

INSPECTION REPORT

LOXDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bilston

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104315

Headteacher: Susan Maule

Reporting inspector: Steve Bywater
18463

Dates of inspection: 3rd - 6th December 2001

Inspection number: 230817

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Chapel Street Bilston West Midlands
Postcode:	WV14 0PH
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ron Wright
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Steve Bywater 18463	Registered inspector	Mathematics Music Information and communication technology History English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught?
Colin Herbert 09652	Lay inspector		How high are standards? (attitudes and behaviour) How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents? How well is the school led and managed?
Margaret Palmer 20646	Team inspector	English Art Religious education Foundation Stage Special educational needs	
Derek Pattinson 19120	Team inspector	Science Geography Design and technology Physical education Equal opportunities	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in Bilston close to the Wolverhampton boundaries with Walsall, Sandwell and Dudley. There are 230 pupils (115 boys and 115 girls) on roll aged between 3 and 11 years. The school is approximately the same size as other primary schools and about the same size as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Attainment on entry to the school is well below average. The majority of pupils who attend the school live in a community which faces many of the issues associated with areas of deprivation. This is reflected in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals (36 per cent) which is above the national average. Very few pupils are from ethnic minority groups and the very small number who speak English as an additional language are competent in speaking English. There are 53 pupils on the school's special needs register, a percentage which is broadly in line with that found in most schools. The majority of pupils with special educational needs have learning difficulties. No pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Need; this is below average for the size of the school. The school has been very seriously affected by staff absence over the past three years and the headteacher has been in post since April, having been acting headteacher for the previous 12 months.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is now at a watershed and has reached the point where it provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. It has some way to go before it can be judged a fully effective school. The children are happy at the school, relationships throughout the school are good and most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is generally good. Teaching is satisfactory and pupils are making satisfactory progress. However, there is a backlog of underachievement following years of inefficiency and ineffectiveness. Standards in English, mathematics and science are below average, but are improving. The leadership and management of the school are now satisfactory and ensure that there is clear educational direction and a shared sense of common purpose. Despite poor progress in previous years, the school now provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The new headteacher has created a sense of optimism and an ethos where the improvement in standards is seen as paramount. The refreshing sense of teamwork between staff, governors, parents and the local education authority means there is now good potential for improvement.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to school, form good relationships and behave well.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, though improving, are too low by the time pupils leave the school.
- The roles of governors and subject co-ordinators in the monitoring of teaching, learning and standards are not yet fully developed in most subjects.
- Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory.
- Attendance is well below the national average.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in June 1998, the school has made satisfactory improvements. Until the current headteacher took charge of the school the improvements were poor. Teacher absences, low staff morale and the resulting poor progress of pupils greatly concerned the local education authority, governors and parents. However, since the 'new management' took over, the governors and the local education authority have begun to address the very serious issues and progress has been brisk. The quality of teaching and learning has improved. During the last inspection almost 20 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. In this inspection only 5 per cent were less than satisfactory. There has been a significant improvement in the monitoring of teaching, the curriculum and pupils' personal development by the headteacher, some key staff and the local education authority inspector. However, the management role of governors and co-ordinators, though much improved, still has some way to go in ensuring that the school uses its resources more effectively. The quality of language across the curriculum has improved and standards in information and communication technology and religious education have improved very significantly. The school has given greater emphasis to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and this is now one of its strengths. Information for parents has improved and is now satisfactory.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	E	E	D
Mathematics	E*	E	E	E
Science	E	E	E	E

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The school's results in the 2001 national tests showed that by the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science were well below the national average. In comparison with pupils in similar schools, pupils' performance was below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. Pupils enter school with poor skills in language and literacy and number. Children in the nursery and reception classes make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning and particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. By the time they reach Year 1, the majority of children are still attaining levels that are well below those normally expected for their age. The evidence collected during the inspection shows that standards in English, mathematics and science are below average by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are below national expectations in English, mathematics and science, but are much closer to the expected standards for 11 year olds than they have been in a number of years. Pupils are making satisfactory progress as they receive a more consistent level of teaching from a regular staff. In information and communication technology, standards at the age of 7 are in line with national expectations, but by the age of 11 standards are below national expectations because the older pupils have not had the time with the computers to reach national expectations in all aspects of the subject. By the ages of 7 and 11, pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The standard of pupils' work in art, geography and music is similar to that found in other schools by the ages of 7 and 11, but standards in history and design and technology are below expectations. There was insufficient evidence available to judge standards in physical education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school. They are interested, concentrate well and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Good in most lessons and around school in lunchtimes and playtimes. A significant minority of pupils in Year 4 display challenging behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory overall. Pupils are developing sensible and mature attitudes and have good relationships with adults and each other. Personal development is satisfactory. Pupils welcome responsibility when it is offered, but they do not take the initiative themselves.
Attendance	Poor. Despite the rigorous efforts by the school, a small number of parents do not send their children to school as regularly as they should.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching is satisfactory. Of the 43 lessons seen, all but two were satisfactory or better, around four in ten were good or better and a small number were very good. In the good lessons, teachers had a good understanding of the subject and challenged pupils well with purposeful questioning and a good choice and use of resources. All teachers have good relationships with their pupils and control is generally good. However, in both of the below satisfactory lessons the expectations of pupils' work and behaviour were too low and firmer control was necessary. Within most lessons in mathematics, English and science, teachers assess how well pupils are doing, but in most other subjects teachers do not use the information gleaned well enough to adapt future planning accordingly. Some teachers do not mark work well and do not have high enough expectations of the presentation. They do not pick up sufficiently on spelling and punctuation errors. The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory overall. Strengths in English and mathematics include the way that teachers give good explanations to pupils and clear instructions for the tasks that they ask pupils to do. Occasionally, these sessions are a little too long. Teachers consistently make good use of review sessions at the end of literacy lessons to consolidate learning and to provide a firm platform on which further to develop understanding. In mathematics the end sessions are satisfactory, but can be improved. Most teachers now provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology across the curriculum. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Class teachers and support staff are aware of pupils' learning targets and use them well to plan work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The balanced curriculum is wide ranging and there is a satisfactory range of educational visits and extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in literacy and numeracy lessons and make satisfactory progress. In lessons other than English and mathematics, some work does not match their needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The very small number of pupils who need it receive satisfactory support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Spiritual development is good. Assemblies and lessons provide good opportunities for personal reflection. Moral, social and cultural development is also good. Pupils are encouraged to work together and to help each other. The school values and explores other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. There is a strong commitment to the well being of pupils, but some procedures for health and safety and implementing the behaviour policy are not formal enough and the school needs to apply them more rigorously.

Parents and carers are positive about the school and express their strong views that this school is now improving. The quality of information provided to parents is satisfactory overall and particularly good efforts are made by nursery staff to involve parents in the life of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall, but only since the appointment of the new headteacher. She promotes most effectively the welfare of pupils and staff and has won the respect of parents and governors. There is a clear vision and a shared sense of common purpose to raise the standards. At present, the role of the co-ordinators is not effective enough.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school, but they have not been sufficiently involved in the process of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Until recently they did not know enough about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This prevented them from understanding their role and acting as a critical friend when dealing with the problems of unsatisfactory standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has evaluated its performance satisfactorily and started to make effective use of test data. It has successfully identified strengths and areas for development and has used the information well in drawing up the school development plan.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school's spending and plans for the use of the funds now support the priorities expressed in the school development plan. Under the previous management, governors were not well informed or aware of the financial situation within the school and did not know that the school lacked resources and was not using funds efficiently.

The school has sufficient teaching and support staff. Teacher absences over the past three years have slowed progress and held back the urgent curriculum development that was considered vital during the previous inspection. Accommodation is satisfactory and there are sufficient resources in most subjects. The new headteacher applies the principles of best value to ensure that the school makes effective use of available resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children like school and they make good progress. The teaching is good and the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. Parents are kept well informed about how their child is getting on. They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. The school is well led and managed. The school is helping their child become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amount of extra-curricular activities. How closely the school works with parents. The amount of work pupils do at home. The behaviour of some of the pupils.

This table takes into account the views of nine parents attending a meeting held with the registered inspector prior to the inspection and those expressed in 77 returned questionnaires. The inspection team agrees with most of the positive views of parents and it acknowledges that the behaviour of a small number of pupils does cause concern. Extra-curricular activities are satisfactory, though somewhat limited and narrow in range. Homework varies from class to class, but is satisfactory overall. Links with parents are satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the Foundation Stage in the nursery class with standards of attainment that are low when compared with other three and four year olds. Although children make a solid start in both the nursery and reception classes, they are still well below average in almost all areas of learning when they join Year 1. Attainment is only close to the national expectation in personal and social skills.
2. The school's results in the national tests for 2001 showed that standards by the end of Year 2 were well below the national average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. When compared with pupils in similar schools pupils' performance was above average in mathematics, average in writing and below average in reading. In science, the 2001 teacher assessments for 7 year olds showed standards were well below the national average. In reading, writing and science, although 77 per cent of pupils achieved the expected Level 2, no pupils achieved the higher Level 3. There was no significant difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls. In mathematics, almost nine out of ten pupils achieved at least the expected Level 2, but only one in ten achieved the higher Level 3. Girls outperformed boys quite significantly in 2001, but there is no trend and standards achieved by boys and girls vary year on year.
3. The school's results in the 2001 national tests showed that by the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science were well below the national average. In comparison with pupils in similar schools, pupils' performance was also well below average in all three subjects. Boys outperformed girls in English, mathematics and science last year, but there is no clear trend and usually there is little difference in their scores. However, boys and girls' achievements in all subjects are of serious concern in Key Stage 2 since they have been, on average, over a year behind the levels expected of 11 year olds from 1999-2001. Fewer than half of the pupils in Year 6 achieved the expected level in mathematics in 2001 and very few achieved a higher level. This is not good enough and very low when compared with all schools. Standards in Key Stage 2 have barely risen since 1997 and the improvements are certainly below the national trend in English, mathematics and science. The reasons for such low standards are very clear, and have now been dealt with. These included:
 - unsatisfactory teaching and low expectations in a number of classes;
 - some pupils entering the school with very limited skills in language and mathematics;
 - ineffective staff were absent so frequently that a large number of supply teachers covered the classes and pupils often repeated work that they already knew;
 - pupils did not develop their skills from year to year;
 - there was no accurate assessment to indicate how much and how well pupils had learned;
 - there was no systematic monitoring and evaluation of what was happening in the subject, much was 'crisis' management;
 - many of the pupils were on the special needs register and not expected to attain the national expectation.

4. Standards are now beginning to improve because:
 - teachers share a strong commitment to raise standards, following a period of staff change and uncertainty;
 - improved planning ensures that the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are securely established throughout the school and science lessons give more emphasis to experimental and investigative work;
 - staff are more confident, and teaching and learning have improved throughout the school;
 - the school allocates additional time beyond the daily literacy and numeracy hours to reinforce and extend pupils' reading and writing skills.

5. The evidence collected during the inspection shows that standards in English, mathematics and science are below average by the end of Year 2 and below average by the end of Year 6, although much closer to national expectations than they have been in recent years. The target of 70 per cent of Year 6 pupils expected to achieve Level 4 in English and mathematics is very demanding, but is within reach.

6. Inspection evidence shows that by Year 2 and Year 6, most pupils' speaking and listening skills are below those found in other schools. Many pupils do not have a wide variety of everyday words to express their thoughts and ideas clearly in conversations and in answering teachers' questions. Teachers do not plan enough activities to extend pupils' speaking skills, such as discussions, role-play and drama. Throughout the school, staff encourage pupils to listen carefully and, as a result, most pupils listen attentively to the teacher and other pupils. Standards in reading are well below the level expected in other schools by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Some teachers do not ensure that higher-attaining pupils are choosing sufficiently challenging books or encouraging pupils to change books more frequently. Others do not involve pupils enough in reading aloud to the class or hearing pupils read. In Year 6, boys and girls show enthusiasm for and enjoyment in reading and they read fiction books with good expression and understanding. Average-attaining pupils read with suitable fluency, but their understanding of the words they read is lower than expected for their age. Although pupils in Year 6 pupils have competent skills in finding information from books and in using the library system they do not use the library to research information independently. Standards in writing are below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. The few average and higher attaining pupils in Year 2 sequence stories correctly and use punctuation with increasing accuracy. By Year 6, pupils use different forms of writing competently, but some average-attaining pupils produce work in which the standard of basic punctuation is low.

7. Inspection evidence shows pupils' attainment in mathematics is currently below national expectations at the end of Year 2 and below average at the end of Year 6, albeit close to national expectations. By the age of 7, most pupils are competent in number and have a secure knowledge of two and three-dimensional shapes and there is evidence of pupils satisfactorily using and applying mathematics. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have a good basic knowledge of number and a good recall of facts, including multiplication tables. Higher attaining pupils explain their methods with increasing accuracy using correct mathematical language, but some lower attaining pupils know what they are doing but have difficulty putting this into words. Pupils' skills in the aspect of shape, space and measure are average and pupils' learning is satisfactory overall, but uneven because in some lessons pupils do the same work irrespective of their abilities.

8. The full range of inspection evidence shows that pupils' standards in science are currently below national expectations by the age of 7 and below expectations at the age of 11 years. Pupils of all abilities, including those pupils with special educational needs and

those who speak English as an additional language, achieve satisfactorily in most areas of science as they move through Key Stage 1. Much of the unsatisfactory progress is because pupils' limited literacy skills affect the way they record their work and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities, when writing, to show their own understanding of what they have learned. Teachers sometimes over-direct pupils and do not give them sufficient opportunities to use their initiative and take responsibility for their work.

9. In information and communication technology, standards at the age of 7 are in line with national expectations, but are below national expectations at the age of 11 years. Progress of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, is satisfactory. Teachers now allocate sufficient time to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding as well as ensuring that they use computers satisfactorily in many, but not all, other subjects. By the age of 7, pupils are beginning to use the keyboard and mouse and they develop a growing understanding of the use of a computer. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding, but since the high quality equipment and teacher knowledge has only recently been made available to them, standards are below expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. For example, pupils produce effective pieces of work that include text and graphics, but do not yet use software packages to combine electronically text, graphics, sound and video clips in multi-media presentations. Pupils set up and use simple spreadsheets, but lack the knowledge to use spreadsheets to model and investigate different situations. They have little experience of databases and the school has only recently acquired the equipment to allow pupils to sense, monitor and control physical events. Pupils have yet to make regular use of the Internet.
10. By the ages of 7 and 11, pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The standard of pupils' work in art, geography and music is similar to that found in other schools by the ages of 7 and 11 years. No judgement can be made on standards in physical education because only two games lessons were observed. Standards in history and design and technology are below expectations and lower than they should be for both 7 and 11 year olds. Pupils do not make sufficient progress in developing their skills in these subjects.
11. The standards pupils with special educational needs attain are often well below those expected for the pupils' ages, but they are satisfactory in relation to the pupils' identified needs and targets. These targets are clear, specific, achievable and suitably challenging. In the main, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards these targets, particularly in literacy and numeracy skills and in behaviour. Teachers track their progress satisfactorily to give them the chance to succeed. Relationships are good throughout the school. Pupils' work is always valued and this encourages them to try harder. Pupils receive additional input by dedicated support staff and make good progress when staff refer to pupils' individual targets in planning the work for them. Classroom teachers do not implement this good practice with sufficient regularity in lessons other than English and mathematics. This sometimes leads to pupils with special educational needs making unsatisfactory progress, particularly when they are recording their work independently.
12. Pupils for whom English is an additional language receive effective support. They make satisfactory gains in confidence and competence in their spoken English and in their capacity to cope with reading and writing tasks at an appropriate level. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of individual pupils and ensure they include them all in classroom activities. There are no consistent variations in the progress of pupils of different gender, background or ethnicity.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. The attitudes of pupils to school and to their learning are good. Their behaviour in and around school is also good. Relationships between all members of the school community are good. Pupils have improved the quality of this aspect of school life since the last inspection. The school has taken positive steps to improve its ethos by introducing assertive behaviour strategies to celebrate good behaviour. However, there are some older pupils whose behaviour and attitude to lessons are sometimes unacceptable. This is especially so when class teachers are not consistently implementing the procedures in the behaviour policy. Almost 90 per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire have positive views about behaviour in school.
14. In the classroom the attitude and behaviour of pupils were good or better in 79 per cent of lessons and very good or better in 26 per cent of lessons. Standards of behaviour in the playground, in the dining hall at dinnertime and during the breakfast club, and around school were often very good. Pupils are very polite and well mannered towards visitors. In particular, pupils were very welcoming and were keen to say 'Good morning' or 'Good afternoon' to visitors. There was no indication of any unsociable or racist behaviour whatsoever during the inspection. However, it was necessary to exclude one pupil during the inspection and to modify the hours of another. The school correctly applied its procedures for both these actions.
15. The children in nursery and reception classes develop their confidence and start to build their basic skills. They quickly learn the routines of their classes and their attitudes and behaviour are good when they respond to staff and other children. There were many examples of children settling well to lessons, showing good concentration and being interested in what was going on in class.
16. Pupils generally have a good understanding of right and wrong. In personal, social and health education lessons in both Year 3 and Year 5, pupils demonstrated their ability to 'say no' if they were pressurised to play on the tram tracks or to smoke by their peers. There was no evidence of graffiti, litter or vandalism in or around school.
17. Most pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to their work. They are keen to make progress, eager to please and enjoy succeeding. They are well behaved and respond well to the encouragement they receive, which helps to boost their confidence and enables them to take pride in their achievements. However, a small number lack concentration and display unacceptable behaviour, for example, in Years 3 and 4. This slows their progress and at times disturbs others.
18. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and the majority are enthusiastic to participate in class activities. For example, in Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils were eager to contribute to the lesson as a direct result of the dynamic approach by their teacher towards the subject.
19. Relationships between pupils, and pupils and all adults, are good. Pupils collaborate very well in all aspects of school life and enjoy working and playing together. In the breakfast club, pupils mix together with staff and visitors very well and enjoy talking about the educational games that they are playing or their support of either Wolverhampton Wanderers or West Bromwich Albion Football Clubs. In a Year 5 geography lesson, pupils had a very good discussion about the uses of water in Britain and they listened well to each other's views. The quality of these relationships has a positive impact on pupils' learning, as all are included in all school activities.
20. The opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in school are now satisfactory and there has been an improvement in this aspect since the last inspection. Responsibilities

include tuck shop monitors, corridor monitors and providing help to the caretaker in cleaning and putting away tables after the breakfast club. The school is currently considering the setting up of a school council and this will provide further opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. The opportunities for pupils to show initiative are limited. Pupils are aware of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. They provide boxes of harvest goods for members of the community and they sing carols at a local home for senior citizens. All these activities have a positive impact on pupils' personal development.

21. Attendance rates are poor in comparison to the national average. However, the school has average rates of attendance when compared with similar schools in the local authority area. A number of families take their children out of school during term time and during the last year a number of pupils have been away from school with medical problems. The level of unauthorised absence is above the national average. The majority of pupils arrive at school on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection when 20 per cent of the teaching observed was unsatisfactory. Overall, the teaching is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress as a result. Ninety five per cent of all lessons observed were at least satisfactory. Of this, 37 per cent were good and 5 per cent were very good. Only two lessons were less than satisfactory.
23. Teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The teachers in the nursery and reception classes are clear about the curriculum, children work to the six areas of learning and appropriate planning is in place. Staff manage children's behaviour well and have very good relationships with them. Teachers have established clear classroom routines and the good organisation of resources underpins this. Staff frequently praise children's efforts and achievements and this fosters their good confidence and learning. They teach basic skills well, such as number work in mathematical development. The teacher ensures that all children are included fully in the activities. A weakness is the inconsistent assessment procedure for tracking children's progress. As a result, staff are not always successful in planning daily activities which pay enough attention to what individual children need to move on to in the next step of their learning. The classroom assistants and adult helpers are deployed very effectively in lessons and make a positive contribution to children's learning.
24. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and around a half of the lessons are good. The overall teaching seen across Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, with just under a half of the lessons being good.
25. Teaching of literacy skills is satisfactory overall and occasionally it is very good in lessons. Teachers explain the work clearly and work effectively with a targeted group of pupils. Most teachers manage the different parts of the literacy hour successfully and teach at a brisk pace. As a result, pupils cover a good deal of work. They give support staff and adult helpers precise instructions about the work that they are to carry out. This enables them to support pupils, especially those with special educational needs well. In both key stages, teachers make good use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning, for example in Year 6. Teaching of numeracy skills is satisfactory overall. Most teachers take into account pupils' need for clear explanations interspersed with the challenge of mental mathematics sessions that are sometimes competitive in nature and generate interest and enthusiasm. The Year 5 teacher in particular promotes pupils' problem solving skills well and makes the best of opportunities to discuss a variety of strategies. Her skilful questioning ensures that all pupils take part

and make progress. Pupils know that their contributions are valued and respond with enthusiasm. Plenary sessions in mathematics lessons are satisfactory. However, some teachers are simply asking pupils to share their work rather than getting them to expand on their answers and strategies fluently, encouraged by the open-ended yet probing nature of the questions asked.

26. All teachers know their pupils well and have warm and supportive relationships with them. This means that pupils are happy and motivated to do their best. Most lessons are well organised and teachers use time and resources efficiently. There are some occasions when teachers speak too much and on these occasions the pace slows and pupils do not finish their work. Most teachers manage and control their pupils well, a task made easier by the good relationships that exist in the school.
27. Although only two lessons were less than satisfactory, a number of weaknesses exist in the quality of teaching and some teaching is not as effective as it should be. The scrutiny of work shows that pupils do not always get work that matches their needs. One of the reasons for this is the lack of consistent assessment procedures in subjects other than mathematics and science. This makes it difficult for teachers to ensure that they always meet pupils' individual needs. Higher attaining pupils and lower attaining pupils are given the same work. Although teachers set realistic and challenging targets for the 'average' group who make up the majority of pupils, planning is not detailed enough to provide interesting and suitably demanding work for all abilities. In some lessons, pupils are sometimes told to do things rather than being encouraged to think for themselves and to be independent. Expectations of the higher attaining pupils are too low in some of these lessons.
28. The quality and quantity of recorded work produced is mostly satisfactory. Marking is inconsistent. In some classes and in some subjects, for example in English throughout the school and in Year 5 in all subjects, marking is at times impressive. However, some teachers do not always mark pupils' work regularly enough. At times, teachers use encouraging remarks which are often unjustified and unhelpful in helping pupils to improve their work. Too often teachers accept untidy work without writing a comment.
29. The amount and types of homework are satisfactory overall and supports pupils' learning. Seventy six per cent of parents commented favourably about the work that pupils do at home.
30. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. This is because most individual education plans are targeted carefully to help pupils to learn. Most teachers use a wide range of successful strategies to motivate, involve and challenge pupils and regularly monitor the progress pupils are making towards achieving their targets. For the most part, good maintenance and regular updating of records enables teachers to track progress carefully. Teachers are aware of the needs of the very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. They ensure that these pupils are fully included in the lessons and receive support where necessary. However, teachers sometimes do not match work well to pupils' abilities in subjects other than English and mathematics and this prevents them from making the best possible progress.
31. The quality of learning is satisfactory overall. Most pupils make satisfactory gains in the acquisition of knowledge and understanding. This is especially true when basic skills and techniques are taught explicitly, systematically and thoroughly, for example in literacy and numeracy. The quality of learning would improve significantly if pupils were taught good learning habits, for example a need for well-presented work. In the demanding lessons, pupils employ a good range of learning skills, listening attentively, handling resources sensibly, responding well to adults and recalling, using and practising previously learned

information in new contexts. In Years 5 and 6, pupils ask purposeful questions and develop an understanding and appreciation of complex issues. Most pupils work well together helping each other to succeed, the exception being pupils in Year 4. Pupils have positive attitudes, sustain concentration and are keenly motivated to learn. Their orderliness and good behaviour contribute positively to their competence as learners.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

32. The school provides a sound curriculum for its pupils, which covers all subjects required by the National Curriculum. There is satisfactory emphasis on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in most subjects to ensure that work carefully builds on previous learning for most pupils. However, it is only in English and mathematics that work usually matches the needs of pupils with different abilities, including those with special educational needs. This prevents some pupils, especially the most and least able pupils, from making the best possible progress in other subjects. Some subjects, such as design and technology, are too thinly represented to ensure that work for pupils builds carefully enough on previous learning. There are good opportunities in some subjects for pupils to develop their ability to speak clearly and confidently and to listen attentively, and this is contributing to their personal development as well as their learning.
33. The curriculum places sound emphasis on the development of speaking, listening, reading, writing and number skills within English and mathematics. A more methodical approach to planning has helped to raise their profile. The school has soundly introduced the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. However, these strategies are not yet leading to improved standards in English and mathematics. Number work is represented in some other subjects, such as geography, and this is helping pupils to realise its importance in their daily lives. Teachers promote soundly the development of literacy skills in subjects such as history and this is helping to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of written and spoken English. Information and communication technology is being developed through some other subjects, such as science. However, there are insufficient planned opportunities for the development of number, writing and information and communication technology skills in other subjects of the curriculum.
34. A satisfactory number of well-led clubs and activities appeal to the interests of pupils. However, the range of clubs is narrow. Clubs, such as football and table tennis, sewing club, computer club and mental maths club are well supported and greatly appreciated by pupils. A good range of visits, such as to Sandwell Farm, St. Mary's Church, Telford Park, and an annual residential visit to Stottesdon for most older pupils, extend pupils' learning. However, there are too few opportunities in some subjects, such as geography and history, for pupils to use the locality to develop important skills to bring these subjects to life.
35. Teachers make every effort in all lessons and activities that support the curriculum to ensure that the contributions of all pupils are valued and celebrated. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part in the life of the school, although work does not always match their specific needs in lessons other than English and mathematics. All pupils learn to respect one another and support each other's learning. The school successfully provides learning opportunities for all pupils, whatever their age, ability, background or ethnicity, to help them make mostly satisfactory progress as they move through the school.
36. Teachers give sound emphasis to pupils' personal, social and health education. They promote this actively as part of a structured programme. However, as this programme is recent, it is not yet embedded enough in the school's work to enable teachers to assess

its impact on pupils' development. Pupils become good citizens by supporting local and national charities. They learn to respect each other's points of view through regular discussions about issues that concern them, such as peer pressure. Pupils develop an awareness of the need for rules based on safety, protection and fairness. They learn how to relate to others and work effectively as part of a group in activities, such as scientific investigations. Teachers regularly give praise to enhance pupils' self-esteem and encourage them to do their best. Older pupils have special duties, which helps to increase levels of initiative and responsibility. The school includes sex education in its health education programme, but the profile is to be raised, for example, through visits from a local nurse, to give it its own identity. Older pupils learn about the use and misuse of drugs. The health education programme in science makes pupils aware of a healthy diet, hygiene and exercise for maintaining a healthy life style.

37. The community makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils make numerous visits to local places of interest such as museums, the theatre in Birmingham, and Bilston and Wolverhampton Art Galleries. Community visitors include representatives from theatre groups and a Shakespearean workshop. All these activities link clearly into the curriculum and have a positive impact on pupils' learning. The school has also developed a number of beneficial business links where local firms have kindly donated resources to school, such as sports kits. Other businesses have donated prizes for raffles.
38. The school has developed effective links with its main feeder secondary school and pupils have the opportunity to make induction visits to ease their transition into Year 7. Additionally, the support that Year 6 pupils receive from their class teacher makes a good contribution to that transitional move.
39. The arrangements for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. This indicates a marked improvement since the last inspection, when this area of the curriculum was found to be unsatisfactory overall.
40. The school promotes pupils' spiritual development well. In assemblies, personal, social and health education sessions and individual interactions with their pupils, teachers consistently encourage pupils to recognise their own individuality and worth. This is consolidated in work such as Year 4's 'We are Special' and Year 5's 'All about Me'. Pupils have regular opportunities to join in prayer, sing hymns, reflect and feel positive about themselves. Although moments of quiet stillness are sometimes too fleeting, a sense of thoughtfulness is evident in assemblies. This is reinforced particularly well when a visual focus is provided, such as a lighted candle. The school provides pupils with appropriate insights into their own and others' values and beliefs through religious education lessons and assemblies. For example, an assembly focused on the ways in which members of different faiths celebrate festivals of light. The local vicar regularly visits school and leads assemblies, contributing very effectively to pupils' spiritual development. Teachers successfully promote pupils' awareness of beauty and sense of wonder through their work in a range of subjects, including art and science. Pupils also enter and leave the hall to well-selected music, which reflects and reinforces the assembly theme.
41. The school fosters pupils' moral development well. Teachers unfailingly recognise and encourage pupils' personal efforts both in class and in weekly achievement assemblies. In assemblies they also give worthwhile consideration to such moral issues as 'responsibility', 'forgiveness' and 'perseverance'. In most instances, members of staff are consistent in their promotion of the school's recently established assertive discipline policy. In consequence, pupils are successfully made aware of what is expected of them and the difference between right and wrong. Much of the school's provision is embedded

in its everyday life and teaching. The headteacher and staff provide good role models. They consistently treat pupils, other members of the school community and each other with courtesy and respect.

42. Arrangements for promoting pupils' social development are good. Supportive and constructive relationships between teachers and pupils successfully promote pupils' self esteem and social interaction. Assemblies often focus on such themes as 'working together' and pupils very regularly participate in co-operative activities in lessons. Pupils have some opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility, such as acting as monitors. However, pupils have few opportunities to act on their own initiative. The school promotes teamwork and a sense of fair play well through team games and sporting competitions. The oldest pupils also have an opportunity to develop their skills of social interaction by participating in the residential school trip. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the needs of others. The school distributes harvest boxes locally and supports a range of charitable causes, including Compton Hospice and Children in Need. Through work in religious education and assemblies, the school raises pupils' awareness of the many cultures represented in Britain today. Teachers reinforce this appropriately through well-presented displays around the school.
43. Promotion of the cultural dimension of pupils' development is good. Pupils learn about their cultural heritage through involvement in local community activities, such as the Music and Art Day, and Year 4's local studies in history and geography. They benefit from visitors to the school, including theatre groups, and a good programme of visits to the museum, art gallery and theatre. Teachers successfully extend pupils' awareness of the works of famous artists and composers, principally in art and music lessons. They also introduce them to the richness and diversity of art and music from other cultures. For example, pupils study aboriginal art in Year 2 and music from the Ivory Coast in Year 1.
44. Daily acts of collective worship are of a broadly Christian character and meet statutory requirements. They contribute very effectively to the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The school takes satisfactory care of all its pupils. This aspect of school life has been maintained since the last inspection. Parents continue to think that their children are well cared for by the school.
46. The policies for both health and safety and child protection are well established, but the governing body must now ensure that it plays a more robust role in monitoring and recording health and safety. It is only since a recent fire audit that the school has started to record fire evacuation drills. Records such as these and for the inspection of the school must be formalised and become a regular function of monitoring by the governors. Effective arrangements exist for first aid and for the contact of parents or carers in the case of an accident. There is good supervision at the breakfast club, at lunch and in the playground. The lunchtime supervisors have recently received training in aspects of using the school's discipline policy and they work as an important part of the school community.
47. The school cares appropriately for pupils with special educational needs and the few who speak English as an additional language. It monitors their work regularly to ensure that they are making the progress towards the targets set for them. Regular reviews of pupils' progress help to ensure that most work is suited to their needs. Outside agencies are involved as required to help meet their specific targets.

48. The procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour and for eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. However, the inconsistent application of the policy by some teachers in Key Stage 2 means that a small number of pupils get away with unacceptable and inappropriate behaviour. When this occurs it disrupts lessons for the rest of the pupils. The procedures to monitor and promote attendance are satisfactory, but they are not yet having the expected impact on attendance levels. The school must encourage its parents to ensure the more regular attendance of their children.
49. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. The school knows its pupils well and is able to provide appropriate support for them all.
50. The school's arrangements for monitoring pupils' academic progress are satisfactory. It has improved its assessment system substantially since the time of the previous inspection. Much of the improvement has taken place very recently, since the arrival of the new headteacher at the start of summer term 2001. The school now assesses pupils regularly in English and mathematics. It fully analyses the results of the National Curriculum tests for pupils in Years 2 and 6. It uses different approaches to help pupils make sound progress as they move through the school. For example, pupils now take optional tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5. The school analyses national test data, school-based tests and teacher assessments to discover strengths and weaknesses of groups of pupils. In mathematics, where assessment procedures are now more secure, it has recently started to use information and communication technology to represent this information, so that it can identify strengths and weaknesses.
51. The school is extending its assessment procedures to science, but it has not yet embedded fully its approaches to assessment in this subject. Class teachers keep records of pupils' work in the other subjects. The school is working towards establishing portfolios of pupils' work, levelled to National Curriculum requirements, to help chart pupils' progress against national standards. In the Foundation Stage, teachers and assistants start with the baseline assessment information obtained when the children arrive at school. They keep records of some aspects of children's progress, but these do not yet fully cover all the early learning goals.
52. The use of assessment is unsatisfactory. However, the school has used its new assessment system to make a start in the right direction. Teachers are using gained information to set targets in mathematics for groups of pupils. At this stage, some targets are still too broad to be of best possible help to individual pupils. A lack of accurate pinpointing means that sometimes pupils get work in the next lesson that is either too difficult or too easy for them. Teachers have started to involve pupils in setting their own targets in mathematics. By using this more fully across the other subjects, the school could encourage pupils to take ownership of their learning. Teachers have started to use homework in mathematics to help pupils achieve their defined targets. They are also using assessment to give parents a clear picture of their children's progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. The school now promotes itself well to its parents. There is a clear feeling of optimism as parents talk about the welcoming atmosphere and the 'dramatic improvements' that have taken place since the new headteacher has been in post. The majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire or who attended the meeting now have positive views about most aspects of school life.
54. A small number of parents and carers regularly support the school in the Key Stage 1 classrooms, but more assist throughout the school by providing transport for visits into the community. In particular the school has built strong links with parents of children in the nursery and a number of mothers have recently been attending the family learning programme over a period of nine weeks. This programme has given those parents a better understanding of how they can help their children learn and it has raised their self-esteem. Some of them are now taking advantage of further education opportunities to gain qualifications in education. This successful initiative is to be repeated in Year 2 in the New Year. Additionally, the school is putting on a course for information and communication technology for its parents and it expects a high demand for places. Although there is no formal parent teacher association, parents and staff are very supportive of the events that are organised by the school. For example, the recent Christmas Fayre raised well over £600 for school funds. The school has also organised workshops for its parents in literacy and numeracy and these sessions allow parents to gain additional knowledge to help their children. All the activities undertaken by parents and carers make a positive contribution to school life.
55. The information produced by the school for its parents is satisfactory overall. The school has listened to its parents and will shortly be sending out topic letters to inform them about the work that their children will be completing each term. The quality of annual reports is satisfactory and they make some useful developmental points. The school encourages pupils to comment on their own progress. For example, a pupil wrote that pupils 'enjoyed maths because they liked learning about numbers'. Many parents make written comments on the reports such as 'I will encourage her to keep up the hard work'.
56. Parents of children with special educational needs are informed and involved at an early stage of the process. Communication with them is mostly good. Links between home and school are regular and constructive, and this helps to ensure that pupils receive sound support and make satisfactory progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall and include a mixture of strengths and areas for still further improvement. There have been some good improvements in the management of the school since the new headteacher was appointed earlier this year. The headteacher has also dealt with the unsatisfactory teaching, the inefficient management of the school and exceptionally high staff absence rates. All these issues were evident in the previous report. Additionally, she is getting to grips with the backlog of underachievement and low morale. As a result of what has happened in the last nine months, the school is now better positioned than it has been for many years. The necessary structures to support and sustain teaching and learning to take the school forward are now in place. A new management structure has been formed and this will be in place from January 2002 and the whole school team now has a clear focus in school improvement and monitoring progress. The school now provides satisfactory value for money and this is an improvement on the previous inspection.

58. The headteacher understands the needs of the pupils well and she has been instrumental in improving the morale of all those who work in the school community following years of frustration for many of the staff and governors. The headteacher has moved a long way to delegate both tasks and authority to involve staff and governors in the co-operative task of improving the school's performance and creating an inclusive environment for pupils to learn. For example, the co-ordinators of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology now have a good understanding of how to move their subjects forward. They have begun to analyse the results of national tests in order to identify strengths and weaknesses. However, due to staffing difficulties over the past three years, they have not undertaken classroom monitoring in all classes and have not systematically monitored pupils' work and teachers' planning. As a result, they did not sufficiently identify the shortcomings in the quality of teaching and the quality of marking. Such important aspects of management were delayed because staff were often too tied up in ensuring that classes had a teacher.
59. The headteacher and subject co-ordinators are now beginning to address these important issues. They are now scrutinising pupils' work, but need to do so more systematically. This recent initiative is helping to improve standards, but it is in early stages of development. For example, as a result of monitoring and analysis of test results the school has set realistic targets for literacy and numeracy in 2002. However, in subjects such as history and music, there is no clear vision of how well pupils are doing in all classes or how the subject will develop. Some co-ordinators are over burdened and their role is insufficiently clear. Job descriptions of most staff are not written precisely enough for the individual teacher. They lack detail about expected responsibilities and targets and realistic time scales in which to achieve them. The full impact of monitoring was not seen during the inspection, but planned developments are clearly detailed in the school improvement plan.
60. Monitoring by the headteacher is satisfactory. However, while governors are supportive of the school they are not yet involved in the process of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning across the school and rely too heavily on the headteacher to identify areas for development. This restricts them in helping the school to improve the areas of the curriculum, for example history, where standards are unsatisfactory.
61. The school is not managing issues relating to special educational needs as effectively as possible. This is because at present there is no co-ordinator for special educational needs with clearly defined roles and responsibilities to oversee this important area rigorously. As a result, the special educational needs register is not updated sufficiently regularly and some records are not thorough or tidy enough. However, classroom assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs. They work well, have clear responsibilities and are valued. Most are well informed about the nature and range of disability, which helps pupils make good gains in learning.
62. In financial matters and in other aspects of their work since the last inspection the governing body has failed to carry out many of its responsibilities. As a result of previous frustrations and being kept at arm's length from financial matters, governors have not involved themselves in the business decision-making processes sufficiently. However, they are now receiving more appropriate information and communication from the headteacher and they feel that there is now a sense of teamwork that was not apparent previously. They are aware that they must now demonstrate more strategic vision and, together with the school, must look further ahead than the one-year focus of the school development plan. The forecasted carry forward figure was investigated and it is now expected to be approximately £11,000, or in the region of 2 per cent of the budget.

63. The school uses its specific grants appropriately and is making satisfactory use of new technology in all aspects of its work. The school office is well organised and it makes a valuable contribution to the day-to-day life of the school.
64. The satisfactory match of experienced and more recently qualified teaching staff enables the curriculum to be taught effectively. The non-teaching staff also provide effective support in the classroom. The school has good procedures for staff development. The newly qualified teacher feels well supported by her mentor and the headteacher and there are satisfactory procedures in place for her continuing induction. The school has introduced its performance management policy well.
65. Classroom accommodation is satisfactory overall, but the governors should now consider the provision of cloakroom facilities for any physically impaired pupils and visitors to the school. The school is well maintained and clean due to the hard working caretaker and cleaning staff.
66. The adequacy of resources in school is satisfactory overall with the exception of history where there are insufficient artefacts. The school has a broad range of good quality reading books, which it uses well to stimulate pupils' interest and promote learning. However, pupils are currently unable to use the library for independent study or research as it is being reorganised and developed.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education the headteacher, staff and governors should:

(i) raise standards in English by:

- continuing to improve the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy;
- improving the level of teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to do;
- improving the teachers' awareness of levels and subject knowledge;
- making more use of on-going assessments to refine teachers' lesson planning so that pupils get tasks to complete that are well matched to their individual learning needs;
- ensuring that pupils choose books which closely match their reading ability;
- ensuring that pupils can use the school library effectively;
- raising teachers' expectations so standards of presentation, handwriting and spelling in all work matches the work expected in handwriting and spelling lessons;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to draft, revise and edit their writing;
- providing more opportunities for them to develop longer pieces of writing across the curriculum;
- providing more opportunities for them to correct their work after it has been marked so that they learn from their mistakes;

(paragraphs 3-6, 27, 33, 77, 80 and 82)

(ii) improve pupils' standards in mathematics by:

- continuing to improve the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy with specific attention to improving the quality of the plenary session;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to pursue mathematical investigations and word problem solving to improve independent thinking;
- developing their knowledge of multiplication tables to improve their ability to solve mathematical problems;
- developing further the use of mathematics across the curriculum;

(paragraphs 3-5, 7, 33, 83, 85, 90, 92 and 93)

(iii) improve pupils' standards in science by:

- implementing the scheme of work which systematically develops pupils' skills, knowledge, understanding and scientific vocabulary and builds on pupils' previous learning as they move through school;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to pursue scientific investigations and to think for themselves;

(paragraphs 8, 97 and 99)

(iv) improve the standards in information and communication technology by:

- continuing to improve and develop teachers' knowledge and expertise in information and communication technology;
- making sure that pupils are given more opportunities to work with databases and to interrogate, search and retrieve information;
- making sure that pupils are given more opportunities to use spreadsheets to model and investigate different situations;
- teaching pupils how to bring information that is produced in different software packages together electronically;
- teaching pupils how to use computers to sense, monitor and control physical events;

(paragraphs 9, 33 and 123)

- 2) raise standards in all subjects and in the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
 - establishing assessment procedures which enable teachers to track pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively and to modify the curriculum in light of their findings;
 - ensuring that teachers' marking is more consistent and gives developmental pointers for further improvement;(paragraphs 23, 27, 28, 35, 50-52, 71, 72, 100, 104, 109, 114, 121, 126, 129 and 138)
- 3) improve the school management by ensuring that:
 - (i) governors effectively discharge their responsibilities as critical friends by monitoring the long-term strategic planning of the school including curriculum and financial planning to ensure that the school gets value for money;
(paragraphs 60 and 62)
 - (ii) co-ordinators are given guidance, time, resources and opportunity to develop their subject by:
 - establishing a programme of lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and analysis of teachers' planning to monitor teaching and learning in their subjects in order to find what is working well and what is not;
 - reporting back to senior management and governors and taking the necessary action to raise standards and quality;
 - using the outcomes of monitoring to inform staff development, curriculum and whole school improvement initiatives;
 - ensuring that subject co-ordinators are fully involved in the financial management of their subject.(paragraphs 58, 59, 61, 82, 94, 109, 114, 121, 126, 130, 135 and 139)

In addition the school should:

- a) improve pupils' standards of behaviour in Year 4 by:
 - ensuring that all staff rigorously and consistently apply a behaviour policy;
 - dealing firmly with the small minority of pupils who behave inappropriately in class;(paragraphs 17 and 48)
- b) continue to stress the importance of attendance and punctuality and take action to raise the rate closer to the national average.
(paragraph 21)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	2	16	23	1	1	0
Percentage	0	5	37	53	2.5	2.5	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	16	198
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Not applicable	71

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	53

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.4
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	13	18	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	10
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	24	24	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (88)	77 (79)	87 (85)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	24	24	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (76)	77 (70)	77 (85)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	18	14	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	10	15
	Girls	7	5	8
	Total	19	15	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59 (62)	47 (47)	75 (71)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	7	14
	Girls	7	4	5
	Total	17	11	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (56)	34 (50)	59 (65)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	183
Any other minority ethnic group	7

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2.6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	76

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16
Total number of education support staff	1.2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	48
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	473,617
Total expenditure	487,300
Expenditure per pupil	1,867
Balance brought forward from previous year	71,258
Balance carried forward to next year	57,574

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 33.5%

Number of questionnaires sent out	230
Number of questionnaires returned	77

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	25	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	56	38	4	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	38	10	1	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	31	17	3	4
The teaching is good.	58	36	1	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	43	8	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	21	3	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	30	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	47	38	10	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	52	42	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	34	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	34	12	1	2

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

68. Arrangements for children in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Some aspects of provision are good. Children spend mornings or afternoons only in the nursery. They attend the reception class full-time. Three year olds enter the nursery with low levels of attainment overall. Some children demonstrate skills substantially below those expected for their age in areas of personal, social and emotional, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. The nursery teacher focuses strongly on promoting children's development in these areas. With the skilled nursery nurse, she creates a very welcoming environment in which all boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, feel secure and motivated to learn. The children make sound overall progress in learning in the nursery. In personal, social and emotional development and aspects of language and mathematical development, children's learning is particularly successful and children make good progress. They maintain this progress throughout the Foundation Stage. Despite this, by the time they leave the reception class most children do not attain the early learning goals for children of their age.
69. The quality of teaching in the nursery is satisfactory and sometimes good. In the reception class, teaching is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching in the reception class was sometimes unsatisfactory. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of how young children learn. Their planning is detailed and satisfactorily incorporates the required areas of learning in both the nursery and reception classes. However, there is not yet a consistent system of planning to ensure that children build on their learning progressively as they move through the Foundation Stage. The co-ordinator recognises this as a priority for development. Shortly after starting school and again on entry to the reception class, teachers assess children's social, language and mathematical skills, using appropriate baseline assessment materials. The nursery and reception class teachers note children's achievements and create a range of records. However, they have not yet established clear systems for regularly assessing and recording each child's attainment and progress and using this information to plan the next step of their learning throughout the Foundation Stage. As a result, daily activities are not always planned with enough attention to what individual children need to learn and this sometimes restricts their progress. Teachers organise their classrooms thoughtfully to stimulate children's curiosity and encourage them to become independent learners. There are adequate resources to support most areas of children's learning. Since the last inspection, the school has provided a secure outdoor area adjacent to the nursery and is building up appropriate equipment. Although this area is not yet fully utilised, it does provide opportunities for valuable outdoor activities, including planting a nursery garden. However, reception class children do not have direct access to this secure area and their opportunities for outdoor activities are restricted to playtimes with Years 1 and 2.

Personal, social and emotional development

70. Parents and children make a series of visits to school before children join the nursery. In this way, the school begins to establish links with home. The teacher encourages parents to be involved and several spend time helping in the nursery each week. The family learning group also meets in school each week. Parents work with a tutor and the nursery teacher to develop skills that they use to support their children's learning. These arrangements, which encourage parental involvement, also successfully promote the children's sense of belonging. They settle well and quickly learn the classroom routines. On entry for their morning or afternoon session, children put their own name card into the

correct pocket, often with a little support from parents. They put on their aprons for art and craft activities with a minimum of help from adults. They tidy up well at the end of sessions. For example, nursery children took out a dustpan and brush and cleared sand from the floor without being asked to do so. They are keen to bring items in from home for displays of items such as those beginning with 'w', and are very proud to receive a sticker for their effort. Staff consistently make their expectations of children's behaviour clear. Almost all children are patient and take their turn, for example, when waiting for their biscuits and milk. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children are well motivated to learn, settling to tasks and concentrating well for extended periods of time. They behave well and handle books and equipment carefully. When moving around school, as when they go to the hall for assembly, they follow instructions and are very sensible and co-operative. The teachers, nursery nurse and classroom assistant establish warm relationships with the children along with clear expectations of good behaviour. Equipment is accessible and children are encouraged to carry out tasks independently and sensibly. Teaching in this area of learning is good. Teachers value each child's efforts and give lots of individual praise and encouragement. For example, in the nursery the children in turn have a 'Special Day', when they carry out particular jobs, such as taking the register to the office. Such arrangements successfully build children's self-esteem and promote their confidence in learning and in their relationships with others.

Communication, language and literacy

71. Teachers plan many worthwhile opportunities for children to improve their communication, language and literacy skills. Children enjoy listening to stories and joining in with repeated phrases, as in *The Gingerbread Man*. On entry to the nursery, many children need much encouragement to communicate in more than single words. Staff take every opportunity to promote pupils' communication skills. For example, the nursery nurse participated actively in imaginative play in *Bob the Builder's Yard*, successfully encouraging the children to talk about what was happening in their story making. In the reception class, children continue to express themselves with increasing confidence and communicate their ideas simply. From their earliest days in school, children's interest in reading is encouraged by regularly taking home books from the 'nursery library' to share with their parents. By the reception class, they are confident in handling books and considering the title page, author and illustrator. They recognise familiar words and are beginning to associate letters and sounds. Most are on the initial stages of reading and all enjoy 'sharing' a book. Teachers carefully prepare activities which stimulate children's interest and encourage learning. For example, reception class children are very keen to write and post letters and lists to Santa. Higher attaining children write their own names and some are beginning to write simple words and phrases independently. Most hold their pencil effectively to make meaningful marks and understand that writing conveys meaning. Teachers maintain records of aspects of children's progress. However, they do not track achievements in communication, language and literacy thoroughly enough. Nor do they use assessment information directly to inform the planning of future work to ensure that it provides enough challenge to move all children on further in their learning.

Mathematical development

72. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children develop a good sense of number, order and sequence through daily counting routines. For example, in the nursery they count the number of children present each day and count the number of milk cartons needed at break time. They learn colours, shapes and mathematical language well through topic-linked activities, such as creating collages of trains using coloured paper squares, rectangles and circles. In the reception class, most children confidently count beyond ten. The teachers regularly introduce number songs and rhymes that successfully

reinforce children's learning. Staff direct questions well towards individual children to promote thinking, for example asking the number of wheels to be found in a child's painting. However, there are not enough procedures in place for systematically observing, recording and updating what children know and can do as they move through the Foundation Stage, in order to provide detailed information on which to plan the next stage of their learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

73. Teachers successfully plan a satisfactory range of stimulating topics that enable children to acquire a sound knowledge and understanding of the world. Children learn about the properties of sand and water by handling and working with them. In the reception class, children build on their understanding through practical activities, such as discovering whether a variety of objects float or sink. The children are interested in learning about the living world. They particularly enjoy woodland walks and visiting the farm. They extend their awareness of their locality through such activities as visiting the under fives unit at the art gallery and the travel agent. They also meet visitors, such as the local fire fighters. Children have regular opportunities to use and become familiar with the classroom computer. They develop good levels of independence and by the reception class they demonstrate basic competence in a range of simple programs and confidently operate other forms of technology, such as the tape recorder.

Physical development

74. Children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning. Children move safely and confidently in and around the nursery and reception classrooms. Although there is a designated secure outdoor nursery area, there are no arrangements for children to move freely between indoor and outdoor play and they have few opportunities to use it for vigorous free play. Both nursery and reception class children enjoy regular opportunities to be active in physical education lessons. Nursery children work on mats and benches to develop satisfactory standards of co-ordination and balance. By the reception class, children move with control and make satisfactory progress in developing throwing and catching skills. Children enjoy participating in games and races on sports day, when parents come along to enjoy the fun. Within the classroom, teachers plan activities which satisfactorily promote children's physical development alongside other areas of learning. Children regularly choose to build models using a range of large and small construction materials and demonstrate sound manipulative skills. They also use paintbrushes and glue sticks confidently and appropriately.

Creative development

75. The children enjoy musical activities, singing and joining in with action songs and number rhymes, often reinforcing their learning across other areas of learning. Children use clay and make simple models, such as pots or hand imprints, often reinforcing learning about festivals such as Diwali. They have frequent opportunities to draw using pencils and a satisfactory range of markers. They stick, print and use paints in various ways, often related to topics. For example, reception children painted their hands and feet for a display reminding them to have 'Kind Hands and Feet'. Staff prepare art and craft resources well so that they engage children's interest. However, whilst planning gives a clear idea of activities to be carried out, it does not consistently specify what the children are to learn or how this is to be assessed.

ENGLISH

76. In the national tests in 2001, pupils' attainments in English at the end of Year 6 were well below average when compared to all schools nationally. In comparison with schools of a similar character, the school's results were below average. Standards of attainment have fluctuated in recent years. Overall, they are now similar to those at the time of the previous inspection, with below average standards in the current Year 6. However, inspection evidence indicates that pupils throughout the school are now making satisfactory progress in their learning. This is because:
- teachers share a strong commitment to raise standards, following a period of staff change and uncertainty;
 - improved planning ensures that the National Literacy Strategy is securely established throughout the school;
 - as a result, staff are more confident and teaching and learning have improved throughout the school;
 - the school allocates additional time beyond the daily literacy hour for pupils to reinforce and extend their reading and writing skills;
 - pupils show good attitudes to learning in English. They are particularly eager to contribute their ideas orally;
 - pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to most other pupils because they receive effective support from teachers and classroom assistants;
 - pupils for whom English is an additional language receive effective support. They make satisfactory gains in confidence and competence in their spoken English and in their capacity to cope with reading and writing tasks at an appropriate level;
 - teachers are sensitive to the needs of individual pupils and ensure that all are included in classroom activities. There are no consistent variations in the progress of pupils of different gender, background or ethnicity.
77. However, some pupils of both lower and higher ability do not make the best possible progress. Reasons for this include:
- teachers are not making enough use of on-going assessments to refine their lesson planning;
 - they give pupils tasks to complete which are not consistently well matched to their individual learning needs. As a result, some lower attaining pupils struggle to complete work in the time available and higher attaining pupils undertake tasks which do not systematically extend their understanding;
 - the subject co-ordinator has had insufficient opportunities to monitor learning in lessons to help her to identify specific strengths and weaknesses.
78. Pupils enter Year 1 with below average speaking and listening skills. Throughout the school, teachers consistently extend pupils' vocabulary and promote their interest in new words. Pupils in all year groups listen well. As a result, pupils make good progress. They demonstrate their attention by answering questions thoughtfully and responding aptly to instructions. By Year 6, they demonstrate speaking and listening skills at nationally expected standards. Younger pupils listen avidly to the story of *Three Billy Goats Gruff*, told very expressively by their teacher. They are very well motivated and act out the parts and talk about the characters simply but clearly. Pupils have frequent opportunities to speak purposefully. They answer questions and offer suggestions willingly because teachers accept them with unfailing interest. Older pupils confidently express their own ideas and listen carefully to those of others, as when pupils read out their poems about *My Gran* and others explained which parts they liked best. Pupils also have opportunities to speak in more formal situations. For example, they regularly address the whole school when they present class assemblies. Pupils use their speaking and listening skills effectively to support their learning in other subjects. In a Year 6 art lesson, for example, pupils reinforced their observational skills by sharing their thoughts

about their still-life compositions. Similarly, in a personal, social and health education session, Year 5 pupils extended their understanding of their responses in pressurised situations, by thoroughly discussing the issues in small groups and with their teacher.

79. Standards for 7 year olds in reading are below expectations. Nevertheless, they enjoy sharing books. Most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of letter sounds and this helps them tackle words that are unfamiliar to them. Teachers ensure that pupils read books at the correct level of challenge. Most read simple texts accurately and with understanding and readily describe their favourite part of the book. In Key Stage 2, most pupils attain an adequate level of competence in basic reading skills, but more advanced skills are slow to develop in all but the most able. By age 11, many pupils have standards of reading below those expected. When reading independently, most pupils show an understanding of the story and read with expression. They learn to use sound, picture and other clues in the text to help them with unfamiliar words. However, from time to time pupils select books that are not closely matched to their reading ability. They then frequently encounter unfamiliar words and do not recognise when they have made an error. Pupils understand the structure of books. They talk readily about the characters and key events of their current reading books, but make few references to the text to support their views. Most pupils are reticent when predicting what might happen next and only the more able compare the book with others they have read or offer opinions about its author. Pupils of all ages enjoy being read to and are encouraged to take books home regularly. Most of the pupils interviewed are keen readers. However, they are unable to use the school library at present as it is being reorganised. Pupils approach a good range of both fiction and non-fiction with interest and use contents and index pages competently. During daily literacy lessons and in silent reading sessions in the course of the week, pupils have regular opportunities to develop and reinforce their skills. Moreover, in almost all classes, teachers give additional time to reading with individual pupils. This boosts pupils' interest and promotes sound progress in reading.
80. Pupils' attainment in writing is below expected levels. By age 11, many pupils are still often reluctant to write, despite their animated presentation of ideas in group discussions. For example, Year 6 pupils talked very purposefully and used lively language when talking about suitable introductions to a 'warning story'. However, many experienced difficulty in putting their ideas on paper. Higher attaining pupils demonstrated an increasing ability to organise their writing using more complex sentences. About a third of the age group, however, worked hard to display the fundamental skills of writing, with some needing support to use basic grammatical sentence structure accurately. Teachers plan a satisfactory range of writing opportunities and consistently praise pupils' efforts. In consequence, pupils gain confidence and show a lively interest in language work. Throughout the school teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly. This supports the setting of tasks that match pupils' levels of attainment. Moreover, classroom assistants give appropriately targeted support that enables pupils to participate purposefully. In Years 1 and 2, many pupils begin to write in sequenced sentences. Their work includes diary accounts, letters and imaginative stories. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 gain experience in planning their work as a means of organising and developing their ideas and opinions. Their writing includes play scripts and a range of poetry. Year 6 pupils are keen to express their ideas and successfully draft and redraft their work. They write for a range of purposes and in a variety of formats including story openings and resolutions, persuasive writing and reviews of selected texts. Throughout the school, teachers focus consistently on the spelling of commonly used words. However, in their writing, pupils often pay inadequate attention to both punctuation and spelling. Pupils practise their handwriting regularly and carefully present work for display. However, teacher's expectations of everyday handwriting are not consistently high. As a result, pupils' work does not always reflect the handwriting standards of which they are capable. As part of their work in information and communication technology, pupils get to know a range of programs that

soundly reinforce their literacy skills. For example, Year 2 pupils took turns to work on a spelling program that directly supported their work on letter sounds. All classes also practise their writing skills through work in other subjects. For example, as part of their history topic, Year 5 pupils wrote accounts of Tudor England and the life of King Henry. In geography, they wrote a flood report in the style of a newspaper article. Such opportunities support pupils' literacy progress well.

81. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with examples of very good teaching of both the younger and the oldest pupils. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They are clear about what they want the pupils to learn and often share this with pupils at the beginning of the lesson. As a result, pupils are interested and approach their work purposefully. However, current systems of assessment and record keeping are insufficient to enable teachers to determine pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses as a basis for teaching specific reading and writing skills and improving pupils' standards. Teachers often use well-targeted questions to stimulate pupils' thinking, check their understanding and reinforce their learning. In the most successful lessons, teachers engage pupils' interest very actively with their lively approach and often with a touch of humour. They make sharply focused teaching points and set tasks at sufficiently challenging levels to extend all pupils' learning. Throughout the school, teachers have good relationships with pupils. They are consistently supportive and successfully boost pupils' self-esteem. This promotes pupils' positive attitudes to work and eager involvement in lessons. Almost all pupils behave co-operatively and well. They follow their teachers' instructions and settle readily to work, both independently and in a range of co-operative activities. Teachers work closely with classroom assistants, who make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, often giving particular support to lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.
82. The literacy co-ordinator is committed to improving standards throughout the school. She monitors planning satisfactorily, but a heavy workload of other whole-school responsibilities has prevented rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. The school has begun to analyse the results of statutory and non-statutory tests and the results are beginning to be used in target setting and to focus support on identified groups and individuals. However, there have been no substantial changes in the curriculum aimed at bringing about improvements. Teachers set regular reading and spelling homework and give written tasks from time to time. Pupils are generally well supported at home and these activities soundly reinforce their learning. The school has a broad range of good quality reading books, which it uses well to stimulate pupils' interest and promote learning. However, pupils are currently unable to use the library for independent study or research as it is being re-organised and developed.

MATHEMATICS

83. In the 2001 national tests for 7 year olds, pupils' attainment was well below the national average, but average when compared with similar schools. Almost nine out of ten pupils achieved at least the expected Level 2, but only one in ten achieved the higher Level 3 (above the national average). Girls outperformed boys quite significantly in 2001, but there is no trend and standards achieved by boys and girls vary year on year. In the 2001 national tests for 11 year olds, pupils' attainment was well below the national average and well below average when compared with similar schools. Boys outperformed girls last year, but there is no trend of either boys or girls doing significantly better than each other. Both boys' and girls' achievements in mathematics had been of serious concern because on average they were over a year behind the levels expected of 11 year olds from 1999-2001. Fewer than half of the pupils in Year 6 achieved the expected level in 2001 and very few achieved a higher level. This is not good enough and very low when compared to all schools. Progress of these pupils has been poor and

seriously affected by staffing difficulties, ineffective teaching and poor management in the past. The reasons for the low standards include:

- pupils enter the school with very limited skills in mathematics (well below average for their age);
- teachers had low expectations and did not plan sufficiently for all ability groups;
- some staff were absent so frequently that a large number of supply teachers covered the classes and pupils often repeated work that they already knew;
- pupils did not develop their mathematical skills from year to year;
- there was no accurate assessment to indicate how much and how well pupils had learned;
- there was no systematic monitoring and evaluation of what was happening in the subject - much was 'crisis management';
- teachers did not give sufficient attention to encouraging experimental and investigation skills or word problem solving;
- teachers over directed the way that pupils recorded their work and pupils did not get sufficient opportunities to show their understanding of what they had learnt;
- many of the pupils were on the special needs register and not expected to attain the national expectation.

84. As a result of the appointment of the new headteacher and a very methodical approach by the mathematics co-ordinator, significant action has been taken and continues to be taken in order to raise standards. This includes:
- the school has now effectively implemented the National Numeracy Strategy;
 - teachers received intensive support and advice from the subject co-ordinator and the local education authority;
 - there has been good training to develop teachers' skills in teaching mental and oral mathematics, practical work and problem solving;
 - most teachers have improved their classroom practice, but there are still some concerns, particularly in providing challenging work for all abilities;
 - the mathematics co-ordinator has analysed the results of the national tests and other assessments and correctly recognised weaknesses in the curriculum and in teaching;
 - additional classes are held to support pupils in Years 4 and 6.
85. Inspection evidence shows pupils' attainment is currently below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and below expectations, albeit close to national expectations, at the end of Year 6 where too few pupils are achieving at the higher levels. This is a similar picture of standards attained in the previous inspection. A large proportion of pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress throughout the school. The target of 70 per cent of pupils expected to achieve the expected level for 11 year olds is very demanding, but is within reach.
86. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils count in tens with numbers to 100 and arrange numbers to 100 in order. They confidently use correct mathematical language such as 'more than', 'less than' and 'doubling'. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of common two-dimensional shapes such as circles and squares, and many pupils recognise the more complex ones such as hexagons and pentagons. Most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of money up to one pound and some higher attainers solve problems involving greater amounts. They make sensible estimations of lengths using 'spans' and 'straws', but there is very little evidence of the use of more conventional measures such as centimetres and litres. Inspection evidence indicates that over three quarters of the pupils are likely to attain at least the nationally expected level.
87. In Key Stage 2, pupils are now building confidently on their work in addition and subtraction and have a good basic knowledge of number, a good recall of facts and

improve their speed with multiplication tables. They use mental strategies together with their knowledge of number to solve problems with the minimum of recording. Pupils understand a range of strategies, but some have difficulty in explaining their methods with accurate use of correct mathematical language. In Years 3 and 4, pupils used a variety of written methods for addition and subtraction and use methods such as 'adding on' and estimation to find their answers. They confidently partition numbers. Pupils in Year 3 accurately describe the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes and draw a symmetrical pattern. In Year 4, they estimate length in centimetres and then measure accurately and they know the properties of different types of triangles. In Year 5, the pupils demonstrated in the mental and oral starter to the lesson that they had a good knowledge of the three and four times tables and were able confidently to double multiples of five. Year 5 pupils use metric units for measuring capacity and in Year 6 they carefully measure angles in degrees. Although the National Numeracy Strategy approach to calculation is being taught, in order to improve standards the work needs to be more challenging in Year 6.

88. Following the analysis of pupils' performance in last year's national tests, it was clear that teachers needed to spend more time in developing pupils' problem solving skills and their skills in handling data. There is evidence in some classes of teachers taking action to deal with these weaknesses. Pupils now make satisfactory progress in work on handling data. In Year 4, children record information given on a tally chart as a pictogram and interpret the data accurately. In many classes there were mathematical displays of data handling work that often related to other curriculum subjects, for instance geography and English. Consequently, the pupils were able to interpret the information on a regular basis. Further analysis led the subject co-ordinator to set a curricular target for the school to improve pupils' ability to solve word problems. In Year 1, good use was made of registration time as a problem solving opportunity for the pupils to work out how many were absent on that day. In Year 3, pupils were able to solve word problems involving money. In Year 5, pupils were able to answer word problems involving both measures and money. They were able to use a calculator to help them with more difficult calculations. However, there was not much evidence of pupils making decisions about methods for calculation in the older classes. In some year groups, especially in Year 6, there was too little evidence of problem solving work.
89. Pupils apply their numeracy skills successfully across the curriculum, for example, in science and geography. They listen well in lessons and are encouraged to participate through targeted questioning. Teachers do not at present make sufficient use of Information and communication technology in mathematics lessons. The school has identified this as a key area for development. Teachers set class and individual targets and use homework to help pupils achieve their targets.
90. Pupils' learning is satisfactory overall. It has, however, been uneven because in work seen in pupils' books prior to the inspection, pupils were given the same work irrespective of their abilities. There are occasions when average and lower attaining pupils make good progress in the same lesson, but the higher attaining pupils do not make sufficient progress. There are times when pupils with special educational needs struggle to answer any questions whereas higher attainers in the same lesson complete their work with ease. In short, there are occasions when all pupils are not included as fully as they might be. However, pupils with special educational needs and those pupils for whom English is an additional language do receive effective support. They make satisfactory progress as teachers are aware of pupils' individual needs and ensure that all are included in classroom activities.
91. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good across both key stages. Most pupils are keen to become involved in the mental sessions that begin numeracy lessons, participating

with both enthusiasm and enjoyment. They usually work well on their set tasks showing good concentration. Most listen well during the final recap of the lesson, confidently sharing their work when required to do so.

92. Teaching overall is satisfactory across both key stages. All lessons observed were at least satisfactory and over half of the lessons were good. However, the judgement on teaching involves more than just the lessons observed and includes scrutiny of work set for pupils prior to the inspection. There is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching. Most staff have appropriate subject knowledge to enable pupils to make effective progress. Particular strengths in the best lessons are the high quality questions that develop pupils' understanding and take into account pupils' prior learning. For example, the teacher of the Years 3 and 5 classes asked questions of varying difficulty to different pupils. All pupils were challenged and encouraged to explain how they achieved their answer. The open-ended questions such as 'How did you do that?' helped pupils to feel that their efforts are valued. The effective methods and organisation ensure that no time is wasted. Thorough planning that ensures that pupils are aware of specific learning outcomes keeps pupils on track and assists the teacher to make accurate assessments. In the best lessons, teachers value pupils' contributions. Weaknesses mainly concern the failure, in lessons prior to the inspection, by some teachers consistently to plan work at appropriate levels for the different abilities of pupils in the class. Pupils with special educational needs are mostly supported well. Classroom assistants provide them with focused attention in both the whole class and group work parts of the lesson. However, more able pupils need to be challenged to extend their thinking and understanding. Another weakness in a small number of classes is marking that does not help pupils to improve. Some work is unmarked and some pupils' books have untidily presented work.
93. The subject is led well. The subject co-ordinator has played an important part in the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. She has delivered all the relevant training to the staff and disseminated information that she has learnt on training courses. As a result of this, all staff are teaching the three part lesson and developing their direct teaching skills well. Lessons begin with a brisk mental and oral session in order to keep skills sharp and which enables teachers to include all pupils enthusiastically and successfully. In some lessons, for example in Year 5, all pupils were using digit fans to answer questions on multiplication facts for the three and four times tables and on doubles of multiples of five to 100. Mathematical vocabulary was highlighted, modelled and reinforced. In a Year 2 classroom, the teacher displayed relevant mathematical vocabulary on the board, modelled the correct mathematical language for the pupils and encouraged them to use the words correctly. The weaker of the three parts is the final session. Teachers tend to spend too much time simply sharing pupils' work rather than asking pupils to explain what they did, why they chose that method and to evaluate whether other methods may have been more suitable.
94. The current curriculum provides a basis for the systematic development of knowledge, skills and understanding and staff have been well guided in its use. Teaching, standards of pupils' work and the mathematics curriculum being offered in all classes have been monitored by the headteacher and to a lesser extent by the curriculum co-ordinator. However, this monitoring has not been totally effective because teacher absences have prevented the planned visits from taking place. As a result, some of the weaknesses mentioned earlier have been identified but not always followed up and addressed. The school has recently begun to set individual targets for all pupils that it shares with parents and is striving to improve standards in the subject. The school provides additional lessons for pupils and a mental mathematics club supports and extends pupils' learning. The resources are sufficient to meet National Curriculum and National Numeracy Strategy requirements, but the subject co-ordinator has not been sufficiently supported, informed and guided in managing a budget for her subject. The new headteacher is

aware of this and is planning to empower subject co-ordinators to lead their subjects in a more strategic way now that the staffing difficulties have been sorted out.

SCIENCE

95. In 2001, teacher assessments for pupils in Year 2 indicated that attainment was well below the level regarded as typical for pupils aged 7 nationally, and well below the standard for pupils in schools of a similar nature. By the end of Year 6 this picture is repeated, with pupils performing well below the level regarded as typical for pupils aged 11 nationally and well below the standard for pupils in schools of a similar nature. In the Year 6 national tests over recent years, boys have consistently performed better than girls, which in most years mirrors the national picture. Over time, results are rising slowly in line with the national trend in science, but at levels that are well below it.
96. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are below national levels at the end of Years 2 and 6. However, progress for most pupils is satisfactory as they move through the school. This is because:
- the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, with most teachers showing secure subject knowledge, asking purposeful questions to aid learning and transmitting enthusiasm to pupils, which helps to ensure that pupils make at least sound gains in learning over time. This is an improvement on the last inspection when there was some unsatisfactory teaching;
 - pupils show satisfactory and sometimes good attitudes to learning in science, especially when they listen well, are involved in carefully structured scientific investigations and use carefully chosen resources to help bring the subject to life. Most take pride in their work, although it is not presented as carefully in Years 3 and 4 as in other years;
 - teachers cover all components of the curriculum and enable most pupils to make sound gains in learning in all required areas of the subject. This is an improvement from the last inspection, which found that scientific enquiry received too little emphasis.
97. However, some lower and higher attaining pupils do not make the best possible progress, especially in investigative science. This is because:
- tasks are not matched well enough to their different needs, for example when Year 3 pupils cut out and stick in their workbooks pictures of living and non-living things, and complete 'low level' photocopied worksheets that are too easy for many of them;
 - the subject co-ordinator cannot function as an effective leader and manager. His responsibilities are not sufficiently precise or documented, so that everyone is aware of them. He does not get time to monitor teaching and learning to help him to identify specific weaknesses, so that these can be overcome;
 - pupils are over-directed when they undertake scientific investigations. This prevents them from working at their own pace, planning and carrying out investigations for themselves and recording outcomes in ways other than writing;
 - teachers miss opportunities to develop some of the skills of scientific enquiry, such as by encouraging pupils to predict what is likely to happen and to consider what makes a test fair.
98. However, progress is still sound for most pupils in the development of many of the skills of scientific enquiry. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to most other pupils, especially when directly supported by the good classroom assistants. Year 1 pupils predict and discover which materials stick to a magnet, and which are hard and soft. By the end of Year 2, pupils learn through investigation how to make a simple electrical circuit using wires, a battery, a bulb and a buzzer, and discover how a switch

can be used to break a circuit. They are starting to use simple equipment, make observations and record their findings using pictures or simple diagrams. However, there is little evidence of pupils making regular predictions, or saying whether what happens in the investigation is as they expect, as required for pupils to reach national standards. Year 3 pupils predict whether an egg will float in water and learn how to make it float by adding increasing amounts of salt. They learn through investigation that the temperature of water changes when it is heated and record the rate at which it cools, learning how to use a thermometer correctly. Year 5 pupils distinguish between the properties of hot and cold air, learning that air is a gas, and as the temperature of air increases, it expands. However, the investigation is too tightly controlled to enable all pupils to make the best possible progress. Year 6 pupils learn how exercise affects the heart and pulse rate. By the end of Year 6, pupils clearly understand that scientific ideas are based on evidence, but they do not present observations and measurements in a sufficient range of different ways.

99. Teaching and learning are mostly satisfactory and are sometimes good. Teachers provide a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to undertake scientific investigation and acquire knowledge and understanding. There was good teaching in Year 6. Positive features of teaching include strong relationships with pupils, high levels of teacher enthusiasm, good choice and use of resources that reinforce learning, purposeful and regular questioning, and secure subject knowledge shown by the teacher. These strengths help to ensure that pupils are fully involved in lessons and make good gains in learning. Where teaching is less successful, teachers sometimes give important information before all pupils are listening carefully. They do not give pupils sufficient opportunity to share problems encountered during the investigation. They plan too much in the time available for science or the lesson proceeds at too slow a pace for many pupils. While most work is marked carefully and teachers' comments celebrate pupils' efforts, they do not always help them to move forward in their understanding. These relative weaknesses hinder the development of scientific knowledge and understanding and restrict progress for some pupils.
100. The subject co-ordinator is a good teacher of science and there are clear plans for its further development. The school now carefully analyses data from national tests. However, it does not yet use the data to best effect to inform future planning and to help overcome identified weaknesses. It has audited and improved resources and they are sufficient to teach the requirements of the curriculum. Links with other subjects such as mathematics and information and communication technology are evident, but require further development. However, satisfactory links with English are helping to improve pupils' writing skills.

ART AND DESIGN

101. Standards in art are at nationally expected levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This marks an improvement since the last inspection when standards were too low. This is because:
- teachers now use national guidelines as a basis for their planning. This has raised staff awareness of the need progressively to develop pupils' skills;
 - the school has introduced a greater variety of resources and equipment, such as a range of paintbrushes, enabling pupils to produce finer quality work;
 - more time is now allocated to art and craft lessons.
102. During the inspection, only two art lessons were observed. Judgements are based on evidence gained from these lessons, analysis of pupils' completed work and talking to pupils. Around the school, pupils' carefully mounted and displayed work shows a satisfactory range of work in pastels, paint and pencil. By the age of 11, pupils have

experience of a satisfactory range of materials and techniques and are familiar with the work of a small number of significant artists.

103. Throughout Years 1 and 2, pupils use paint and a range of materials confidently. They demonstrate a sound awareness of patterns around them. This work continues at Key Stage 2, as pupils extend their experience of painting, printing and collage. For example, Year 3 pupils used ready mixed paints and gold paper to depict *The Owl who was Afraid of the Dark*. They demonstrated good appreciation of colour as they merged yellow and red into orange, to create an evening sky. In Year 4, pupils worked in pastel and crayon to create imaginative images of *Zarg the Alien*. Pupils' work indicates an increasing awareness of detail, as well as skills in pencil shading. Year 5's pencil sketches of trainers demonstrate close observation. This is reinforced and extended in Year 6, when pupils concentrate very hard to capture still life compositions of fruit and a jug, as they are introduced to the style of Cézanne. Teachers often use art work successfully to support other subjects, such as creating symmetrical patterns and painting ancient Greek vases, to extend work in mathematics and history. They also make good use of opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills through discussion. For example, on completing their drawings, Year 6 pupils thoughtfully expressed their views about each other's work. Throughout the school, pupils reinforce their information communication and technology skills effectively when using computer programs to produce a wide range of patterns and effects. For example, Year 2 pupils made good progress in learning about the work of Mondrian, as they worked on the computer, selecting and using straight lines and geometric shapes to produce work in the style of the artist. Throughout the school, pupils are interested in learning about the life and work of artists, such as Van Gogh and Picasso. However, teachers have not yet established a scheme of work to ensure that pupils do not repeat work on particular artists as they move through the school.
104. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was unsatisfactory. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject. Recent guidance gives valuable support for planning and this is to be refined further following the introductory period. However, there are no procedures in place for assessing pupils' progress and using the results in planning the next steps of pupils' learning. In the lessons observed in Years 2 and 6, teachers were enthusiastic about the subject and engaged pupils' interest well. Resources were selected and presented carefully to stimulate pupils' interest and promote their learning. Teachers and classroom assistants ensured that pupils with special educational needs played an active part in all aspects of lessons and made steady progress in their learning. Teachers responded very positively to all pupils' efforts and this successfully promoted their confidence and involvement. Pupils have positive attitudes to art and are keen to discuss their current and previous work. There are no significant differences in the progress of pupils of different gender or background. Teachers managed the art activities well. Pupils responded readily to their teachers' explicit expectations of sensible behaviour. They shared resources co-operatively and clearly enjoyed their work.
105. Pupils' learning in art makes a satisfactory contribution to their cultural development, particularly their developing knowledge and understanding of the work of famous artists and occasional introduction to art from other cultures. Moreover, pupils' visits to Bilston and Wolverhampton Art Gallery successfully promote their cultural awareness and stimulate interest and learning in art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

106. Standards in design and technology are below national levels by the end of Year 2 and 6. Progress is mostly unsatisfactory as pupils move through the school because not enough

time is given to the teaching of important skills in the subject. As a result of this, work does not always build carefully on previous learning. This is a slightly worse picture than at the time of the last inspection.

107. However, pupils complete some projects in which they apply and slowly improve their skills of designing and making, although they rarely evaluate and change the things that they make. Pupils work with tools, equipment, materials and components to make products, but many are not high quality. Some projects are linked well to other subjects, such as music, religious education, information and communication technology and mathematics. For example, Year 1 pupils make 'moving pictures' of baby Jesus, Mary and the donkey, with the help of paper fasteners. Year 2 pupils compare and evaluate different ways of joining materials as part of a project to make puppets. Year 3 pupils consider differences in packaging for different products before they all make an identical box to contain a small chocolate bar. They use a computer software program to study different nets of boxes. Year 4 pupils design containers to hold money and Year 5 pupils design a musical instrument, but designs lack care and precision and are rarely labelled.
108. There is insufficient evidence to form a judgement about the quality of teaching in design and technology. Only two lessons were observed; one was good and the other unsatisfactory. Good features of teaching, observed in Year 2, include secure subject knowledge, well chosen resources that enable pupils to improve their making skills and good questioning to help pupils extend their knowledge. These good features help to increase pupils' confidence and enthusiasm and this encourages them to 'have a go' when they are initially unsure. Unsatisfactory features of teaching, observed in Year 3, include insecure control strategies and knowledge of National Curriculum requirements, slow pace, too much teacher direction and an inappropriate and too narrow range of resources. These weaknesses slow progress for all pupils and result in them becoming disillusioned when the choice or resources hinder their simple constructions, and help, support and reassurance do not arrive quickly enough.
109. The subject is without a co-ordinator, which is preventing needed improvements from being undertaken. For example, no one is monitoring the subject to ensure that all components are being adequately taught or that work given to pupils is building carefully on previous learning. There are no consistent approaches to assessing pupils' progress as they move through the school. Links with English, mathematics and information and communication technology are evident, but require further development. Many of the weaknesses from the last inspection remain.

GEOGRAPHY

110. Pupils make at least sound gains in learning as they move through the school and reach standards, which are close to national levels by the end of Years 2 and 6. All pupils make at least satisfactory progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding because:
 - teachers place sound emphasis on developing important skills, such as mapping skills;
 - the subject is well represented in all years, with all components taught;
 - the leadership of the subject is sound and there are plans for its further development;
 - the quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, and is sometimes good;
 - the range of resources is satisfactory and helps to support pupils' learning.
111. Pupils acquire a geographical vocabulary, and knowledge and understanding of their own area and contrasting localities, to levels close to those found nationally by end of Years 2 and 6. By the end of Year 2, pupils have begun to compare and contrast different

localities, such as town, countryside and seaside environments. They start to acquire a geographical vocabulary, such as promenade, shore and coastline as features of a seaside town. In a study of Egypt in Year 3, pupils learn about the importance of the River Nile both as a waterway and for irrigation purposes. By Year 4, pupils are learning why settlements are established in precise locations. By the end of Year 6, pupils consider the benefits and disadvantages of St. Lucia as a holiday destination, learn about the impact of floods and hurricanes and can explain and represent the water cycle.

112. Pupils start to appreciate what causes pollution and how conservation can help improve matters. For example, Year 1 pupils comment on local buildings they like and dislike. By the end of Year 2, pupils identify pollution in their locality, such as noise and smells from traffic, litter on roads and canal pollution, and consider how these might be improved. By the end of Year 6, pupils understand the main causes of river pollution.
113. Pupils gradually develop an understanding of maps as they move through the school. For example, some Year 1 pupils start to draw 'picture maps' of the route taken on a local walk showing buildings they have seen and identified, such as shops and a factory. By Year 3, pupils are identifying features, such as the Arctic, Antarctic and equator on a world globe. By Year 4, pupils are locating features on maps using co-ordinates. By the end of Year 6, pupils locate the world's deserts on a world map, St Lucia on a map of the Caribbean, and use keys to complete maps of the island.
114. However, some weaknesses exist that prevent some pupils, such as higher and lower attaining pupils, from making the best progress possible. For example:
- there are no consistent approaches to assessing pupils' progress as they move through the school. For example, there are no portfolios of pupils' work, which are levelled to National Curriculum requirements, to help track their achievements over time;
 - the co-ordinator has no opportunity to monitor lessons to help identify weaknesses;
 - pupils complete the same work, which low attaining pupils sometimes do not finish or find too difficult, while more able pupils sometimes find their work too easy;
 - teachers do not use visits enough to develop fieldwork skills to bring the subject to life;
 - there are examples of unnecessary colouring that does not extend understanding;
 - pupils with special educational needs in behaviour are not always well supported;
 - links with information and communication technology are evident, such as when Year 4 pupils use information and communication technology to study a village plan, but this requires further development.
115. Teaching in geography ranges from good to poor, but is satisfactory overall. Good features of teaching seen, such as in Year 5, include good relationships with pupils, good choice and use of resources, secure subject knowledge, brisk pace, good use of questions to help develop understanding, and regular use of encouragement. These features help pupils to make at least sound progress, gain confidence, and increase levels of interest and involvement. When teaching is poor, as in Year 4, the ineffective control strategies and inappropriate use of praise prevent pupils from making satisfactory gains in learning.

HISTORY

116. Standards in history are lower than they should be for both 7 and 11 year olds. This appears to be a drop since the last inspection and is understandable since the school has had so many staffing problems and has concentrated its efforts on trying to improve standards in literacy and numeracy. Time for history and other subjects has been squeezed and pupils are only taught history for the equivalent of one hour every week. This time has not been used efficiently enough and all pupils do not make sufficient progress in their historical skills, knowledge and understanding.
117. The teaching of history in Key Stage 2 is judged as satisfactory, but there are some shortcomings. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards of teaching and attitudes to learning in history in Key Stage 1, as only one lesson was seen and there was very little recorded evidence to scrutinise. Only one lesson was observed in Key Stage 2, but much more recorded evidence was available to enable a judgement to be made.
118. Teaching was satisfactory in both lessons and pupils' response was good in both lessons. Good features of a lesson in Year 2 included the way that the teacher used a visit to the War Memorial to remind pupils of the war and its effect on the local community. The teacher did, however, miss an opportunity for pupils to reflect and empathise with how the victims or their loved ones would have felt. Whilst pupils know some important events happened many years ago, they do not suggest why people acted as they did or why things in the past are different from today. In the Year 3 lesson, the shortage of artefacts and the use of inappropriate books slowed the pace of the lesson and many pupils were not inspired. Teachers are generally not spending sufficient time and effort to bring the subject alive for pupils to facilitate learning. Other weaknesses include too little attention being paid to the development of understanding of the passage of time, such as through sequencing activities and the use of timelines. Although most classes have a timeline clearly displayed in their room, the identification of different ways of depicting the past is not being emphasised. Some teachers do not ask sufficiently searching and probing questions such as 'What evidence have you got?' and 'Why do you think they did that?' In both lessons, pupils listened well to their teachers and demonstrate high levels of concentration. However, in both the Year 2 and 3 lesson, pupils tended to lose interest and showed little enthusiasm towards the subject and little work was recorded. Much of the teaching is too directed and this means that pupils are often given undemanding tasks. This was certainly the case in Year 2 where some pupils were asked to construct paper poppies by cutting around a template and fixing together.
119. There was good quality work in Year 5 where the teacher made very good use of interesting history topics such as the 'Plague' and the 'Great Fire of London' to encourage the pupils to write accounts, newspaper reports and diaries. This is a very good development of pupils' literacy skills. The high quality work was neatly presented, well-organised, marked very positively and certainly shows pupils making good progress in history in this class. While pupils in a number of other classes know of some important dates, people and events, they do not sufficiently explain and suggest consequences of events or look at the way that the past is represented in enough depth. They are not encouraged to link evidence well enough.
120. The school has arranged very few educational visits in the past year owing to foot and mouth outbreak and it is clear that these are needed to enrich the history curriculum. Pupils desperately need worthwhile historical experiences to deepen their knowledge and understanding and teachers do not take sufficient advantage of these opportunities to gain first hand experience. The use of the locality is under-used as a rich resource for

developing important skills in history. Pupils' developing awareness and understanding of history are communicated in too narrow a range of ways. For example, information and communication technology is not widely used to communicate findings or to provide information other than through a small number of CD-ROMs. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to research and record their work in their own ways. Pupils do not have a sufficiently wide historical vocabulary by the time they leave the school.

121. Whilst there is evidence that history is used satisfactorily to develop pupils' literacy skills, for example in Year 5 Tudor work and Year 6 work on World War II evacuees, there is little done to promote pupils' numeracy and information and communication technology skills. The co-ordinator has not produced an action plan for history so there are no strategic objectives and time scales to plan for future development of the subject. She recognises that the current provision is inadequate. There is little formal assessment of progress in history. There has not been any monitoring of teaching or effective scrutiny of pupils' work and the weaknesses have gone unnoticed. Work is rarely matched to pupils' different abilities to ensure that all pupils receive appropriate levels of challenge to enable them to make the best possible progress. This means that there are times that pupils with special educational needs find the work too difficult. Resources, especially artefacts, are inadequate and make the delivery of the curriculum very difficult and lacking in sparkle

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

122. The school has made significant progress in information and communication technology since the last inspection. There has been a high level of investment in both equipment and staff training. This has paid dividends. The quality of teaching has improved, although some staff are still a little tentative when faced with new situations or technical difficulties. Class teachers now teach specific lessons to develop the skills laid down by the school's programme of work. As a result, pupils are beginning to develop their skills in a logical and systematic order. This is having a really good impact on the younger pupils. At the time of the last inspection, standards in information and communication technology were broadly in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Although the current inspection evidence matches these judgements, there has clearly been good progress in developing the subject, but pupils in Year 6 have not had the benefit of the full range of opportunities and their standards are not at the levels expected for 11 year olds. The computer suite has only been operational for a few months.
123. In Key Stage 1, pupils have good keyboard skills and are confident in using the computer for word processing. Pupils learn the basic skills of how to move the mouse and choose options on the screen. Pupils in Year 1 use a painting package to draw pictures and discuss whether it is easier to draw using a computer or crayons. Pupils in Year 2 draw using line, fill and texture and can create a picture in the style of Mondrian. The pupils can adapt their original plan to improve their finished picture. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are confident users of word processing packages and use these to present their work in different styles and layouts. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils have produced various accounts, booklets and newspaper reports and have combined text with clip-art, images from a digital camera and graphics downloaded from the Internet and CD ROM. Teachers are aware that some software packages will allow different forms of information to be combined electronically, including text, graphics, sound and video clips, but pupils have not yet had the experience of putting together such multi-media presentations. Pupils know how to set up and use simple spreadsheets as was clearly demonstrated by pupils in Year 6 to show pulse rates before, during and after exercise. However, their knowledge of how to use spreadsheets to model and investigate different situations is limited and they have little experience of databases. The school has only recently

acquired the equipment to allow pupils to sense, monitor and control physical events and, consequently, this area is still weak. Pupils have yet to make regular use of the Internet, especially the websites that may help them in their research, and have not yet had the opportunity to use electronic mail.

124. The standard of teaching is good. The good teaching is characterised by the teachers' secure subject knowledge and the way that they demonstrate clearly what pupils need to know through the effective use of the available resources. As a result, pupils make good progress in the tasks set and demonstrate full involvement and a commitment to achieving success. The pupils' attitudes to their work are good and they are able to work with enthusiasm. They are keen and thoroughly enjoy using the range of information technologies. They listen to instructions carefully, treat equipment with absolute respect and are eager to develop their skills. All lessons have thorough introductions with clear explanations of what pupils need to do. Teachers have established effective routines of working and this means that time is used well and pupils are self-disciplined when working with minimal supervision.
125. The school is now in a fortunate position of having a computer suite as well as computers in each classroom. This means that teachers can teach the computer skills and give more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in other subjects. For example, in Year 4, pupils draw a plan of a village on screen during their geography work. They select and add items to improve their original ideas and print out the plan. Pupils in Year 5 show a good understanding of how to use a spreadsheet to consider the use of water and how we can reduce its wastage. The work in information and communication technology is clearly supporting work in literacy and numeracy across both key stages.
126. The information and communication technology curriculum is satisfactorily managed and meets National Curriculum requirements. Pupils get a wide range of experiences and all elements of the subject are taught or planned to be taught. There is a detailed scheme of work that ensures pupils carry out activities in an appropriate sequence that builds upon their previous learning. However, a weakness in the lack of assessment procedures means teachers cannot be sure how well pupils are achieving. The subject co-ordinator does not formally monitor teaching, pupils' work or teachers' planning, but she does have a sound understanding of what goes on in a number of classes because she has supported teachers in their lessons. However, there is still a need for an effective development plan for information and communication technology to show a clear long-term strategic direction for the continued improvement and development in the subject.

MUSIC

127. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain the standards expected for their age and enjoy their music making activities. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, including pupils with special educational needs. The teacher ensures that all groups of pupils are included fully in the activities. There are very few pupils with English as an additional language and the school has not identified any gifted and talented pupils in music. No judgement can be made on standards in Year 2 because the organisation of the school's timetable meant that no lessons were observed in the Year 2 class. One good lesson was observed in Year 1. Further evidence comes from discussions with the co-ordinator and curriculum planning. Music makes a minor but positive contribution to the social and cultural development of pupils. Standards are the same as in the previous inspection.
128. The teaching seen was good and this leads to pupils' good learning in the subject. Lessons are conducted at a good pace. This maintains pupils' interest and ensures that no time is wasted. The teachers structure the lesson well, for example, by ensuring that lessons have time for listening, practical work, whole class and group contributions.

Teachers use the correct technical terms and encourage pupils to use them too. For example, in Year 6 pupils used the phrases 'tempo' and 'dynamics'. Pupils throughout the school sing satisfactorily, with clear diction and sound control of the dynamics of their voices, pitch and rhythm. Older pupils build well on their singing skills. In Year 6, pupils sang World War II songs with enthusiasm and in Year 5 pupils sang songs from Bugsy Malone. Teachers encourage pupils to show respect for the performance of other pupils and pupils respond well. Pupils read the words of hymns and songs competently from the overhead projector and songbooks and sheets and this reinforces their literacy skills. Pupils usually take responsibility for working this equipment and this promotes their sense of responsibility and personal development.

129. In Year 6, pupils follow the teachers' instructions and create their own music imaginatively to interpret a poem. This provides a good link with literacy as pupils interpret the mood of the poem in their own musical way and consider the intentions of the poet. The teacher makes pupils' learning better by using good quality tuned and untuned instruments. Pupils play these correctly with a satisfactory awareness of rhythm, good discipline and control of the instruments. Teachers could make greater use of the music played in assemblies to develop pupils' knowledge of composers and their works.
130. Pupils' attitude to music is good and boys and girls enjoy singing. Most pupils are interested, motivated to learn and genuinely enjoy the subject. They listen well to the music. In the good lesson in Year 1, the teacher planned a lesson that inspired and included all pupils well. It helped to promote their cultural development as they listened to a recording of drummers from the Ivory Coast. The school has made satisfactory improvement in the subject since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator has produced satisfactory guidance. This supports the progressive teaching of skills throughout the school and a structured approach to teaching lessons. However, the co-ordinator has had no opportunity to keep track of pupils' achievements throughout the school and there is no system for monitoring what is being done or assessing and recording pupil's progress in specific skills. The lack of such a system means that there is no guarantee that work will not be repeated unnecessarily. Junior pupils have a short hymn singing period each week. Information and communication technology plays very little part in the music curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

131. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards in physical education at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is because only three lessons were observed during the inspection. However, this evidence indicates that pupils are close to national levels in their ability to travel with, receive and send a ball in well planned games activities. Planning indicates that the school teaches all components of the subject. Year 3 pupils visit a local pool to learn to swim. A residential visit to Stottesdon enables most pupils in Year 6 to benefit from a programme of outdoor and adventurous activities.
132. Pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties, make satisfactory gains in learning some games skills as they move through the school. Year 2 pupils remember, copy and explore simple actions involving the use of balls of different sizes. They work effectively in pairs to link simple planned actions developing control and co-ordination, and consider how their routines might be improved. Year 6 pupils employ their increasing knowledge of skills and tactics to develop dribbling and passing skills in football. For example, they pass the ball with either foot accurately to their partner and at the correct speed. In both lessons seen, pupils were fully involved, were well supported and showed much enthusiasm. In the Year 2 lesson, pupils demonstrated very good attitudes because they were given much encouragement and praise, and this helps to raise their self-esteem.

133. There was too little evidence to make judgements about the quality of teaching, as the only lessons seen were games lessons. However, the teaching in all lessons was good. Both teachers emphasised well the development of important skills. Resources were used effectively to ensure pupils made good gains in learning. Teachers enabled pupils to think for themselves, and to share good practice, to help improve their learning.
134. All areas of the physical education programme are not equally represented. For example, the development of skills in gymnastics and dance is not as well represented as the games component. In games, there is more emphasis on playing games than on developing essential skills. However, links with other subjects are evident. For example, in a link with English, Year 4 pupils produce a dance sequence based on a story about a visitor from space, and, in a link with science, Year 6 pupils discover how exercise affects heart and pulse rates.
135. The enthusiastic, temporary subject leader has clear plans for its further development. These include the purchase of equipment to widen the range of sports which are offered to pupils, although resources have been recently improved. The small range of after-school clubs, such as table tennis, cross-country and football, helps to enrich the curriculum. However, not all staff are equally confident when teaching physical education, which can affect the rate at which pupils learn. For example, the wall bars in the hall are not used enough to develop skills in gymnastics. The subject co-ordinator has no opportunity to monitor teaching so that weaknesses can be identified and overcome, although an audit of each year group is planned.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

136. Pupils' attainments are consistent with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Years 2 and 6. This marks an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were below expectations. This is because:
- the co-ordinator has drawn up guidance to support teachers' planning;
 - more time has been allocated to the subject;
 - a range of resources has been introduced to support teaching and learning, including posters and books;
 - teachers are more confident in teaching religious education.
137. Younger pupils are introduced to Bible stories and know of characters in the Old Testament, including Noah and Joseph. By the end of Year 2, pupils know major feasts of the Christian calendar, including Christmas and Easter, and are beginning to understand the significance of Harvest Festival. They know that Jesus was a special person, who looked after the sick and taught people. They are also introduced to other world faiths, including Judaism and Sikhism. Older pupils considered the story of Moses and the Ten Commandments. The teacher developed the theme well and successfully introduced a discussion about why rules are important. By the age of 11, pupils know that the Bible is a special book for Christians and know stories from both the Old and New Testaments. They are familiar with events in the life of Jesus and some of the stories he told. They learn about the lives of significant Christian people, including St. Paul. As they move through the school they gain knowledge of important figures in other major world religions, such as the Sikh holy man, Guru Nanak. They also learn about aspects of the daily life, traditions, symbols and sacred writings associated with Sikhism in Year 4, Hinduism in Year 5 and Islam in Year 6.
138. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was unsatisfactory. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and understanding. They prepare lessons well and often introduce topics in a lively way that successfully engages pupils' attention. For example, in a Year 2 lesson focusing on

special clothes, two girls dressed in appropriately sized Christian and Sikh wedding dresses. This successfully captured pupils' interest and reinforced their knowledge and understanding. Teachers use well directed questions to extend pupils' thinking and ensure that all pupils are actively involved. Pupils with special educational needs are consistently supported and encouraged to participate. This enables them to make progress in line with the others in their class. However, there are no arrangements in place for teachers to assess pupils' progress through topics as a basis for planning and preparation of further work. Throughout the school, pupils are interested in the subject. They readily talk about their current topics and their work is carefully completed and neatly presented in workbooks and on displays around the school. Children do not regularly use their information and communication technology skills in this subject. Class visits to the local parish church, and occasionally to a Hindu temple, successfully raise pupils' awareness and promote their learning about places of worship.

139. The subject co-ordinator is committed to raising standards in religious education. She has rewritten the subject policy and has developed a whole school scheme of work based on the locally agreed syllabus and incorporating national guidance. Because of a very heavy workload and the demands of other school priorities, she has not yet begun to monitor teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. She recognises that opportunities are missed for the identification and highlighting of examples of good practice within the school. The vicar regularly leads assemblies and successfully extends pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christian celebrations, such as Christingle. She readily supports class teachers, as when she brought in her vestments to Year 2 as examples of special clothes. This successfully reinforces pupils' learning and also makes a positive contribution to their spiritual development.