

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **WOOD GREEN JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Wednesbury

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 103913

Headteacher: Peter Hughes

Reporting inspector: Paul Nicholson  
25406

Dates of inspection: 1 – 4 October 2001

Inspection number: 230819

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hobs Road Wednesbury West Midlands
Postcode:	WS10 9BW
Telephone number:	0121 556 0377
Fax number:	0121 556 0630
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Dawn Winter
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Paul Nicholson Registered inspector 25406	Science Information and communication technology Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Janet Butler Lay inspector 9428		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Joyce Cox Team inspector 25074	English Art Geography Religious education	How well are pupils taught?
Robert Battey Team inspector 2866	Mathematics Design and technology History Music Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Wood Green Junior School is situated in Wednesbury, a small town within the borough of Sandwell. It serves an area with a range of social backgrounds and includes mainly local authority and some private housing. The school is part of the Wednesbury Education Action Zone. The school is similar in size to other primary schools. The school is popular with parents and is almost fully subscribed. Currently, there are 237 pupils on roll (134 boys and 103 girls) aged from 7 to 11 years. Eighteen per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is broadly in line with the national average. Nineteen pupils come from ethnic minority groups and 17 speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils within the school with special educational needs is well above the national average. The school has identified 37 per cent of pupils as having special educational needs and eight who have a Statement of Special Educational Need. When pupils enter the school, their attainment varies from child to child, but overall it is well below that expected of children aged seven years.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school gives an acceptable education to its pupils. Standards by the time pupils leave the school remain well below average although they make satisfactory progress in relation to their attainment on admission. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the school is soundly led and managed. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The school is a friendly and caring community, which promotes very good relationships between all members of the school 'family'.
- There is particularly good support for pupils' moral and social development.
- There are very good procedures for promoting good behaviour. Consequently, pupils are well behaved.
- The school provides good support for pupils with special educational needs.

#### **What could be improved**

- The standards achieved, particularly in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, as these are low compared to national averages.
- The effectiveness of teaching methods so as to further improve the quality of teaching, improve pupils' interest and motivation and to develop their independent learning skills.
- How the information gained from assessing pupils' achievements is used in teachers' plans.
- The school's long-term planning so that it has a clearer focus on raising standards.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in January 1998. Since then it has made satisfactory progress in developing its curriculum and ensuring that all statutory requirements are met. It has improved procedures for assessing pupils' progress though use of this information in planning activities remains an issue for the school. Standards in design and technology and religious education have improved. As a result of the increased number of pupils with special educational needs, the overall standards in literacy and numeracy have declined. Individual pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. The role of subject co-ordinators has improved although further development of their work is required. The governors now play a fuller part in the strategic management of the school.

## 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
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	E	E	E
Mathematics	E	E	E	E
Science	E	D	D	C

**Key**

well above average    A  
 above average        B  
 average                C  
 below average        D  
 well below average   E

The school's results in national tests have been consistently below or well below average. Only half of the pupils achieve the expected standard for a typical 11-year-old in English and mathematics. While the results in 2001 show an improvement, inspection evidence confirms a similar position to 2000 in the current Year 6. Standards in English and mathematics are well below average and in science they are below average. Standards in information and communication technology are also below average, as pupils have not fully developed their skills in all aspects of this subject. Pupils' low standards in literacy and numeracy slow their progress in other subjects, particularly in the recording of their work. However, their achievements in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and religious education are appropriate for their age. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards in physical education.

Many pupils reach satisfactory levels of personal achievement given their low attainment on entry to the school. However, the targets the school has set for improving standards have not been sufficiently high to ensure that more pupils achieve average or above average results.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy coming to school, but many often show little enthusiasm for their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are well behaved in the classroom, around the school and in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils form very good relationships and they respect others, but many lack the confidence and skills needed to take personal responsibility for their own learning.
Attendance	The pupils' rate of attendance is below the national average.

Many pupils lack self-esteem and often show little enthusiasm for their work. They do not volunteer to answer their teacher's questions. They find it hard to concentrate for any length of time particularly when they are not fully involved in an activity. This has a negative impact on their learning and slows down their rate of progress.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Not applicable	Not applicable	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.*

Overall, the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and at times good. This is an improvement on the last inspection. Teaching is satisfactory in all subjects, including English and mathematics. This results in pupils making satisfactory progress in their learning. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Teachers and support staff provide good levels of help for those pupils with special educational needs. In the best lessons, teachers provide interesting and carefully planned activities that fully involve the pupils and result in good progress. In other lessons, teachers do not always make effective use of assessment information when planning activities. Activities do not always motivate pupils, fully involve them in meaningful tasks or develop their independent learning skills.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school has a satisfactory curriculum, which is supplemented by a very good range of extra-curricular activities and good links with the local community.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision for these pupils, which includes well-targeted individual education plans and effective support in lessons. Consequently, these pupils make sound progress towards their individual targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	None of these pupils are at an early stage of acquiring English. They are as fluent in English as are the other pupils and so the school makes no specific provision for them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, there is satisfactory provision for pupils' personal development. There is very good moral development and good social development. Cultural development is satisfactory but spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a caring and welcoming environment for its pupils. Satisfactory procedures for pupils' welfare are in place.

The effectiveness of the school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. The school values the support of parents but does not provide them with sufficient information on the work of the school or their children's progress.

The school has very effective procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating bullying.

The procedures to assess pupils' progress are satisfactory, but assessment information is not used sufficiently well to help teachers in their planning.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides sound leadership and effective day-to-day management of the school. Senior staff and subject co-ordinators are developing their role in supporting the management of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are enthusiastic and very supportive of the school. They satisfactorily fulfil their responsibilities and are beginning to play a fuller role in the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Recent initiatives ensure that the school satisfactorily monitors its work, including teaching. Its written development plan does not have a clear enough focus on the school's priority of raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes effective use of its resources. Funds are directed well and their use is controlled and monitored well. The school makes good use of funding available from the Wednesbury Education Action Zone.

Levels of staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The school satisfactorily seeks 'best value' in its spending decisions by questioning what it does and ensuring that money is spent wisely.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Seventy-one parents (34 per cent) completed questionnaires and eight parents attended a meeting with inspectors.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school.</li> <li>• Staff are very approachable.</li> <li>• The school expects children to do their best and helps them to become more responsible.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and children make good progress.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Behaviour in school is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The homework that is given.</li> <li>• Information about how children are getting on.</li> <li>• The extent to which the school works closely with parents.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspection findings support most of the parents' positive views, but show that teaching, pupils' progress and the leadership and management are satisfactory rather than good. Inspectors support the parents' concerns with regard to homework, which is not consistently used to support pupils' learning, also the need for better information on pupils' progress. Home-school links are satisfactory but communication between the school and home could be improved. Many parents do not work closely enough with teachers to help their children's education. The school has a very good range of extra-curricular activities that make an important contribution to pupils' learning. However, it needs to provide more information to parents on what it offers pupils outside lesson time.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. At the time of the last inspection, pupils entered the school with attainment slightly below the national average. They made satisfactory progress and by the age of 11 years most pupils achieved standards below national expectations in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Standards were also below average in design and technology and religious education. Since then the proportion of pupils within the school with special educational needs has almost doubled and now, at 37 per cent, it is well above the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is now well below that expected of pupils at the age of seven years. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress as a result of satisfactory and at times good teaching. However, some weaknesses in the teaching, especially the matching of tasks to pupils' abilities and the motivating of pupils, hamper more rapid progress. Overall standards by the age of 11 are now well below average. No significant differences between the performance of girls and boys have been noted. Pupils from ethnic minority groups and those who speak English as an additional language make equal progress to that of their classmates and achieve similar results.
2. Attainment on entry to Year 3 varies between individual pupils and the groups of pupils who enter the school each year. Overall, pupils enter the school with low standards in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. For example, the current Year 6 entered the school, at the age of seven, with standards well below the national average in these three core subjects. Pupils enter the school with poor language and numeracy skills in comparison to pupils of a similar age and as a result they have low self-esteem.
3. The results of National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds over recent years (1997-2000) in English, mathematics and science have been consistently below or well below average. In 2000, for example, standards were well below the national average in English and mathematics and below average in science. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 4, the expected standard for a typical 11-year-old, was well below the national average in all three subjects. The proportion of pupils who went on to achieve the higher standard, Level 5, was very low in English, well below average in mathematics but average in science. The test results for 2000 show that pupils' achievements are a year behind those of a typical 11-year-old in English, two terms behind in maths and a term behind in science. When compared with the performance of pupils in similar schools<sup>1</sup> the pupils' results were well below average in English and mathematics but average in science.
4. Over recent years, results in end of Key Stage 2 tests have shown a gradual improvement but the overall trend has only been broadly in line with the improving national trend and so results have remained well below average. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 improved in the 2001 tests. More pupils achieved Level 5 in English compared to the previous year, but fewer achieved Level 5 in mathematics and science. Currently, there are no national comparisons for these results. They reflect the slightly better levels of attainment on entry for this group of pupils and the school's focus on improving standards in writing.
5. Inspection evidence confirms that overall standards in the current Year 6 are well below average, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Only half of the pupils are on target to achieve the expected standard by the end of their final year at this school. This reflects the particularly high number of pupils with special educational needs in this year group. Overall standards in English are well below average as their attainment in reading, writing and

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<sup>1</sup> National Benchmark information bands together 'similar schools' based on the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

speaking and listening are all well below those expected of this age. Evidence indicates that standards in mathematics are well below average in all areas of mathematics. The school has maintained the improvement in science although standards remain below average. Standards in information and communication technology are also below average as pupils have had insufficient opportunities to develop their skills in all aspects of the subject. While pupils have appropriate skills in using computers to communicate with others using a word-processing program, their skills in monitoring and control are insufficiently well developed. Pupils do not make sufficient use of information and communication technology to support their learning in other subjects. The pupils' weak literacy and numeracy skills impact on their learning in other subjects. However, their standards in art, design and technology, geography, history and music are in line with national expectations. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on physical education. The pupils' weaknesses in literacy hinder their recording of information, none the less they achieve broadly average standards in these foundation subjects. The curriculum and sound teaching ensures that pupils have appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge and practical skills within these subjects.

6. Pupils' achievements in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for the subject by the age of 11 years. They have a satisfactory understanding of Christianity and other world religions. This is an improvement on the standards found at the last inspection and reflects the work the school has done to improve the teaching of this subject.
7. Pupils with special educational needs work well with learning support staff in well-structured, short sessions outside the classroom. Those with a Statement of Special Educational Need also receive good levels of support within the classroom. As a result, these pupils make sound progress towards their specific learning targets. However, in some lessons, particularly the lower sets in literacy and numeracy where almost all pupils have special educational needs, there is insufficient support to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress.
8. The use of reading and writing skills in subjects other than English does not consistently support the development of literacy skills. In some lessons, pupils use different forms of writing to record their findings, for example in history. However, in other lessons pupils do not use what they have learnt in literacy to develop their writing or knowledge of the subject. Similarly, pupils do not make full use of their numeracy or information and communication technology skills to support their learning in other subjects.
9. The low standards on entry and the growing number of pupils with special educational needs are reflected in the well below average standards achieved by the age of 11 years. Pupils have made satisfactory progress as they move through the school. The satisfactory and at times good teaching ensures that many pupils reach satisfactory levels of personal achievement. However, the school has not been successful in ensuring that pupils make the best possible progress. The targets the school has set for pupils have not been high enough to ensure that more pupils achieve both the expected and higher levels of attainment. The raising of standards is a key priority for the governors, headteacher and staff. Pupils' low self-esteem and their resulting lack of motivation during many activities also negatively impacts on their rate of progress. The school is aware of this and has recently begun a programme to raise pupils' self-confidence although it is too early for this to have had any significant impact.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

10. Since the last inspection the school has successfully maintained its ethos of a friendly, orderly community where pupils are happy to attend and behave well. Pupils have satisfactory attitudes to learning and most try hard in lessons when appropriately challenged. Their response is noticeably better when they are given the chance to become practically involved with their learning, rather than when sitting and listening. They show good enthusiasm for lessons in which they are able to be creative, such as art, drama, and a geography lesson in Year 3 where pupils used geographical symbols to make a map for a treasure island. There are too few occasions where pupils are inspired by the tasks and they often sit passively, reticent to answer questions and making contributions only when directly spoken to by a teacher or classroom assistant. Many pupils, often with special educational needs, find it hard to concentrate for long periods, but make good progress when given varied, achievable tasks to complete. Pupils' interest and involvement in extra-curricular activities is good.
11. Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school at playtimes, is good and a feature much appreciated by parents. Pupils are polite, considerate and show respect for people and the environment. Considering the high number of pupils with special educational needs, the level of self-control and harmony, both at work and play, is a credit to the whole-school community. In very rare instances, such as when pupils are insufficiently involved in their learning, or when classroom organisation is inappropriate, low-key disruptive behaviour can occur. However, teachers are successful in restoring order and pupils fully accept and understand the need for sanctions. The school is prepared to use exclusion to enforce its refusal to accept anti-social, intimidating or oppressive behaviour, but this is extremely rare.
12. Very good relationships are a strength of the school. The promotion of the school 'family' is very successful, with clear evidence of pupils treating each other and all adult staff with mutual respect, compassion and understanding. All pupils, whatever their race, home background or individual special needs, are at ease in a friendly and welcoming environment in which tolerance and care for one another are very much in evidence.
13. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory with some good features, particularly in their contribution to the smooth running of the school day. Through a wide variety of duties and responsibilities, they quietly and reliably demonstrate their growing awareness of the need to work together as a team for the common good. This awareness is taken to a much wider forum with the work of the eco-committee. Their infectious enthusiasm for a sustainable lifestyle has not only won awards for the school, but also encouraged the majority of pupils to become involved in aspects of healthy living and global citizenship. However, many pupils lack the confidence and the basic skills that they need to take responsibility for their own learning and independence. In this respect, the school has rightly made raising self-esteem a high priority.
14. Attendance is unsatisfactory. Until the last school year, attendance had been broadly in line with the national average, but in 2001 the level of attendance dropped significantly and is now below the national average for primary schools. Unauthorised absence is very low and punctuality is good. The main reasons for absence appear to be holidays in term time and sickness. Many of the pupils have difficulty in retaining information and need frequent, regular revision of their learning to enable them to make progress. In this regard, it is particularly damaging to have their education disrupted by periods of absence from lessons and this contributes to the low standards of attainment.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching was at least satisfactory in all the 46 lessons observed during the inspection. Half of the lessons seen were good and two lessons, supported by visiting specialist teachers, were judged to be very good. This represents a slight improvement since the previous inspection when a small percentage of teaching observed was unsatisfactory or poor.
16. There is sound teaching of literacy skills throughout the school. Introductory sessions are usually of the appropriate length and most teachers try hard to stimulate pupils' interest in the books selected. On one occasion, the teacher skilfully enthused the pupils by sharing her own love of literature and words. This enthusiasm motivated the pupils to look carefully at the text and try harder to answer her questions. Work is usually, although not always, appropriately matched to the differing needs of pupils within the class and by clearly defined learning objectives, which are shared with the pupils. Not all teachers discuss the learning objectives at the end of the lesson to determine what pupils have actually learnt. The teaching of reading is sound. Many lower-attaining pupils do not fully understand what they have read and are heavily reliant on adult support, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Pupils make satisfactory progress, but they are not consistently taught specific skills which would enable them to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary confidently. Teaching of writing skills is satisfactory but there is no consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting or spelling.
17. The teaching of numeracy skills is mainly sound with some good lessons seen during the inspection. Regular mental mathematics at the start of each numeracy session has helped to improve the pupils' recall of number facts, but many lower-attaining pupils cannot explain the processes they use. Work in numeracy lessons is not always matched to pupils' abilities and is either too hard or too easy and pupils' learning and progress is impaired. Older, higher-attaining pupils learn and can use mathematical terminology reasonably accurately but are not always given sufficient opportunities to apply what they have learnt by investigating and solving problems independently. Opportunities for developing both literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects are underdeveloped. The teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) in the school's new computer suite is at least satisfactory and often good. However, the use of computers in the classroom to develop pupils' ICT skills and support their learning in other subjects is underdeveloped.
18. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Class support assistants work in close association with teachers and are fully informed and involved in the process of support. This helps to maintain a consistent and effective approach, which makes an important contribution to the provision for all pupils particularly those with special educational needs. Pupils benefit from additional help and are taught individually or in small groups where this is thought necessary. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a good understanding of pupils' needs and provides an interesting variety of tasks to raise pupils' attainment and self-esteem. Teachers are very aware of pupils with special educational needs in their classes and usually plan work specifically for their learning needs. Indeed, all of the lower literacy and numeracy sets are comprised totally of pupils with special educational needs. When available, the pupils receive good support from the classroom support assistants, who are well briefed and effective. This is particularly true of pupils who have Statements of Special Educational Need. They are valued and cared for by the learning support staff who ensure that they make appropriate progress and learn effectively by building on their previous learning experiences. For instance, a pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Need participated as much as possible in all class activities because of sensitive and very effective handling by the class assistant.
19. In some subjects, only a limited number of lessons were observed, but inspectors examined teachers' planning and pupils' work in order to ascertain their quality and the extent of

pupils' learning and progress made. At the time of the last inspection, gaps in the knowledge and expertise of some teachers were identified in design and technology and religious education. This has improved and teaching in both these subjects is now satisfactory. Teaching in all the other subjects is also satisfactory. There were insufficient lessons seen in history and physical education to make a secure judgement. The overall quality of teaching has improved slightly and although weaknesses were observed, they are within the context of otherwise sound or good lessons. The main areas for improvement are in more closely matching activities to pupils' needs, the methods teachers use and a more consistent approach to the use of homework.

20. Despite there being a reasonable percentage of good teaching, pupils display a lack of interest in lessons, which inhibits the quality of learning. Teachers have to work extremely hard in order to evoke any response from many pupils. There are many contributory factors to the sound and often good teaching. One of the key teaching skills necessary to overcome pupils' lethargy is the ability to match tasks and questions very closely to individual pupils' needs and interests. For instance, in a Year 4 religious education lesson, the teacher skilfully encouraged reluctant pupils to describe their experiences at a 'celebration' to the other pupils. The teacher realised that pupils needed to verbalise these experiences before attempting to write them. This activity improved their speaking and writing skills and increased their confidence.
21. When pupils failed to be motivated it was because tasks were not matched sufficiently to their abilities and failed to challenge them or were too hard. Also, on some occasions, teachers talked for too long without encouraging the pupils to participate in their learning. This resulted in pupils losing concentration and becoming bored and restless. Activities often do not develop pupils' independent learning skills. For example, there are missed opportunities in science lessons, for pupils to instigate and carry out their own experiments. Many pupils have little idea of how well they are doing compared to other pupils. For instance, in marking pupils' work most of the teachers' written comments are supportive, but do not detail strengths and areas for improvement. On occasions, several housepoints are given for fairly mediocre work, which does not raise standards.
22. The two very good lessons were in art and music in Year 6. The specialist teachers inspired the pupils with lively introductions and very clear explanations of the practical activities. The pupils were enthralled by these introductions and were 'raring to have a go' themselves! They worked very hard in both lessons and as a result made very good gains in their art and music knowledge and understanding. Their preferred way of learning is through practical activities rather than through discussion as they have considerable problems with speaking and listening.
23. One of the strengths in teaching is the way in which pupils' behaviour is managed, even when it is challenging. Most teachers insist on pupils' full attention in introductory sessions and when explaining tasks. This is particularly important, as many pupils do not have the confidence to ask for further explanation of activities and begin work without being clear as to what exactly they have to do. The behaviour insisted on in class reflects the school rules. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good throughout the whole school.

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

24. The quality and range of learning opportunities for all pupils is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection in line with the recommendations in the last report. National Curriculum requirements are now met for design and technology. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and there is now a satisfactory breadth and balance of subjects taught.
25. Satisfactory policies are in place for each subject, except for personal, social and health education, although some need updating and approval by the governing body. Satisfactory schemes of work, many based on recent national guidelines, now support all subjects. Appropriate time is allowed for the satisfactory teaching of literacy and numeracy. In English and mathematics, pupils are taught in ability sets with tasks modified to meet the needs of the different ability groups.
26. All pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum. The school's aim of inclusion for all pupils, particularly for those with special educational needs, is clearly met. The school offers good levels of support and provision for all pupils with special educational needs across the school. It provides them with an appropriate curriculum, mainly within classes, and fully meets the requirements of the nationally agreed Code of Practice<sup>2</sup>. The special educational needs co-ordinator, supported by class teachers and support staff, ensures that individual education plans express pupils' needs well. These plans are appropriately reviewed, with good levels of input from parents and specialist agencies from outside the school. Higher-attaining pupils are given additional support to help them to achieve appropriately higher standards. The impact of this support has been limited as activities are not always well matched to pupils needs due to insufficient use of assessment data when planning lessons.
27. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils enjoy taking part in activities such as football, cricket, rounders, gymnastics, cross-country running, athletics, first aid, gardening, ornithology and brass band. During the week of the inspection the school cross-country team came first in competition with other schools. In addition, there is a wide variety of experiences outside the school in the form of visits to places such as theatres, local hospitals, bakeries and mathematics and science fairs. Every year group is offered an opportunity to participate in residential activities. Visits to local places such as Oak House, a local Tudor house and the Black Country Museum bring subjects such as history to life. Visitors to the school add a more personal note. For example, as part of food technology, two ladies from a local bakery assisted pupils with sandwich making, stressing well the healthy living aspects. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about this experience.
28. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is satisfactory. It is recently being developed as part of the curriculum. Staff have all completed a survey of the curriculum, including where PSHE is covered. A co-ordinator has been recently appointed, but has not been able to develop a policy. The school timetables PSHE lessons where social, personal and health matters are well discussed. Issues such as healthy eating are explored in science and design and technology. Sex education and the dangers of drugs are discussed in science and, as the need arises, on a personal basis with pupils. First-aid clubs are provided and pupils in Year 6 visit the local hospital to learn about health and safety. The school has an active eco-committee, started by a pupil, which influences the school's commitment to environmental issues.

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<sup>2</sup> Code of Practice – this gives advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the appropriate help to further their learning and personal development.

29. The school has a good range of links with the local community. These contribute well to pupils' learning. Local industries and businesses visit the school and pupils visit their establishments. The school has won a Sandwell Schools' Business Partnership award in recognition of its work in this area. Pupils have taken part in the Children's Parliament and were the local education authority's representatives in the area final for a 'Caring's Cool' competition organised by West Midland Police. Pupils participate in the Wednesbury Schools' Music Festival and the very good brass band makes a significant contribution. There are good links with a local church and the vicar frequently plays an important role in school assemblies. The school has satisfactory links with its main feeder infant school and its receiving high school. The very good range of extra-curricular sporting activities prepares pupils well for the high school, which has College of Sport status.
30. The ways in which the school provides opportunities for the full personal development of its pupils are satisfactory overall, with some real strengths and some areas of relative weakness. The framework of moral education is very good and is a strength of the school. The pupils benefit from an effective behaviour code, which is widely and consistently applied and perceived to be fair. All staff provide very good role models and pupils are taught to extend their understanding of right and wrong from the school situation out into the wider world. For example, in religious education, pupils in Year 3 have considered the similarities between school rules, British law, and the *Ten Commandments*. The school has recently been awarded the Sandwell Charter for sustainable development in education, which includes components relating to crime and reflects a strong commitment to citizenship.
31. The provision for social development is good and is an area currently being strengthened through a programme for personal and social education. Pupils of all ages are given opportunities to take responsibility for classroom duties as monitors and older pupils help to run the tuck shop and set up the hall for assembly. The eco-committee, of which the school is justly proud, is a group of 12 pupils from Years 5 and 6 who, together with two teachers and a governor, make decisions that could affect the health and lifestyles of the school community, in a global context. They have introduced water-conserving taps in the washrooms, energy-saving light sensors and more fruit into the tuck shop sales. The planned school council is intended to increase the number of pupils who can contribute to this philosophy of social awareness and taking action. Residential holidays offer further social opportunities for pupils in a more relaxed environment.
32. Cultural provision is satisfactory. Musical appreciation over a wide range of cultures is a feature of the chosen music for assemblies, the brass band, local musical festival and specialist teaching through the Education Action Zone. Specialist teaching has also enriched the cultural experiences of some pupils in the areas of art and poetry. The school is successful in embracing pupils from ethnic minority groups in a full and equal partnership. However, there are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to explore and appreciate the contribution made by other cultures to life in multicultural Britain today.
33. The area of personal development that was and still is unsatisfactory is that of spiritual awareness. Although the pupils learn about the values and beliefs of the main world religions in religious education, they are not given enough opportunity to reflect on their own experiences in a way that will develop their own spiritual awareness and self-knowledge. A study of emotions in personal, social and health education became a mechanical task rather than a quiet personal revelation. The daily act of collective worship is well led and has an appropriate theme or message, usually within a Christian ethos and regularly involves the local vicar. However, there is rarely any planned opportunity for the pupils to personalise that message, or to reflect on how it might affect them. Similarly, with very few exceptions, teachers do not emphasise the wonder, beauty or breathtaking amazement within the subjects they teach, thus limiting pupils' inspiration and dulling their unique creativity.



## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. This continues to be a caring school in which the vigilance, concern and compassion of all staff, teachers, classroom assistants and ancillary staff, provide a safe and supportive environment in which pupils' needs are the main priority. Parents greatly value this feature of the school and particularly the way in which pupils with very specific special needs are welcomed and supported. Overall the provision for the safety, welfare and support of pupils is satisfactory with many good features. Child protection procedures are sound and follow the local area guidelines. The application of the health and safety policy is however still not monitored with sufficient rigor and the programme of assessing possible risks is underdeveloped. The school does not have adequate recently trained first-aid cover for the needs of its pupils.
35. From the first meetings between parents, pupils and school staff, the transfer into junior school is characterised by a feeling of genuine concern that the school will be able to provide for the needs of all its pupils. Recent increases in the number of pupils with special educational needs have been met by increased numbers of support staff and where necessary, improved facilities. Teachers and classroom assistants know their pupils well and provide clear, consistent support and guidance to underpin their personal development. The personal, social and health education programme, while still not complete in its formal structure, provides a satisfactory range of guidance and opportunities to discuss and reflect on issues that affect the everyday lives of pupils both now and as they grow older. Termly targets for personal development are decided by mutual agreement between teachers and pupils. However, elements to improve confidence and independence as learners require strengthening.
36. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. The assertive discipline code of behaviour<sup>3</sup> is well understood by pupils, who were involved in creating the few, simple school rules. All adults in the school show fairness and consistency in their application of the discipline policy. Through assemblies, circle time<sup>4</sup> and direct teaching, pupils learn the unacceptable nature of bullying, aggressive play or harassment and they learn to understand the impact of their actions on others. The systems of house points, high achiever of the week awards and stars leading to merit certificates are all successful in their promotion of high personal standards.
37. Although the school uses its attendance data well to monitor absences, the promotion of good attendance is unsatisfactory. The significant decline in attendance during the last school year requires closer attention to provide a system of personal incentives that will encourage pupils and their families to place a higher value on full attendance and thereby avoid the current disruptions to progress.
38. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress over time are satisfactory. The school uses a range of tests and assessments in reading, spelling, writing and mathematics to track pupils' progress as they move through the school. These provide useful data for monitoring overall performance and are used, in conjunction with teacher observations, to set pupils according to their apparent abilities in English and mathematics. There is an early identification of pupils with special educational needs and relevant targets, which are appropriately reviewed, are clearly stated in their individual education plans.

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<sup>3</sup> Assertive discipline has three main parts: clear unambiguous rules; continuous positive feedback to pupils when they are successfully keeping to these rules and a recognised hierarchy of sanctions that are consistently applied when rules are broken.

<sup>4</sup> During circle time, pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

39. The available assessment information insufficiently identifies pupils' individual needs and the procedures are not in place for all subjects. In English and mathematics and for all other subjects of the curriculum, the on-going assessment of pupils' needs and the use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning is unsatisfactory. There are subjects, for example design and technology and music, where pupils' long-term or short-term progress is not effectively assessed. As a result, teachers insufficiently evaluate the impact of their lessons on pupils' attainment in order to identify the learning targets for different groups in future lessons. This results in pupils making uneven progress and not achieving standards as high as they might. The lack of assessment information means that pupils' annual reports identify less clearly the strengths and weaknesses, as teachers do not have sufficiently detailed information, other than their own knowledge of pupils' work.
40. The school has started to address assessment over the last two years and an updated policy was put into place in September 2000. The school development plan shows the need for further developments, but does not intend to have in place, until 2004, targets matched to pupils' individual needs. This is a too long timescale for this important development. Teachers are unsure of how to develop assessment and the means they use to assess pupils' progress is insufficiently monitored and unevenly developed across the school. The assessment co-ordinator has no time allowance to determine where further developments are needed.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

41. The improving relationship with parents since the last inspection has resulted in greater interest in the work of the school, particularly through membership of the governing body. There have also been some improvements in parents' involvement in their children's learning. Parents' views of the school are satisfactory, with particular value placed on their children's happiness and welfare. They feel that the school staff are very approachable and parents are quietly supportive of most school policies, although some do not appear to share the school's goal of full attendance. Almost all have signed up to the home-school agreement.
42. The school values and promotes this partnership by maintaining a readiness to listen and trying to keep parents informed about school life. Overall the effectiveness of home-school links is satisfactory, but there is a weakness in the level of communication. Some parents feel that they are not sufficiently informed about their child's progress. Some are concerned that the school could be working more closely with them and others do not feel well informed about the range of extra-curricular activities. The inspection found that the quality of information provided for parents is unsatisfactory. Formal documents, like the governors' annual report to parents, are dry and uninviting and there is no regular communication about forthcoming topics of study, homework requirements, or after-school opportunities. The pupils' annual progress reports are inadequate in their reporting of the standards attained in relation to what is typically expected of that age and they do not give clear targets for improvement in which parents could support their children. Comments like 'Strive to build on this year's good achievements and consolidate and further his understanding, throughout the curriculum, next year' are not helpful, measurable goals for a child who is attaining well below the national average.
43. Parents' impact on the life and work of the school is satisfactory overall, with some strengths. There is good support for parents' information evenings and the main social and fund-raising events organised by the Parents and Friends Association. Through their generous financial support, the school is able to offer free transport to pupils, making particularly good use of the minibus, which is shared with two other schools. The 'Enable' project involves several parents and friends in providing valuable one-to-one support for pupils with special educational needs to help them to improve their literacy and numeracy

skills. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved in regular reviews of their child's progress. Many parents support their children's learning at home, by encouraging them in their music practice, or their homework tasks. However, there are still too many parents who are unsure of the school's homework expectations and who are insufficiently involved in supporting reading and the development of basic skills.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

44. At the time of the last inspection the leadership and management of the school was satisfactory. The then headteacher provided firm leadership. However, the governing body was not sufficiently involved in strategic planning and subject co-ordinators did not have clearly defined roles in monitoring standards of teaching and learning. Statutory requirements, with regard to school publications, were not being met. Since then, the school has appointed a new headteacher and has made satisfactory progress towards addressing these weaknesses. Currently, the school is soundly led and managed.
45. The school has clear and appropriate aims, which are published in its prospectus. They state that the school aims to deliver a curriculum that helps pupils to fully develop their academic, physical, social, spiritual and moral potential. This is to be done within a stimulating and enjoyable environment. The school is making satisfactory progress towards its stated aims. Wood Green is a happy school, which provides very good moral development for its pupils. Its aims for pupils to achieve their academic and spiritual potential are less well fulfilled.
46. The relatively newly appointed headteacher provides sound leadership. He has quickly gained the respect of parents, most of whom feel the school is well led and managed. He provides effective day-to-day management of the school and has correctly identified the need to raise pupils' self-esteem and self-motivation. The headteacher has introduced more effective arrangements for monitoring the work of the school. These include more formal arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning. However, these recent initiatives have not had sufficient time to positively impact on the quality of teaching and the standards achieved. Although they have had no specific management training, the senior management team and the subject co-ordinators are beginning to expand their role in developing the work of the school. For example, co-ordinators monitor pupils' work and the results of national tests and are beginning to use this information to develop the curriculum. Overall, teachers with management responsibilities make a satisfactory contribution to school improvement. Further development of their role is required to make their contribution to school improvement more effective. Currently, they do not have sufficient time to perform their role as defined in their relevant job descriptions. The role of the senior management team is not clearly focused on important whole-school issues and in particular, the raising of standards. There is no one with the overall responsibility for the curriculum across the school.
47. The quality of the leadership and management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator reviews the register of pupils with special educational needs and produces good quality individual education plans, which are regularly monitored. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs works closely with the co-ordinator and is well informed about the school's provision. The governing body is keen that there should be inclusion for all pupils, especially the growing number with special educational needs. They successfully ensure that there are equal opportunities for all pupils.
48. The governing body, which has many new members, is enthusiastic and very supportive of the school. It satisfactorily fulfils its statutory responsibilities by ensuring that all legally required documents are in place, including a school prospectus and special educational

needs policy. The Chair of Governors ably carries out her various functions, including liaison with the headteacher. The governing body meets regularly and has an appropriate structure that includes committees for finance and premises, curriculum and staffing. Governors receive satisfactory information from the headteacher and some gain further knowledge of the school through informal visits. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, their visits do not have a clear focus that would provide more effective information to support their decision making and monitoring of the work of the school. Governors see questioning policy and practice as an important part of their role. They effectively monitor the spending, which has supported the school's priority of increasing staffing so as to allow senior teachers the opportunity to work across the school, support the teaching of information and communication technology and co-ordinate the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school makes effective use of specific grants, particularly those available through the Wednesbury Education Action Zone. This has supported the purchase of computers, additional support staff and visiting specialist teachers. These initiatives are having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

49. There is a shared commitment between headteacher, staff and governors to further school improvement. The school development plan satisfactorily identifies appropriate priorities, including the monitoring of teaching, school self-evaluation techniques and pupils' personal development as well as curriculum development for each subject. The headteacher and governors regularly monitor progress towards its targets. However, the plan does not clearly identify whole-school priorities to give a strong lead to school improvement. The targets do not always clearly focus on improving standards and their success criteria are not always specific enough to measure progress towards the targets.
50. Overall the level of staffing is satisfactory for the demands of the curriculum. The number of teachers is good and allows the school to provide tuition for smaller groups of pupils for extending and challenging the higher attainers, as well as for supporting those with special educational needs. A particular benefit enjoyed by the school is the provision of specialist subject teachers in art and music who are funded through the local Education Action Zone, which enriches the curriculum and is helping to increase staff expertise. Although the number of support staff has increased considerably since the last inspection, the high percentage of pupils requiring considerable support means that in some lessons there are insufficient classroom assistants. This was especially noticeable in the lower sets, where the rate of progress made by many pupils was hindered by the lack of help available. There are good arrangements in place for the induction of new staff and the two newly-qualified teachers are settling into school well. Improvements in the management of appraisal and professional development have resulted in better links between the training offered to members of staff and the priorities for school development.
51. The accommodation remains satisfactory for the delivery of the National Curriculum and has been redesigned in some areas to improve its usability. The library area has been made more accessible and there is an impressive suite of computers, which is awaiting adequate ventilation. However, the hall remains small and unavoidably cluttered with dining furniture so that indoor physical education activities are severely restricted. Alterations to the building have been successful in providing full access for disabled pupils except to two of the temporary classrooms.
52. Learning resources are satisfactory and have been improved since the last inspection. Equipment for design and technology is now adequate and resources for geography and religious education have been increased. The computer suite, together with networked computers in classrooms, mean that the school now enjoys good provision for information and control technology, although further software is still required. The supply of reading books in some classes is rather old and in poor repair, although library stocks are adequate.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. To further improve the quality of education provided and to raise standards, the governors, headteacher and staff should now:

- (1) raise the overall standards achieved by pupils, particularly in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology;  
(Paragraphs: 1-5, 54, 66, 74,100)

This should be done by:

- providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in all subjects;  
(Paragraphs: 55-56)
  - developing a whole-school approach to the teaching of reading and providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their reading skills at school and at home;  
(Paragraphs: 57-58)
  - continuing to raise standards in writing by improving pupils' spelling and handwriting and developing writing skills in other subjects as well as English;  
(Paragraphs: 8,16, 59-61, 95,119)
  - developing pupils' mental skills and speed of recall in mathematics;  
(Paragraph: 67)
  - developing the use of numeracy skills in other subjects;  
(Paragraphs: 17, 75)
  - developing a wider range of methods for recording observations and results in science;  
(Paragraph: 82)
  - developing pupils' understanding of scientific vocabulary;  
(Paragraph: 78)
  - challenging higher-attaining pupils to instigate their own investigations and experiments;  
(Paragraph: 79)
  - provide more opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology and to use it to support their learning in other subjects.  
(Paragraphs: 17, 75, 84, 92, 103-106, 119)
- (2) improve the effectiveness of teaching methods, to further improve the quality of teaching, raise pupils' levels of interest and motivation and develop their independent learning skills;  
(Paragraphs: 10, 13, 19-20, 63, 81)
  - (3) make more effective use of assessment information when planning lessons, so that activities more closely match the needs of all pupils;  
(Paragraphs: 16-17, 21, 25-26, 39-40, 64, 67, 74)
  - (4) provide a strong educational direction to guide and focus the work of the school, by:
    - setting clearly identified priorities for school improvement in the school development and setting challenging targets and achievable success criteria against which to measure progress towards the agreed targets.  
(Paragraph: 49)

In addition to the key issues above, the following minor issues should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan. They are indicated by the following paragraphs:

<b>Area for development</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>
Develop the links with parents by providing them with better levels of information, particularly on the standards achieved and the progress of their children.	42, 43
Ensure a consistent approach to homework that supports pupils' learning.	19
Improve the quality of marking so that it helps pupils to understand what they can do and what they need to learn next.	21, 70
Improve the provision for pupils' spiritual development.	33
Encourage better rates of attendance.	14, 37
Ensure, through appropriate training, that there is adequate first-aid cover for the needs of the pupils.	34

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	2	25	19	0	0	0
Percentage	0	4	54	42	0	0	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	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	239
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	42

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	89

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	17

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	34	30	64

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	17	24
	Girls	17	17	24
	Total	33	34	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	52 (57)	53 (50)	75 (69)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	18	25
	Girls	19	18	25
	Total	36	36	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (64)	56 (49)	78 (64)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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



### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	6
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	8
Chinese	0
White	220
Any other minority ethnic group	3

*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	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	1	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: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.7
Average class size	30

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	116

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	509,708
Total expenditure	516,610
Expenditure per pupil	2,050
Balance brought forward from previous year	27,549
Balance carried forward to next year	20,719

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
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: 34%

Number of questionnaires sent out	210
Number of questionnaires returned	71

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	34	1	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	47	46	4	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	48	1	1	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	48	23	3	7
The teaching is good.	44	48	0	1	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	45	18	3	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	31	4	4	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	37	3	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	27	46	17	3	7
The school is well led and managed.	42	48	1	1	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	51	3	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	46	11	6	14

Totals for each question may not equal 100 as a result of the rounding off of numbers.

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

**ENGLISH**

54. At the time of the last inspection, overall standards in English were below average and well below average in speaking and listening. Since then standards have declined, despite a rise in 2001 and are currently well below average in all aspects of the subject. This is confirmed by recent national test results and inspection evidence. The low standards, however, represent a satisfactory level of achievement for most pupils. The number of pupils with special educational needs has risen considerably since the previous inspection. Pupils enter the school with low self-esteem and poor language skills in comparison to pupils of a similar age. They make satisfactory progress in their learning as a result of sound teaching. Good support ensures those with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress. There are no marked differences in the performance of girls and boys, pupils from minority ethnic groups or those who speak English as an additional language.
55. Attainment in speaking and listening at the end of Year 6 is well below national averages. Only a small number of higher-attaining pupils achieve average standards. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Pupils appear to listen carefully to what teachers are saying and the small number of higher-attaining pupils reply to questions with relevant comment and detail. A good example of pupils using their speaking skills well occurred in a Year 5 literacy lesson when pupils prepared and read playscripts with expression and clarity. However, many pupils sit very passively and remain silent during whole-class discussions. Many pupils have difficulties with understanding and replying to questions and need much support and encouragement to speak in class. The majority of pupils in the school have great difficulty in expressing ideas. They struggle to find the correct word to use and have problems articulating word definitions.
56. Many pupils avoid using spoken language because of poor self-esteem and fear of failure and resort to pointing in response to questions about their work. Some teachers work hard to compensate for pupils' lack of expressive vocabulary and attempt to modify questions to match their level of understanding. However, there are many occasions when pupils are not asked to give opinions or use speech. Some teachers tend to talk for too long without encouraging pupils to communicate and many become bored and lose concentration. Not all staff insist on pupils replying to questions and interactions in full sentences and accept single words or nods. In addition, although some teachers ensure that pupils learn and understand specific vocabulary in all subjects, many do not. Pupils therefore do not acquire the necessary important vocabulary in many subjects. By the time they are 11, the small number of higher-attaining pupils are more confident in their contributions to class discussions and in one-to-one situations with adults, for example when discussing school life with inspectors.
57. Pupils' attainment in reading is well below the national average at the end of Year 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress but the majority of pupils have insufficient ways to tackle new words. For instance, many younger pupils are aware of the names of letters but cannot connect this with the sound, so are unable to attempt new words. Most pupils in Years 3 and 4 rely on adult support when reading and are hesitant and lack confidence. Some pupils have difficulty in understanding the book and cannot deduce or predict what might happen next without considerable support. Most pupils, but not all, attempt to join in with class reading during the literacy hour. Although many pupils know how to select an information book from the library, there was limited evidence of pupils being able to skim and scan texts for information.
58. Reading is not taught consistently throughout the school. Many of the pupils in Years 3 and 4 are not confident readers and require much individual support. Many pupils do not have the

opportunity to read daily to an adult in order to develop their skills and confidence. Inconsistencies in the reading provision do not help the situation. For instance, pupils in some year groups can take their books home to practise with parents, whilst others cannot. Not all teachers keep detailed reading records that clearly indicate pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Some teachers, but by no means all, share these records with pupils, which accelerates learning as pupils are aware what they have to do to improve. These low levels of reading skills impede pupils' progress in all subjects.

59. Pupils' attainment in writing is well below the national average but they make satisfactory progress. A small number of higher-attaining pupils achieve the expected levels for writing and produce a good range of work in a variety of forms, such as reports, book reviews, stories and poems. Many pupils, in all classes, have great difficulty in combining neat handwriting, interesting content, correct spelling and punctuation when producing a piece of writing. Many pupils who have special educational needs experience considerable problems when recording the spoken word into written English. Some pupils do not take sufficient care when presenting their work.
60. Pupils are not confident when using spellings in their writing and many rely on adult support. The higher-attaining pupils maintain steady progress through their ability to check spellings in dictionaries and thesauruses. Handwriting is taught in all classes, but there is no clear development of skills and, as a result, some lower-attaining pupils' handwriting is untidy and incorrectly formed.
61. There are limited opportunities provided for pupils to use their developing literacy skills in other subjects. Higher-attaining pupils competently use computers to present their work. For instance, last summer, pupils in Year 6 produced impressive and attractive word-processed anthologies. Specific work is planned for pupils with special educational needs during the literacy hour and they receive good support from the special educational needs team. Pupils receive good, additional literacy support in Years 3 and 4, which is carefully planned to meet their learning needs.
62. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, although some good lessons were also observed. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Many teachers show confidence and sound knowledge and understanding of the subject. They make lesson objectives clear to pupils, which is an improvement since the last inspection. They make appropriate use of question and answer sessions to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. In the best lessons, there is a lively pace, a good variety of interesting activities to stimulate and engage the pupils and high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Teachers provide good models in their own reading of texts. For instance, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher read the text *The Balacava Boy* with obvious delight and enjoyment, which transfixed the pupils. Learning support assistants are used effectively to promote good work and behaviour, which raises pupils' attainment and accelerates progress. However, in many of the lower literacy sets, teachers have no additional classroom support and have to try and teach a whole class of pupils with special educational needs unaided.
63. There is a range of reasons why, in some lessons, teaching is satisfactory rather than good. The teachers' expectations of what the pupils can achieve are too low or too high and work is not effectively planned for different needs. There are often missed opportunities to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills. Planned activities are not sufficiently practical or interesting and fail to capture the pupils' interest so they become restless. Pupils are often expected to sit and listen for too long and lose concentration. These areas for development reduce the effectiveness of the overall sound quality of teaching and therefore the pupils' rate of progress is not maximised.

64. The school has effectively introduced the National Literacy Strategy and the literacy hour is established in all classes. The co-ordinator is new to the role, but feels that she has been supported well by the previous co-ordinator. She is aware of the need to look at teaching and learning in all classes to ensure that pupils make progress. The co-ordinator has a realistic view on further developments and recognises the necessity of ensuring that there is a consistent approach to teaching spelling and handwriting. Teachers keep appropriate records of pupils' attainment in English, although there is no assessment made of pupils' skills in speaking and listening. The use of assessment to target individual pupils in order to raise standards is underdeveloped.
65. Resources for English are adequate and efficiently organised. The quality and quantity of books provided recently for shared and guided reading is good. The library area is small and the stock of books is not large, but well kept and displayed. It was satisfactorily used by all classes during the inspection as pupils selected non-fiction texts for class and individual use.

## **MATHEMATICS**

66. By the age of 11 years, standards are well below average in numeracy and all areas of mathematics (number, algebra, space, shape and measures and data handling). At the time of the last inspection, standards were below average levels. The reason for the apparent decline is that the school has a substantially increasing number of pupils with special educational needs. In some year groups, there are over 50 per cent of pupils with special educational needs. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is satisfactory overall. During the inspection, good teaching was seen in three-quarters of the lessons observed. However, samples of previous work highlight some unsatisfactory elements of teaching, which result in the progress that pupils make over time being inconsistent. Overall, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. There are no marked differences in the performance of girls and boys.
67. By the age of 11 years, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of place value up to 100, with some higher-attaining pupils solving problems up to 1,000. They work out simple calculations quickly. The higher-attaining groups have a good recall of multiplication tables, but many pupils have not thoroughly consolidated tables to aid their mental skills and speed of recall. The oral and mental sessions at the start of lessons are not evenly developed across the school. In some lessons there is a quick pace and pupils are fully involved but in others the content is not relevant and is insufficiently challenging.
68. Teachers display a suitable range of mathematical vocabulary in their classes, but do not always sufficiently explain or use it with their pupils. Most pupils understand simple fractions but have difficulty understanding the meaning of terms such as 'numerator' and 'denominator'. Consequently, they are not proficient in calculating fractional or percentage parts of quantities or measurements. Many pupils in Year 6 are slowly growing in confidence in applying their mathematical knowledge to problem solving. Teachers give them relevant opportunities, including real-life problem solving, but many find this task difficult due to their underdeveloped understanding of the four rules of number. This hinders their speed and accuracy of calculation. They are not competent at checking their results, as this is insufficiently encouraged by teachers.
69. Pupils enter the school with low levels of understanding of shape and space. For example, while pupils in Year 3 recognised that each side of a cube was a square, they thought that there were only two sides to the shape. By the age of 11 years, pupils know the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes and use standard metric measures for length, mass and time. However, their understanding of more difficult ideas, such as congruent shapes

and symmetry, is limited. By Year 6, pupils understand how to calculate the perimeter and area of rectangular shapes. However, their calculations are not always accurate enough to ensure that the correct answer is reached.

70. Throughout the school, teachers manage the pupils well and this results in good behaviour in lessons. Where teaching is good, teachers match tasks well to pupils' needs, pupils are keen and enthusiastic and motivated learners, showing good attitudes to their work. In a better lesson, where good learning took place, pupils were asked to read the problem displayed on the board before the teacher assisted them to analyse the information and develop their understanding. Here the class teacher effectively evaluated and supported progress, marking pupils' work across the class. Supported with a good plenary session, arising from an awareness of the pupils' needs, she further consolidated their learning. However, marking is inconsistently developed. Rarely do teachers point out the pupils' mistakes. When they do occasionally correct their pupils' work, they are not sufficiently encouraged to make the necessary corrections. Marking is insufficiently used to inform teachers on the understanding and progress of their pupils.
71. Teachers have a satisfactory understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy. The three-part lesson structure is starting to be successfully developed. What is to be learnt is clearly identified in satisfactory planning. Teachers commonly share the lesson objectives with their pupils, but tasks are not always matched accurately to the pupils' specific needs. Teachers tend to teach the National Numeracy Strategy at average levels, not realising that many of their pupils have insufficiently consolidated earlier learning to enable them to progress.
72. A weakness identified in the scrutiny of pupils' work was in the setting of suitable activities. On some occasions, the range of worksheets pupils were given led to them completing tasks at levels that they had already acquired. On many occasions the worksheets did not match their need and were too difficult. In the absence of reliable assessments of what pupils know and can do, teachers do not realise that pupils have not yet consolidated some of the necessary early learning. Here pupils make mistakes or get sums right, but do not understand the processes they have used in doing so. When they come to later learning, which requires this understanding, they are lost.
73. When pupils enter the school in Year 3, the school only has information on the levels that pupils have acquired on their national tests. Pupils are not put into ability groups until the teacher knows more about their strengths and weaknesses. There is insufficient evidence of the school using a range of set criteria to identify and record the respective levels of the pupils. Too much is kept in the teachers' head regarding the pupils' attainment and far too little is recorded by teachers and support staff as pupils progress. This lack of recording at the end of lessons is the general picture across the school.
74. Pupils with special educational needs are satisfactorily supported. They have good numeracy targets in their individual education plans, but do not always give them a relevant consideration in what they teach. The school teaches mathematics to pupils in ability groups. In some of the lower-attaining groups nearly all pupils have special educational needs, but standards are still not as high as they should be. The use of assessment information, which identifies the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils to guide what they should be taught next, is underdeveloped. The school is trying to improve the standards achieved by higher-attaining pupils by withdrawing them into smaller working groups. Here it offers them work intended to better meet their needs. Discussion with these pupils shows that some are not progressing sufficiently, as they are still insecure with some of the previous processes, which they should have consolidated earlier. Again, teachers are making insufficient use of assessment data when planning activities.

75. In all areas of the school, the pupils' ability to use information and communication technology to develop their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding is insufficiently developed. Pupils use mathematics in other subjects. For example, in science, for recording temperature. They use measurement in design and technology. Here, an example of a low level of achievement was seen in a Year 3 class where pupils did not understand that they measured with a ruler from the first mark rather than from the end of the ruler. There are good examples of pupils recording by tallying (keeping count by making a mark the number of times something happens). They successfully transfer this information into pictograms and block graphs. However, pupils require more opportunities to practise and develop their mathematical skills in practical situations in other subjects.
76. Despite decreasing standards, due mainly to the increasing numbers of pupils with special educational needs, the school has made a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Overall, teaching has improved. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching, although minor weaknesses remain, particularly in the use of assessment data. The subject co-ordinator has a strong commitment towards the development of the subject. She has monitored pupils' work and trained staff in all aspects of the subject. Governors have, through their representative, a relevant oversight of the provision. The subject has a relevant budget; resources are satisfactory and well organised. The match of tasks to pupils' abilities remains an issue from the last inspection.

## **SCIENCE**

77. By the age of 11 years, standards in science are below average. This is borne out by both recent national test results and evidence from the inspection. Overall standards have remained below average since the last inspection, although test results in 2001 showed an improvement in that year group of pupils.
78. Pupils in Year 6 understand the importance of a balanced diet in staying healthy. They have a basic knowledge of the five, main food types and identify into which groups the foods they eat fit. For example, they know a pizza contains bread, dairy products and possibly meat. While some pupils know that their bodies need, for instance, the carbohydrates in potatoes to give them energy, about half find it hard to retain this more detailed information. Their lack of both scientific and general vocabulary makes it difficult for these pupils to explain why the different food groups are important.
79. Throughout the school, pupils satisfactorily develop their experimental skills. They carry out simple experiments, make predictions based on their everyday experiences and make observations and measurements that are adequate for the task. They have a satisfactory understanding of a 'fair test' by varying one factor while keeping others the same. Pupils in Year 6, for instance, know that when testing the effect of hot water, cold water and salt on ice it is important that each block of ice is the same size. They use appropriate instruments, such as thermometers and stopwatches, to measure the changes that occur. Pupils have not sufficiently developed the skills required to independently identify an appropriate approach when solving a scientific question or developing an experiment beyond the activities chosen by the teacher. They are still dependent on activities being directed by the teacher.
80. Teachers give pupils appropriate experiences to develop their scientific knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils in Year 3 sort foods into groups that come from plants, trees and animals. In Year 4, pupils investigate the characteristics of different materials. They test different objects to see which are attracted to a magnet and which solids dissolve in water. Pupils in Year 5 discuss the major joints of the human skeleton and the muscles that make them move. They build simple electrical circuits and observe what happens when additional bulbs are added to the circuit. In Year 6, pupils discuss the water cycle, the

differences between solids, liquids and gases and the impact of increasing the slope of a ramp on the time it takes a model car to travel down it. The majority of pupils achieve a satisfactory understanding of each of the main aspects of the subject (life processes, materials and physical processes) and a small proportion of higher-attaining pupils achieve an appropriately higher standard. However, these proportions are lower than that normally found. Many pupils have difficulty in retaining the information they have learnt and in expressing themselves clearly in both speech and writing. Their understanding of appropriate scientific vocabulary for their age is underdeveloped. This results in the below average standards observed.

81. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and at times good. This results in pupils making satisfactory progress, although from a below average starting point, as they move through the school. Progress is, however, inconsistent and very much depends on the teaching methods used. Pupils make good progress when they are fully involved in activities. For example, pupils in Year 5 made good progress in their understanding of the life cycle of a plant as a result of well-organised activities in which pupils carefully observed a range of flowering plants. An effective plenary, which gave all pupils time to reflect on what they had learnt, ensured sound progress. In other lessons, the teachers spend too much time in their explanations so that pupils lose interest. Explanations that lack practical examples or hands-on experiences for pupils do little to raise pupils' low levels of motivation or reinforce their learning. For example, a discussion on planning an experiment to test the absorbency of different papers resulted in little progress being made. Pupils' lack of understanding of the term 'absorbency' was not corrected through a simple, practical demonstration that would have reinforced their learning and increased the level of interest. Teachers use correct scientific vocabulary in their explanations. For example, 'germination' and 'stigma' when discussing the life cycle of a plant and 'protein' and 'carbohydrates' when discussing a healthy diet. However, they do not always ensure that pupils fully comprehend key words needed to develop their understanding. Pupils with special educational needs are given adequate support to ensure that they make satisfactory progress. For example, they are often given more appropriate worksheets to complete. Occasionally, they are provided with resources that are too difficult for them to read and understand.
82. Teachers plan investigations but these are often over-directed and do not give pupils enough chance to ask questions or devise ways of finding answers. The range of methods used to record pupils' observations and results are limited. Results are often recorded in similar, simple charts and through the use of a block graph. In some classes, all pupils copy the same written explanation of their work. While the presentation of work is satisfactory the standard of writing is often low. This neither meets the needs of the individual pupils nor supports their use and development of literacy or numeracy skills. Information and communication technology is not used to record pupils' results or to present them in a variety of ways. The school has recently purchased a computer-linked microscope and a monitoring program that records, for example, changes in temperature. However, these have not been used regularly enough to develop pupils' use of modern technology within the subject.
83. The management of the subject has improved since the last inspection. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has successfully modified the curriculum following an analysis of pupils' test results. She is currently developing more effective ways of assessing pupils' progress. Pupils' work is regularly monitored but the co-ordinator has not monitored classroom practice, though this is planned for the future. Resources are adequate and well organised.



## **ART AND DESIGN**

84. By Year 6, pupils achieve the expected standards for their age. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in developing their skills and understanding of art and design. They successfully learn a range of techniques and incorporate this knowledge into their artwork. However, there was very little evidence of computer-generated artwork.
85. Pupils in Year 3 have made effective observational drawings of patterns around the school. They are learning how to portray relationships in art and made satisfactory attempts at sketching backgrounds to character sketches. Their figure sketches were rather naïve and they have not mastered the technique of using pastels without smudging. Pupils in Year 4 satisfactorily extend their knowledge of printmaking by using corrugated card and water-based paint to depict an aspect of the built environment. Pupils in Year 5 made detailed and careful sketches of garden implements. Art is used effectively in other subjects. For instance, work sampled from Year 5 showed impressive and realistic sketches of Henry VIII. In Year 6, pupils made very good progress in one lesson, which was led by a specialist art teacher. Good quality digital photographs of the pupils were used as a stimulus and pupils were encouraged to consider body proportions and ways to depict movement when sketching. The sketches produced were of a high standard and pupils were keen and enthusiastic, working hard to perfect their techniques. Pupils throughout the school use sketchbooks to practise and satisfactorily develop their ideas.
86. In the limited number of lessons observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory with very good teaching by the specialist art teacher. In the very good lesson, the teacher had very good subject knowledge and encouraged and successfully motivated pupils to be creative. This inspirational teaching ensured that the pupils understood fully what was good in their artwork and what could be improved. The main weakness in teaching occurred when the pace of the lesson slowed because the teacher spent too long discussing ideas, so that pupils became restless and lost interest.
87. A criticism of art in the last inspection report was that there were limited planned opportunities for pupils to print or use clay and other three-dimensional materials. Although no three-dimensional work was observed during the inspection, the clear scheme the co-ordinator has developed to help teachers with planning shows that every year pupils have the opportunity to develop their skills in three-dimensional work. For instance, pupils in Year 6 have produced colourful masks.
88. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and working hard to improve the artwork even further in the school. She uses her expertise successfully to support other members of staff in order to promote pupils' learning and knowledge of the subject. The co-ordinator has updated the policy in line with the new curriculum and has developed clear procedures for teachers to assess pupils' work. Although the co-ordinator monitors pupils' work in their sketchbooks and displays, she has not had the chance to directly observe and evaluate pupils' learning in the classroom. Visits and visitors with expertise who work with pupils enhance the curriculum and pupils' learning. There is a satisfactory range of art materials.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

89. During the period of inspection it was only possible to see two lessons taught, both in Year 4. Discussion with pupils and a scrutiny of work and photographs of previous work shows that average standards are reached. This is an improvement since the last inspection, where the statutory requirements to teach the subject were not being met. The design and making elements of the subject are now satisfactorily met across the school. The evaluation of pupils' designs and their development before they make the objects they are

designing is unevenly developed across the school. In many cases, pupils start making without sufficient attention being given to evaluating and thinking about what they are doing. Too little attention is given by teachers to ask pupils questions such as 'How will this be used?', 'Why have you used these materials and components?', 'What would happen if...?' and 'How can this be improved?'

90. The two lessons in Year 4 involved both classes designing and making a greetings card with moving parts. The teachers had individually planned their input around the same theme. Overall, the teaching and learning were satisfactory. Pupils responded well to these lessons. One teacher was investigating how a wheel mechanism could be used. The other encouraged pupils, using a picture of themselves taken by a digital camera, to make a pop-up card, with the picture standing up when the card was opened. In each class, good features of teaching were seen. The learning and progress of the pupils was supported well by the careful choice of relevant resources and the input across the class matched to each pupil's needs. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, made at least and, in some cases, good progress. Pupils enjoyed their experiences, producing a good range of ideas. They successfully managed to select appropriate techniques to produce a pop-up card or a card that showed various facial features or body features of a person when a wheel inside was turned. Overall, they were moving towards achieving average standards. The more difficult wheel mechanism was challenging the standards of pupils further. Here, they found difficulty in cutting the wheel to size to fit inside the card and how to position it to produce movement.
91. Samples of work across the school produce evidence of an appropriate range of work, with satisfactory standards usually being achieved. Pupils in Year 3 had benefited from a visit by two teachers from a local bakery, when they designed a healthy sandwich. In Years 4 and 5, an analysis of biscuits had been made with an emphasis on their appearance, shape, cost, texture and ingredients. Designs have been made of stained glass windows and the making and design of moving toys and mobiles. Pupils progress satisfactorily into Year 6, developing their skills further. Here, pupils have designed and made a range of musical instruments. When asked, they explained clearly what they had done and demonstrated with enthusiasm how they could be played to make successful musical sounds. Work on moving toys is further progressed in Year 6 with the use of more complicated mechanisms, such as a cam mechanism and the design and making of model chairs. When asked what they were doing, pupils showed good degrees of understanding, motivation and interest in their work. Teachers are giving sufficient time to the subject and are starting to satisfactorily develop their awareness of how it should be taught.
92. The present co-ordinator of the subject has no time to monitor and evaluate the teaching and learning. The subject is now supported by a relevant, commercial scheme, but there is only one copy available for all the staff in the school. The last time any in-service training was given to the co-ordinator and staff was four years ago. Staff plan the subject with reference to the commercial scheme and to a series of headings saying what to teach at any given time. Opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills, when planning and evaluating their work and practical numeracy skills are underdeveloped. The subject is insufficiently linked to information and communication technology. It is given a too distant priority for development in the school development plan. There is no clearly defined means of assessing pupils' skills as they progress from lesson to lesson. The lack of this assessment, matched to individual needs, means that pupils' standards are insufficiently rising as they progress across the school. The subject is satisfactorily resourced.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

93. Standards in geography are very similar to those found by the previous inspection. By the time they leave the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs attain average standards. Progress overall is satisfactory but in two of the lessons seen during the inspection, pupils made good progress.
94. Pupils in Year 3 make good progress in drawing large-scale maps of a 'Treasure Island'. They embellish their maps with rivers, lakes, mountains, campsites, castles and forests and show waves on the surrounding sea. They skilfully reduce the size of their geographical features when producing a key for their maps. In Year 5, pupils satisfactorily investigate the school water supply and enjoy identifying drains, manholes and gutters. By Year 6, pupils have a reasonable knowledge of the physical features of the River Severn. They successfully locate the river in an atlas and use four-figure grid references confidently.
95. Teaching in geography was good in two of the lessons seen. Teachers explained the lessons well, sharing the learning objectives with the pupils. They displayed a good level of subject expertise and reinforced pupils' geographical language well by emphasising specific vocabulary such as 'tributaries' and 'meanders'. Scrutiny of pupils' previous work indicates that teaching is satisfactory. Links with literacy are sound. Opportunities are provided for speaking and listening but writing is not given sufficient priority in lessons. Writing is not used regularly to record the results of a lesson, which often culminates in the completion of a worksheet.
96. Information and communication technology is beginning to be used more in geography. For instance, pupils write e-mail messages to a son of one of the teachers, who works at the South Pole. Pupils are fascinated to learn about his life in this hostile environment. Resources are adequate. Additional globes have been purchased in response to the shortage identified in the previous report. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and contributes much to the subject with her own world travels! She has a clear plan for improvements and an intention to improve standards in geography.

## **HISTORY**

97. By the time they leave the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, attain average standards. Standards in history are very similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection. During the period of inspection it was only possible to see one lesson taught in Year 3, as the school was giving a priority to the teaching of geography at this time. Discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of their previous work show that progress overall is satisfactory.
98. By the time pupils leave the school at the age of 11 years, they have satisfactorily developed a factual knowledge and understanding of aspects of the history of Britain and other countries. Samples of work show pupils, across the four years that they are in school, have successfully studied the Vikings and 'Invaders and Settlers', the growth and fall of the Roman Empire, Anglo Saxons, Ancient Egypt and Greece. When asked, pupils show a clear understanding of aspects of life at Victorian and Tudor times and famous people living at various times. Many relevant attempts are made for history to be brought to life. Pupils make visits to places such as Oak House, a local Tudor house and the Black Country Museum. The week before inspection, a local drama group had presented a play about Lord Shaftesbury and children's welfare. Many visits are made in the locality of the school and further afield.
99. Pupils' written work shows a satisfactory knowledge of historical characters such as Henry VIII, Florence Nightingale, Thomas Edison and Alexander Graham Bell. Pupils show a

satisfactory sense of chronology. This is supported in classes by the provision of timelines, which pupils enjoy using, showing interest in how their lifespan can be put into the context of time over the period of history they are studying.

100. Good teaching was observed in the one lesson seen in Year 3. Lesson objectives were clearly stated, with pupils being put into the role of being archaeologists. They satisfactorily developed an understanding of how evidence is gathered from the past. The pupils enjoyed examining a range of objects, naming them and saying where they came from and describing the properties. They responded well to this interesting task, with good degrees of enthusiasm and motivation.
101. Teachers make effective use of relevant resources to support pupils' learning. Good use is made of structured worksheets to aid pupils' understanding and teachers ask pupils to explore and write about their findings. Here, they show a growing awareness of their pupils' literacy skills. They encourage their writing by supporting those who cannot write a succession of sentences, by asking them to fill in words in a given text. Others, who have a more developed style of writing, are encouraged to write in the story in more detail, with some having an opportunity to word-process their work. The use of information and communication technology to develop pupils' historical research skills is underdeveloped.
102. The subject is at present co-ordinated by a part-time teacher. She has ensured, through discussions with teachers, that all aspects of the subject are taught. However, she has not been able to monitor teaching and learning across the school. She shows a satisfactory commitment to the subject's development. The action plan for further development of the subject in the school development plan indicates too long a timescale before the realistic intentions for developing the subject are finally in place. Assessment is based on assessing pupils' progress through the chosen commercial scheme. This is a very broad assessment. There is no means of assessing pupils' attainment to guide short-term curriculum planning and the individual help they need to make better progress. Resources are satisfactory and the school makes good use of a loan service from a local museum and archive collection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

103. At the time of the last inspection, standards were 'broadly in line with national expectations'. The school has not kept pace with the rapidly developing expectations of this subject. Currently, standards by the age of 11 years are below those expected for pupils of that age. Pupils are competent in those areas they have learned, but there are gaps in their knowledge. The school has recently made several important changes in the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) in order to raise standards. These include the introduction of new national guidelines to help teachers with their planning and the improvement of resources through the opening of an ICT suite following a grant from the Wednesbury Education Action Zone. Consequently, pupils, including those with special educational needs, currently make satisfactory progress. These recent initiatives have not had a sufficient impact on pupils' learning to raise standards to an appropriate level in all aspects of the subject.
104. By the age of 11 years, pupils satisfactorily use ICT to communicate information using text. They use a word-processing program to write, save and print their work. For example, pupils in Year 4 use different fonts to write a message for a greetings card and pupils in Year 5 use different size and colour when presenting poems following work with a visiting artist. In Year 6, pupils add pictures to their printed text. Pupils are beginning to exchange information using e-mail. Pupils in Year 5, for instance, send and receive messages with a contact in Antarctica. Pupils satisfactorily use graphics programs to draw plans of the classroom and create pictures made from geometric shapes in the style of Henri Matisse's *The Snail*. Other aspects of the subject are not as well developed. Pupils in Year 4 use a

branching database to sort and classify information, such as types of pets and pupils in Year 6 are developing their knowledge of spreadsheets, as when calculating the area and perimeter of fields. Younger pupils enter simple instructions to make a programmable toy robot move. However, pupils have not had sufficient opportunities to develop their skills of data handling, using ICT simulations to help them find things out and solve problems or to use sequences of instructions to control devices. As a result, their overall skills are not at an appropriate level for their age.

105. While pupils' progress over time has been unsatisfactory, the quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was satisfactory and at times good. Teaching that takes place in the school's well-equipped ICT suite is good overall. Lessons are well planned and the effective use of resources results in pupils making good progress during their weekly lesson. Clear explanations and demonstrations on the large screen help pupils become confident in the use of computers and the software available. Teachers give effective, individual guidance although the crowded nature of the room makes it difficult for them to move easily from one pupil to the next. The good number of computers available results in pupils having plenty of 'hands-on' experiences within a lesson. Pupils are well motivated by these opportunities and show good levels of concentration while using the computers.
106. However, teachers give pupils too few opportunities to develop and use their ICT skills within the classroom. While pupils satisfactorily use their word-processing skills to support their writing, opportunities to support pupils' learning in other subjects are often missed. For example, very little use is made of data handling programs to record pupils' results in mathematics and science. Pupils make insufficient use of CD-ROMs and the Internet to gather their own information in subjects such as history and geography. Skills learnt in the weekly lesson are therefore not reinforced or used to improve pupils' progress. Consequently, overall progress remains satisfactory.
107. One of the co-ordinators has a positive impact on raising standards by supporting class teachers when using the new ICT suite. The newly-introduced scheme of work based on national guidelines ensures that all aspects of the subject will be covered. However, this has not been adapted to suit the specific needs of the school or show teachers where they can use and further develop ICT skills in other subjects. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress against the new scheme are not fully developed. Currently, pupils have not completed the full programme of planned activities and so there are gaps in their learning resulting in below average standards.

## **MUSIC**

108. At the time of the last inspection standards were 'in line with national expectations'. The school has maintained these standards and pupils by the age of 11 years and throughout the school attain the standards expected for their age. Pupils enjoy their music-making activities. The school makes very effective use of visiting, specialist teachers to support learning in this subject. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.
109. Pupils in Year 3 successfully identify and name percussion instruments and are starting to say if they play a high or low sound. Supported by satisfactory teaching, they develop their understanding of the properties of a range of percussion instruments. Pupils show good levels of interest in the instruments and respond well with generally good levels of behaviour. A special educational needs pupil with pronounced learning difficulties, was successfully included in part of this lesson. He successfully identified an instrument and managed to play a simple tune. Older pupils have an increasing range of opportunities to make and play music. In a Year 6 lesson, taken by a specialist teacher, pupils attained at least satisfactory standards for their ages. The teacher successfully introduced the country

of origin of each drum, including north and south India and Guyana. Pupils followed the very good lead given by the specialist teacher when she played an increasingly complex range of rhythms for them to repeat and develop. With an excellent attitude and level of concentration and behaviour, pupils, using both hands, successfully played eight bit parts with pauses on the fifth beat. This lesson increased the pupils' knowledge of music from other cultures. The range of music from various cultures played in assemblies further develops this cultural awareness although, at times, the music is insufficiently discussed with the pupils. In assemblies and in class, pupils sing well, showing good control of pitch, dynamics and rhythm. Pupils compose and perform simple pieces. Older pupils have successfully composed pieces, which they perform on the keyboard. A good CD has been made, celebrating their performances, which parents and other visitors to the school have purchased as a lasting example of the good standards reached.

110. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory overall. It rises to very good when taught by the two specialist teachers, one provided by the Education Action Zone to support the teaching of the arts and the other provided by the school. One provides very good support in the classroom for singing and percussion playing. The other specialist teacher, whose input is excellent, teaches pupils a wide range of brass instruments. Class teachers are, however, not always secure with the teaching of the subject and their teaching varies from good to barely satisfactory. Teachers are just beginning to understand the recently purchased commercial scheme. The absence of assessments mean that some teachers set the tasks for the pupils at too low a level, with some pupils getting too few opportunities to improve melodic and rhythmic phrases within a group performance and to improvise repeated patterns. There are sometimes insufficient opportunities for pupils to build on and improve their own work by assessing and talking about the desired effect. On other occasions, teachers who are anxious to raise pupils' well below average standards in English, give them written tasks, which they find difficult to achieve. This was seen in a Year 3 lesson, where much time was taken up with completing the written tasks. As a result, pupils did not receive more opportunities, according to the scheme of work, to use the percussion instruments to explore ways in which the sounds could be arranged, their orders and structures and to make some music together by combining the sounds they made. Teachers need a more detailed guidance of how to plan and develop their lesson, relevant to the assessed needs of the pupils.
111. The co-ordinator for the subject left the school last term. The headteacher has taken over the role of temporary co-ordinator. The present policy needs updating with the newly adopted scheme in mind and the teaching of the subject has not been effectively monitored across the school. A means of assessment still has to be developed.
112. The brass band, which is developed as an extra-curricular activity, gives many pupils an excellent opportunity to develop a high level of proficiency on a brass instrument. The school acts as a host to local schools. Here pupils play together in an excellent manner, led by the specialist teacher. During the period of inspection, 22 pupils attended from four different schools, the majority of pupils being from this school. Here the pupils, making excellent responses to their teacher, showed a very good recognition of the relationship between sounds and the way music and their instruments reflect differing intentions. They could maintain their own part from simple notations and were aware of how their part fitted in with others. They showed very high standards of control and playing of their instruments. This clearly illustrates the standards pupils are capable of achieving if all the necessary elements are in place to help them to achieve such standards.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

113. At the time of the last inspection, standards were 'in line with national expectations'. Pupils made satisfactory progress as a result of good teaching. It is not possible to give an overall judgement on the standards of teaching and learning in physical education during this inspection. In the one Year 5 lesson observed during the inspection, pupils displayed appropriate games skills for their age. In swimming, most pupils achieve the expected standard by the age of 11 years.
114. During the Year 5 games lesson, pupils displayed satisfactory hand-eye co-ordination when throwing and catching a large ball. They have developed an appropriate understanding of the principles of attack and defence in simple small-sided invasion games. They followed the rules of their game of 'hoop ball' and most showed good levels of sporting behaviour. The teacher ensured a good pace to the lesson, which resulted in pupils being physically active throughout the lesson, apart from the lengthy time taken to organise groups. The teacher's management of pupils was effective and resulted in good levels of behaviour. Progress during the lesson was satisfactory. Insufficient focus was given to highlighting specific games' skills to ensure better progress.
115. The school has an effective programme for swimming. Pupils attend a series of 10 lessons each year. They develop their confidence in water and learn to swim on their front and back. By Year 6, most pupils swim 25 metres, the expected standard for their age. Many swim longer distances and about half learn water safety and survival techniques. An effective scheme of awards encourages pupils to develop their swimming skills.
116. The school is correctly addressing the need to provide clearer guidelines to help teachers with their planning. The co-ordinators have produced a suitable draft policy and proposed curriculum map that ensure that pupils experience all appropriate National Curriculum activities, including gymnastics, dance and athletics. The recent adoption of national guidelines provides teachers with appropriate activities, but these have not been fully adapted to suit the school's specific circumstances. The school is developing new ways of assessing pupils' progress but these are not complete and therefore do not provide teachers with information to help them to plan activities at an appropriate level. The school is successful in a range of inter-school sporting competitions. The very good range of extra-curricular sporting activities make an important contribution to pupils' physical and social development.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

117. By the age of 11 years, pupils achieve standards in religious education in line with the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus for the subject. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection when standards were judged to be low.
118. The pupils develop a sound appreciation of the central beliefs and traditions of various major world faiths, such as Christianity and Islam. They recognise the significance of religious faith in the lives of individuals and groups and are developing an appreciation of the symbolic significance of signs and ceremonies. In a Year 6 lesson, the pupils showed a good appreciation of the specific language used in *The Lord's Prayer*. They learnt to identify unfamiliar vocabulary such as 'hallowed' and demonstrated that they could 'modernise' the language used in the prayer. For instance, a pupil said 'Help us not to do anything we might regret' instead of 'Lead us not into temptation'. All pupils demonstrate sound general knowledge about different places of worship, holy books and places, festivals and celebrations.

119. Pupils in Year 3 make satisfactory progress in understanding the 'Rules for Living' used in various religions, for instance, the *Ten Commandments* in Christianity. Although many of the pupils do not have the necessary skills to verbalise their learning, they watched a CD-ROM depicting the story of Moses with interest and some higher-attaining pupils suggested alternative words for 'respect'. The teacher worked very hard to motivate the pupils to communicate but the majority of pupils were content just to watch the screen! Pupils in Year 4 are familiar with celebrations involving light such as birthdays and christenings. Pupils' written work indicates that higher-attaining pupils in Year 4 used their literacy skills well to write mature, emphatic accounts of the last days of Jesus' life prior to the crucifixion. This work is the exception, however, as the majority of pupils in the school have difficulty in both articulating and recording their learning in religious education, due to well below average literacy skills. There is some word-processing of information but information and communication technology is not used sufficiently in the subject.
120. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The most successful lessons are where the pupils are actively involved and encouraged to speak about their knowledge before attempting to write. For instance, in a Year 4 lesson, the teacher sensitively encouraged reluctant pupils to explain their experiences of christenings to the rest of the class. Pupils lacked confidence when speaking in front of the class but managed this activity well because of the teacher's support and guidance. Consequently, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, made sound progress. However, pupils' low literacy standards impede their progress in religious education as in many other subjects.
121. The school has made considerable improvements to the religious education curriculum since the last inspection. There is a useful policy and schemes of work have been revised in the light of new national guidance. Staff have had good professional support from the previous co-ordinator and the new co-ordinator has a clear notion of what needs to be done to improve the subject further. The school has a satisfactory stock of artefacts and other resources that are organised well. The school has suitable plans to develop the assessment of pupils' work in the subject as a way of further raising standards.