

INSPECTION REPORT

HILLARY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Pleck, Walsall,

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 131511

Headteacher: Mrs A Wild

Reporting inspector: Ian Nelson
2220

Dates of inspection: 8th - 11th January 2001

Inspection number: 230852

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hillary Primary School Hillary Street Pleck Walsall
Postcode:	WS2 9PB
Telephone number:	01922 720812
Fax number:	01922 720993
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Martin Evans
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Ian Nelson 02220	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? How high are standards (results and achievements)? How well is the school led and managed?
Susan Dixon 19335	Lay inspector		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?
Sharon Brown 01189	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Physical education	
John Collier 07593	Team inspector	Mathematics Music	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
Beatrice Cloke 02799	Team inspector	Equal opportunities English as an additional language Design and technology Religious education	How well are pupils taught?
Jenny Clayphan 20230	Team inspector	Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Megan Spark 18342	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Special educational needs	
Judith Hicks 02063	Team inspector		

The inspection contractor was:

Schools Inspection Unit
School of Education
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number of full time pupils	365 (bigger than most primary schools)
Pupils with English as an additional language	72% (very high)
Pupils entitled to free school meals	31% (above average)
Pupils on the register of special educational needs	31% (above average)

This is a large new primary school formed from the amalgamation of the former infant and junior school in April 1999. It serves an area of Walsall with high unemployment and the families come from a range of mainly Asian ethnic backgrounds. One reception class was taught by a supply teacher who had only been in school for three days prior to the inspection. Attainment on entry is well below average and many children are not fluent in English when they start school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective in some aspects of its work but not in all. Senior staff and governors have been very effective in managing the merger of the two former schools into one new one. Standards are still too low, though there are signs that they are beginning to rise partly due to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies being implemented. Teaching is satisfactory overall though it is inconsistent, particularly at Key Stage 2. The school has achieved much in its early days and senior staff and governors have a clear vision for its future. It currently provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher, governors and senior management team have overcome many difficulties to merge the former infant and junior schools into one new primary school
- The school promotes good behaviour, relationships and attitudes to learning within lessons
- The successful introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is beginning to raise standards
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress
- Assessment procedures in writing and mathematics are good

What could be improved

- Standards, particularly in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and physical education
- The impact of subject co-ordinators on raising standards
- The experience and expertise of Key Stage 2 teachers in all primary school subjects
- The marking of pupils' work
- Attendance

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the new school's first inspection so there is no previous report with which to make comparisons.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	N/A	E	E	B
Mathematics	N/A	D	D	B
Science	N/A	E	E	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

The table shows that standards in the 2000 national tests were well below the national average in English and science and below average in mathematics. When compared with the results of schools with similar pupils the school matched them in science and was better in English and mathematics. As a new school there is not enough information to be able to judge whether standards are rising as fast as standards nationally or not. Inspection findings suggest that standards in English, mathematics and science are below average but that the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is beginning to have a positive impact. Standards in design and technology and physical education are below expectations at both key stages and music is below expectations in the junior department. Standards in all other subjects are in line with those expected of pupils of these ages. Pupils make satisfactory progress in most subjects. They enter nursery well below average, make good progress in the nursery and satisfactory progress throughout the rest of the school. Targets set for the 2001 national tests in English and mathematics are realistic.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and are enthusiastic about learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. While behaviour in lessons is good the behaviour of some junior pupils in assemblies and in the playground is less than satisfactory.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory overall. In lessons pupils get on well with each other and share equipment and materials.
Attendance	Poor. Levels of attendance are well below average.

Attitudes to lessons and relationships between pupils in the classrooms are good. Behaviour is good throughout Key Stage 1 and in lessons at Key Stage 2. However, some pupils at Key Stage 2 do not behave well in assemblies and in the playground. Attendance levels are poor despite the school's efforts to raise them.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

Teaching is satisfactory overall. In 94% of lessons seen teaching was satisfactory or better, being unsatisfactory in only 6% of lessons. These were at reception and Key Stage 2. There was no unsatisfactory teaching at Key Stage 1. In 8% of lessons teaching was judged to be very good and in 44% it was good. Teaching in English and mathematics is satisfactory overall though there are examples of good and sometimes very good teaching in these subjects, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons. In the best lessons, plans show clearly what pupils will learn so that pupils are well motivated and keen to work. Good control of classes means that pupils in most lessons work hard and succeed with their work although some younger Key Stage 2 pupils sometimes let their enthusiasm get the better of them and time is lost as the teacher regains their attention. Overall learning is satisfactory. In some lessons where teachers effectively support pupils, use the classroom assistants well and set work which interests and excites pupils, learning is good. Pupils with English as an additional language are effectively supported and make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their learning targets because of the support they receive in lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school is currently revising all its subject policies to ensure it covers all the subjects of the primary school effectively.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Pupils with English as an additional language receive effective support which enables them to make satisfactory progress throughout school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for moral and social development is good, while that for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. There are too few planned opportunities for spiritual development and there is too little emphasis on Western European art and culture.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. There are good assessment systems in writing and mathematics but few in other subjects.

The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents although few are involved on a regular basis in helping in school. The school is reviewing all its subject policies but has not been giving sufficient emphasis to design and technology recently. Although the school cares well for all its pupils and makes sure all are well looked after, it is lacking some formal written procedures.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The head and senior staff have managed to merge the two former schools effectively and have a clear idea of what now needs doing to raise standards throughout the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors have clear structures to ensure that they fulfil their duties effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school analyses test results well and uses the information to set targets for the future, but does not yet have effective enough systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school sets its budget to meet the educational priorities identified in its school effectiveness plan.

The school is well staffed, but most of the junior school teachers are not familiar enough with all the subjects taught throughout the school to use them effectively in reinforcing the learning of basic literacy, numeracy and computer skills. The head, senior management team and governors provide strong leadership and have accomplished much since the amalgamation. While some subject co-ordinators are experienced and providing strong leadership, others are new to the role and require training to become as effective. The accommodation is good and pupils are proud of it, pointing out how clean and tidy the building is. Resources are adequate and the school is still checking exactly what it has in some subjects and where it may need more. The governors have a clear understanding of how to get good value from their spending decisions rather than simply taking the cheapest option.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children make good progress in school • The teaching is good • The school helps their children to work hard and do their best 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework their children receive • The range of after-school activities • How closely the school works with parents

The inspectors agree with the parents that the school encourages pupils to their best in their work and that more could be done to encourage closer links with parents. Progress made by most pupils is satisfactory and teaching is satisfactory overall rather than good. The inspectors think that there is a clear homework policy but that it is not consistently applied. There is a satisfactory range of after-school clubs and activities. The school works satisfactorily with parents although some felt they were not encouraged enough to help in school. The inspectors saw little evidence of parents helping in classrooms during the inspection.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 When children enter the nursery their attainment is well below average in all areas of learning for the Foundation Stage. During their time in nursery they make good progress overall. Progress in personal, social and emotional development is considerable, while in other areas it is at least satisfactory. Consequently they enter the reception classes with attainment overall below average. Although most children make satisfactory progress in the reception classes they are still attaining below average standards in most areas by the end of the reception year. By the time they enter Year 1 the majority of children attain the expected levels in their personal, social and emotional development because of the strong emphasis placed on this area during the Foundation Stage. Most attain below the expected levels in communication, language and literacy and are unlikely to attain the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1, except in their personal, social and emotional development. Children who speak English as an additional language make good progress in their understanding of English because of the good levels of support provided by the school.

2 The results of the Key Stage 1 national tests in 2000 show pupils attaining well below the national average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared with the results of schools with similar pupils, standards in reading were below the national average and standards in writing and mathematics were above the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher than expected level 3 was well below the national average in reading and mathematics and close to average in writing. The tests results for 2000 show that girls performed better than boys in all three subjects, while in 1999 the differences were not so marked. As this is a new school there is not yet enough information from past results to be able to comment on whether standards are rising in line with standards nationally. The inspection findings show that the standards pupils attain in lessons are slightly better than their test results, making them below rather than well below average overall, because of the support they receive from their teachers and classroom assistants.

3 The results of the Key Stage 2 national tests in 2000 show standards to be well below the national average in English and science and below average in mathematics. When compared with the results of pupils in similar schools standards in English and mathematics are above average and standards in science are average. While the proportion gaining the expected level 4 in English and science was slightly above average, the proportion gaining the higher level 5 was well below average in both of these subjects. In mathematics the proportion gaining the expected level 4 was below average and the proportion gaining the higher level 5 was close to the average. There is not yet enough test information available to be able to comment on trends in standards and whether these are rising as fast as standards nationally or not. In all three subjects boys did slightly better than girls this year, although in the 1999 tests there was no real difference between them. The inspection findings show that standards this year are below rather than well below average overall partly because of the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

4 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them because of the good arrangements made to support them in school. The system for identifying such pupils means that they are supported from an early stage and receive work well matched to their needs. Pupils with English as an additional

language receive effective support throughout the school so that most are competent in English by Year 6. As a consequence of the good support they receive in lessons they make progress in all subjects at around the same satisfactory pace as other pupils.

5 Speaking and listening skills are below average at the end of both key stages. A significant proportion of pupils enter school with a limited grasp of English. At Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils listen carefully to what the teachers say in lessons. Some speak in clear sentences but the majority find difficulty in expressing their ideas, often giving one word answers because they cannot think of the words they need to give a more detailed response. By the time pupils reach Year 6 standards in speaking and listening are still below average because the teachers do not provide enough planned opportunities to use and develop these skills within lessons. Consequently pupils make simple grammatical errors in speaking and some of these then find their way into their writing too. Too often the teachers do too much talking and do not encourage pupils to become involved in discussions and debates on issues they are learning about.

6 Reading skills are below average at both key stages. At Key Stage 1 higher attaining pupils enjoy reading books and read fluently and expressively. They use phonics to help them to work out words they do not recognise. However, average and below average readers in the school are much less confident, lack fluency and expression when reading aloud and have few ideas for tackling words they do not know. The poorer readers have little idea about how to work out words using phonics. They have little idea of how to find information in non-fiction books. The best readers at Key Stage 1 are able to find information in books by using the contents and index pages of non-fiction books. At Key Stage 2 the better readers read aloud fluently and with expression. Although they know how the library is organised they do not use it for private study. Average readers at Key Stage 2 are still not confident with a range of strategies for tackling unknown words. The poorer readers tend to read rather mechanically, making simple errors and not always understanding what they are reading.

7 Writing skills are also below average at both key stages. By the time they are seven the highest attaining pupils write in full sentences with capital letters and full stops but few others do so. Handwriting ranges from consistently well-formed letters through to poor spacing of letters of inconsistent size with capitals appearing in the middle of words or sentences. By Year 6, although pupils have made satisfactory progress and the higher attaining ones are using expressive and descriptive language in their writing, most do not attain these levels. Too often the grammatical errors from pupils' speech are transferred to their writing, including mixing tenses. They do begin to join their handwriting at Key Stage 2 and it gradually improves for most through the junior years. By Year 6 the most capable pupils refine and improve their writing, sometimes using the computer to do so.

8 In mathematics standards at Key Stage 1 are below average. In lessons where they have teacher support most seven-year-olds understand the numbers to 100 and count on and back in tens correctly and confidently with the help of a 100 square. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to understand the value of each digit in four digit numbers, name two-dimensional shapes and understand halves and quarters. Average pupils explain why one number is bigger or smaller than another and confidently complete missing numbers from a 100 square. Below average pupils work with numbers to 20 and know odd and even numbers. By the age of 11 most pupils can double numbers in their heads and recall facts from their 2, 3, 5, and 10 times tables. However many are less confident with number facts from other multiplication

tables. Higher attaining pupils understand decimals and work out areas of irregular shapes. Average attaining pupils plot coordinates on squared paper to create pictures and patterns. They know the factors of two digit numbers but struggle with three digit ones. Lower attaining pupils find fairly simple multiplication of two digit numbers by a single digit challenging.

9 Standards in science are below average by the end of both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have learned about parts of the body including the names of various joints, how to classify foods into different categories and useful ways to record simple investigations including creating graphs. Year 6 pupils spend a lot of time revising earlier work in preparation for the national tests and go over much of their earlier work to reinforce their knowledge and understanding. They know that some changes in some materials are reversible and some are not, and a range of sources of light and what implements around the house use electricity. There is little evidence of pupils being encouraged to ask scientific questions or suggest ways to investigate issues that interest or intrigue them. Most of the practical work is carrying out teacher devised tests to increase knowledge and understanding of scientific facts rather than to encourage an investigative attitude towards the subject.

10 Progress in English, mathematics and science is satisfactory overall. There is evidence occasionally of pupils not quite grasping technical language because for so many English is an additional language, as when a pupil confused wrist and ankle in a science lesson. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is beginning to have a positive impact on standards in English and mathematics as teachers use the structures to teach basic skills, but the lack of expertise and experience of most junior school teachers in all of the subjects covered means that opportunities to reinforce basic skills through all subjects are sometimes lost.

11 Standards in physical education are below the expected levels at both key stages because of the recent disruption caused by the merger of the two schools and subsequent building work. Standards in design and technology are below the expected levels because it does not appear to have been given enough time during the last few unsettled years. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in art, history, geography, information and communication technology are in line with those expected at both key stages. Standards in music are satisfactory at Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2.

12 The school achieved targets set last year and has used its analysis of assessment information to set realistic targets for the future.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13 Pupils have good attitudes to their work. They enjoy coming to school and approach their lessons and activities with enthusiasm. In lessons where stimulating and challenging questions are given, pupils respond well and explain their answers with growing confidence. For the most part pupils listen well to their teachers and each other and instructions are usually followed quickly and quietly. In lessons where the teachers have high expectations pupils settle to work quickly and maintain concentration well throughout the school. Pupils are able to work well in pairs or alone when required. As pupils move through the school they develop the skills needed to become independent learners. They know how to use reference books and computers to support research and independent study. There are a small number of lessons throughout the school where pupils are over-directed by their teachers. They then have insufficient opportunities to make choices and develop independence.

14 The behaviour of the pupils is satisfactory overall. Children in the nursery, reception class and in Key Stage 1 behave consistently well in lessons and at playtimes. In Key Stage 2 there are a significant number of occasions when pupils lack self-discipline and behaviour is unacceptable. In the majority of lessons behaviour is good. In Key Stage 2 assemblies the atmosphere is adversely affected by underlying chatter and inattention. The value of this occasion is devalued as a result. Misbehaviour goes unchecked and teachers' expectations are insufficiently high. Behaviour at lunchtimes is for the most part sociable and most pupils behave well. However a small number of older pupils lack self-restraint and tolerance of others. Incidents of bullying and conflict are dealt with swiftly, but at present playground behaviour is not given a sufficiently high profile. In the school as a whole, pupils understand the school rules well and appreciate their purpose. There have been a number of exclusions in the past year. They have been accompanied by appropriate procedures.

15 Relationships amongst the whole school community are good. Pupils are friendly and polite and the many different cultures represented in the school work and play well together. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. When pupils are offered responsibility, for example in preparing the hall for assembly or tidying away after lessons, they respond well carrying out their tasks responsibly and sensibly. The beliefs and values of others are well respected and pupils learn to consider those less fortunate than themselves. For example in a Year 6 personal and social education lesson pupils discussed in a mature and sensitive way the plight of displaced children in Mozambique.

16 Attendance rates are well below the national average and are poor. For the most part pupils are eager to come to school and most arrive on time although a small number of pupils are persistently late. Absences are due to normal childhood illnesses and to a considerable amount of holiday taking in term time both for short and extended periods. There are a number of pupils whose attendance records give cause for concern.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17 The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in over nine out of ten lessons. It is good or very good in about half the lessons. Teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning. There are, however, significant differences in quality between key stages.

18 Teaching in the reception and nursery classes is satisfactory overall. In the nursery class, teaching is often of good quality. In one out of ten lessons in the reception classes teaching is unsatisfactory and in the remainder it is satisfactory. Teachers at this stage do not have a secure knowledge or understanding of the new Foundation Stage curriculum and planning is unsatisfactory. There are many activities in the reception classes that are not planned in detail. This results in children not learning as well as they should at times. Sometimes pupils lose interest and concentration when activities last too long or are not at the right level for them. The classroom assistants and nursery nurses support learning effectively and usually have good planning for their activities.

19 In Key Stage 1, teaching in lessons seen during the inspection was good overall. It was good or very good in two-thirds of lessons seen. Teaching at this stage is never less than satisfactory. However when samples of pupils' work in many subjects are taken into account, the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is judged to be satisfactory overall. The scrutiny of pupils' work suggests that the good standards seen

during the inspection have not been sustained over the longer term. Pupils make satisfactory progress as a result and acquire skills at an appropriate rate. They work at an appropriate pace and concentrate on their tasks well.

20 In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is more inconsistent than in Key Stage 1. It was good in about half the lessons seen but ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. Teachers in Key Stage 2 do not teach all the subjects to their class. Sometimes they teach groups set across the year group for English or mathematics. These groups are at times maintained for other subjects so that a class teacher may only teach his or her own class for a very short time each day. There are subjects that some teachers in Key Stage 2 do not teach at all. This specialist teaching has a positive impact on learning on one hand, but also results in teachers who are not confident and do not have sufficient knowledge to teach the full curriculum. As well as this, opportunities are missed to support the teaching of basic skills across the whole curriculum and pupils at times do not learn as well as they should. When the sample of pupils' work is taken into account, teaching at Key Stage 2 is judged to be satisfactory overall.

21 When teaching is unsatisfactory, activities are too directed by teachers and not at the correct level for the pupils; as a result pupils' learning is held back. They are not sure what they are expected to learn in the lesson. At times, teachers have to stop to establish control of some unruly behaviour and the pace of the lesson is affected so that pupils do not learn as much as they can. Sometimes teachers are not confident in teaching a subject, such as music or information and communication technology (ICT), and pupils are confused. In one ICT lesson, the teacher had to stop the lesson to try to clarify confusing instructions and unclear demonstrations due to insecure subject knowledge. When expectations of pupils are low, the presentation of their written work is untidy and they take little pride in it.

22 In the best teaching, teachers make sure that pupils understand what they are expected to learn in the lesson, are very well organised and ensure that pupils work hard. They make use of good questioning to help pupils contribute and extend their understanding of the content. They plan work at the correct level for each pupil in the class, according to their ability. This sort of teaching has a very positive effect on pupils' achievement. In a mathematics lesson in a Year 3 and 4 class in a lower ability set, pupils progress well when counting on and back in tens and understanding the value of numbers. The individual and group tasks are at a good level of difficulty for each pupil. The teacher has time for everyone and always demands explanations of what they are doing to check that they understand. Good use is made of a concluding session so that pupils can share what they have done and what they need to do next. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher plans the lesson very effectively, makes sure all pupils have a chance to contribute, including those with limited skills in English, and encourages speaking skills. In a Year 2 art lesson, the pupils settle down to work very quickly and the teacher makes good use of a classroom assistant to ensure that pupils, who find the task difficult, are able to achieve good results when doing a still-life drawing of fruit and vegetables. Meanwhile the teacher circulates to make sure all pupils are encouraged to consider texture, tone and shades.

23 The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good overall and is beginning to help to raise standards. Strengths are in careful planning so that tasks are well matched to pupils' varying needs and in good use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Progress in mathematics, reading and writing is assessed well in lessons and information gained is used to plan future work for each group. Speaking and listening skills are not so well supported, especially in Key Stage 2. Opportunities to develop these skills through discussions, debates, role-play and drama in subjects

other than English are not recognised and used effectively. In marking pupils' work, teachers' comments are often positive and bland. They do not always help pupils to improve. The comments do not tell pupils what they have done well in the piece of work and how to make it better. Consequently pupils are not very aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, of what they are good at and what they need to improve. Homework, for example in reading and spelling or to complete work, is also generally used appropriately.

24 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is well supported and planned. Pupils with English as an additional language are also taught well in groups and supported effectively in class lessons. Good practice in these areas is also helping to raise standards and make sure such pupils make satisfactory progress.

25 Resources are generally well used to stimulate learning but time is lost in Key Stage 2 because lessons overrun or the changeover of groups takes too long.

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

26 The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. It provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils to make progress in all subjects. The school has implemented the new Foundation Stage curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes and this is satisfactory overall.

27 The quality of planning in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory, but not yet as good as it should be. The recent creation of the new school has meant that every subject has needed to be appraised in order to ensure that all aspects of skills are built up consecutively across the two key stages. New schemes of work based on the latest national guidelines are being tried out this school year in many subjects and a systematic revision of all policies is also taking place. The school has not yet had time to devise assessment techniques to judge the success of the schemes of work. Teachers' half-termly and weekly planning is usually in sufficient detail, but these plans are not annotated to show how successfully topics have been taught and learnt, so that if need be, future planning can be modified. Currently not enough time is given to teaching design and technology throughout the school, nor to music in Year 6. The school day is a little shorter than is the usual for Key Stage 2 pupils and further time is lost due to the changeover of classes and groups between teachers.

28 There are effective strategies in place to teach literacy and numeracy skills. Although literacy and numeracy are firmly embedded into the specific subject areas of English and mathematics, links with other subjects are only loosely structured, and the system in Key Stage 2 where teachers do not teach all subjects to their classes is not helpful in promoting close links. Similarly, the use of information technology skills in many other subject areas is unsatisfactory.

29 The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. There are a variety of clubs and activities available for pupils in both key stages including opportunities for sport and music. There are reading clubs for both key stages and a neighbouring school has recently offered to set up a breakfast sports club. The school ensures that each class goes on at least one history, geography or cultural trip each year, and the oldest pupils take part in a residential activities week. All these activities give pupils valuable educational and social experiences and help to increase the pupils' interest and enjoyment of these subjects.

30 Provision for the pupils' personal, social, health and emotional education is sound at both key stages. There is provision for sex education for the oldest pupils, attention is paid to drugs' related issues and bullying is discussed regularly. The school makes effective use of circle time to promote awareness of others, their feelings and problems. At present there is no school council or formal way for pupils to make their views known.

31 The school has established a sound range of links with the local community. In addition the curriculum is enriched by a wide range of visitors to the school such as the fire and rescue service and Railtrack. There are good contacts with local mosques, temples and church and the pupils take part in competitions devised by the local library. All of these links help to bring to life and reinforce the day-to-day classroom learning of the pupils.

32 The school maintains good relations with other educational establishments. Students come into school and there are close links with the two nearby secondary schools. Pupils use the swimming pool in one secondary school and teachers from both schools visit to give them lessons throughout the year. Year 6 pupils visit the secondary school of their choice for up to three sessions. The governing body has co-opted members from both schools. The school belongs to an independent cluster of six primary schools that meets at least twice a term to discuss issues of common concern and to share ideas for improving their effectiveness.

33 All pupils have good access to the full range of opportunities provided by the school. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Work is usually set at appropriate levels of difficulty. The school is committed to equality and raising standards for all pupils.

34 Work within withdrawal sets for pupils with special educational needs is effectively matched to individual education plans and carefully monitored by the co-ordinator. The work provided within class is well matched to needs, and meets the requirements of individual education plans well.

Pupils' personal development

35 Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall. Assemblies meet requirements in that they contain an act of collective worship but they vary in quality. Key Stage 1 assemblies are pleasant occasions that create a positive atmosphere enabling pupils to enjoy the stories that are told. They react enthusiastically and take in the moral messages that are being presented, for example that Jonah had to face up to his responsibilities even though he was afraid to do so at first. Behaviour is good and pupils are given time to pray and reflect on what they have learned. Provision for spiritual development is therefore satisfactory. The quality of the Key Stage 2 and whole-school assemblies is not nearly so good. Pupils enter the hall noisily and many continue to chatter, unchecked by their teachers, while everyone assembles. The recorded music or that being played by the pianist cannot be heard. A few continue to distract others during the main part of the assembly though the lively talk by the local minister in the whole-school gathering does hold their attention. Many opt out of singing the hymn or song. There is therefore no sense of togetherness. Nor do the assemblies, which are held at the end of the afternoon, create an appropriate atmosphere for quiet reflection on the day's events or on the story that has been told. Provision for spiritual development is therefore unsatisfactory in these assemblies.

36 Taking the school as a whole, provision for spiritual development is satisfactory overall. Opportunities are offered in some lessons for pupils to reflect on their experiences and to express feelings. Poems from Year 5 pupils indicate that they have been given time to think about moods. In a religious education lesson, pupils think about what effect the death of a relative has. In an art lesson, they express amazement at the beauty of a woven rug from India. Year 1 pupils think about what makes them happy and sad. Similar opportunities are not offered regularly in every class, but Year 6 pupils say that they would not be afraid to discuss their worries with a teacher and there is general respect throughout the school for the feelings, beliefs and values of others.

37 There is good provision for moral development. Pupils know right from wrong and school and class rules are displayed prominently in every room. They are well understood by pupils and teachers apply them consistently across the school. Team points and stars are awarded for good effort and these accumulate and lead to the granting of a certificate and a tangible reward such as pencil, a ruler and ultimately a teddy. Pupils clearly understand the sanctions that are applied for misdemeanours. Moral issues are also raised during assemblies and, by collecting for charities, pupils become aware of the needs of others. Older pupils sometimes organise these collections themselves, supporting, for example, the Blue Peter appeal.

38 Provision for social development is good. Work is progressing to develop an up-to-date policy for this aspect of education but satisfactory opportunities are provided in lessons for pupils to work collaboratively. Relationships are fine and adults are good role models. Pupils have responsibilities within their classrooms and the oldest carry out jobs responsibly such as looking after the library. There are good opportunities for pupils to socialise in settings other than school. A wide range of educational visits ensures that all the pupils learn to conduct themselves properly when out of school. The residential visits for the older pupils are the highlight of the year for them, presenting them with challenges that require teamwork and co-operation. Social interaction also occurs when sports teams play competitive matches and when the choir sings during events at the National Indoor Arena and Walsall Town Hall.

39 Provision for cultural development is sound but limited use is made of school subjects such as art and music to introduce pupils to the indigenous culture of Britain and Western Europe. Year 6 pupils struggle to name famous composers and can only quote Van Gogh when asked about famous artists. Through history and geography, they learn about the local area, for example, about Walsall during the Second World War, but an understanding of the multicultural nature of modern society is well promoted in the school. Major world faiths are studied in religious education, visits are made to the local church, mosque and temple, and major festivals are celebrated, for example with Christmas and Eid parties. A club for pupils to learn traditional Indian dances is particularly popular and over-subscribed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40 The school has satisfactory arrangements for the care and protection of its pupils. All staff know the pupils well and show a caring and sensitive attitude towards them. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and provided for. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory and the school provides a safe and well maintained environment for its pupils. The arrangements for the care of sick and injured pupils are good. The procedures for child protection are unsatisfactory at present. Whilst there are members of staff with appropriate knowledge and training this

is not consistent for all members of the teaching and ancillary staff. The school lacks a suitable policy and written guidance for all adults in school.

41 There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Detailed records are maintained which allow the school to highlight individual problems and to offer appropriate support. The school works closely with parents where there are concerns about a child's progress or their behaviour.

42 The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. There is a well understood system of rewards and sanctions and there are clear and well written rules. Praise is used consistently by the teachers to promote good behaviour and sanctions provide clear messages about unacceptable behaviour in most lessons. The system is effective in lessons. The procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are satisfactory. Provision is made for pupils to learn about the issues of bullying and disrespect in personal and social education lessons, but these lessons are not reinforced in the junior school playground where consideration, respect and tolerance for others are not given a sufficiently high profile.

43 The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. The school meets all statutory requirements and the administrative arrangements are efficient. Pupils with unsatisfactory attendance rates or persistent lateness are carefully monitored. The school works closely with the education welfare service in taking appropriate action. Good plans are in place to develop a system of incentive awards to promote better attendance.

44 Since the opening of the new school a lot of work has been done to create and use effective assessment procedures across the school in order to place pupils in appropriate groups for their literacy and numeracy sessions and to plan work to match the needs of all pupils. The results of formal assessment tests are in the process of being transferred onto computer so that pupils' progress can be seen at a glance as they move through the school. Predictions as to pupils' probable future attainment have started to be made and annotated. There are good systems in place for assessing pupils' work in mathematics and writing. However assessment of reading, pupils' speaking and listening skills and their work in other subjects is unsatisfactory. The assessment procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory at the Foundation Stage and good at Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers are starting to collect samples of work which demonstrate specific levels of attainment in each subject. It is expected that this exercise will raise general awareness of the skills that need to be taught to each year group throughout the school and so help to raise standards. Where assessment procedures are good the findings are being used effectively to plan future work and drive standards up as in literacy and numeracy and with pupils with special educational needs. However more needs to be done in those subjects without effective procedures for assessing pupils' progress. The assessment co-ordinator is clear sighted and well organised.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45 Parents are appreciative of the education provided for their children. In particular they feel that the teaching is good, that their children are making good progress and are expected to work hard. Some parents are unhappy about behaviour, the amount of homework provided and the range of activities provided outside lessons. A number of parents also feel that they are not sufficiently well informed about how their child is getting on and that the school does not work closely enough with parents.

The inspection findings generally support the views of parents but find that the provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory.

46 The school has established satisfactory links with parents. Parents are confident in approaching the school should they have any concerns and the school is able to provide appropriate support for the various languages spoken by parents. Nursery and reception staff are easily accessed at the start and finish of the day as are the headteacher and deputy head. The size and layout of the school building makes access to all class teachers difficult. Parents are invited to seasonal performances and to open evenings but opportunities to gain insight into the work that their children do are limited. A curriculum workshop has been held for Year 6 parents but this has not yet been extended to the rest of the school. Class assemblies and open lessons are not offered.

47 The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is satisfactory. Parents are supportive of the school. A small number of parents are able to offer help in the classrooms with group work, sewing and other activities. Special occasions and fundraising events are well supported. Overall the opportunities for parents to be involved in the life of the school and in their children's learning are underdeveloped.

48 The quality of the information provided for parents is satisfactory. The school brochure, governors' report and newsletters are all well written and keep parents well informed about the life of the school. The school brochure in particular provides good information about school life and includes copies of the homework and behaviour policies. Information about the work to be done in the term ahead is provided for all years. In Key Stage 1 pupils' reports give a brief outline of the work covered in the year and areas of difficulty are identified. Pupils' personal progress is also reported on. In Key Stage 2 the quality of the reports is inconsistent and in general they provide insufficient useful information.

49 The contribution that parents make to their children's learning at home and at school is satisfactory. Homework is generally well supported but its provision is inconsistent particularly at Key Stage 2. Whilst parents are provided with information about homework expectations in general there is no home-school diary to provide specific and up-to-date requirements and to encourage parents in supporting their children at home. The home-school agreement is well written and is included in the school brochure.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50 Overall leadership of the school is good. The headteacher has managed effectively the merger of two very different schools, each with its own distinct ethos, into one coherent unit. This was especially difficult given the length of time the future of the former schools was under discussion and the obvious damage to staff morale caused by such uncertainty. The head, governors and senior management team have a clear view of what needs to be done to develop the kind of school they want with its emphasis on high standards and care of pupils. The school analyses the results of the national tests in English, mathematics and science to check if any groups of pupils are not being well catered for. Given the newness of the school, the amount of information collected so far is insufficient to show any trends but it will in the future. The school is beginning to develop systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning but these are still in their infancy. This monitoring has so far, been done by the headteacher and deputy. Although the school has plans to delegate more of this responsibility to subject co-ordinators, some of them are very new to their posts and lack the management and leadership experience and expertise to be fully effective.

51 The governors have played a vital role in the merger of the two former schools. They have an appropriate committee structure to ensure that they fulfil their duties effectively including establishing a temporary committee to oversee the ongoing building refurbishments. All school policies are carefully checked by the governors before being approved and they are effective in the strategic management of the school. They keep track of what is happening in school through regular reports from staff and are fully committed to supporting the staff in their determination to raise standards. For example the curriculum committee meets subject co-ordinators to discuss new policies and agrees targets for improving standards based upon information from the school's performance and assessment report. The governors fulfil their statutory role effectively and have a satisfactory grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The head, senior management team and governors have a clear commitment to school improvement and know how to bring this about. While other staff are committed to improvement, some will require training and support in their management roles to enable them to acquire the capacity needed to be fully effective in raising standards.

52 The school has put in place an effective policy for performance management based closely on government guidelines. A comprehensive staff development policy is being planned but at the time of the inspection was not in place. Given that many of the junior school teachers have not taught several subjects in recent years and there is a need for management training for some subject co-ordinators, the policy will need to reflect these issues. The school has a good school effectiveness plan with a very strong emphasis on raising standards. The school effectiveness plan is closely referenced to the local education authority's education development plan. It identifies appropriate priorities and includes clear and challenging targets for improvement.

53 The school is fully committed to providing equality of opportunity for all. This is demonstrated in the careful analysis of performance information to make sure no groups are being overlooked, in the good provision for pupils with special educational needs, and in the commitment to enable all pupils to access day and residential trips through heavily subsidising those who find it hard to afford them. The school needs to remain aware of the need to identify gifted and talented pupils and to ensure that any such pupils are well catered for.

54 The management of special educational needs is good, and there is effective, caring provision. The co-ordinator has effectively developed procedures for early identification of need. She is directly responsible, together with class teachers and outside agencies, for compiling each pupil's individual education plan and is fully involved in reviews and assessing pupils' progress.

55 The head, senior management team and governors ensure that the budget is based on the priorities in the school effectiveness plan and that specific grants are used well for their designated purposes. This is demonstrated through the good work being done with pupils with special educational needs. They have a clear view on the need to obtain value for money from spending decisions and there are effective systems in place to monitor spending on a regular basis. The day-to-day management and administration of the budget is ably carried out by the office staff who have a clear understanding of their roles and make an effective contribution to the smooth running of the school on a daily basis.

56 The school has sufficient resources for learning and is currently still auditing what it has after the amalgamation. There is plenty of internal accommodation and the refurbishments to enable the two former schools to become one mean that the building

is in a good state of repair. It is kept very clean and tidy, which the Year 6 pupils were keen to mention to the inspectors in discussion. There are a good number of appropriately qualified teachers and support staff to enable all subjects to be taught and pupils to be supported effectively. However many of the teachers have limited experience beyond the infant or junior phase in which they have been working and most junior teachers do not have a grasp of the full primary school curriculum. Consequently opportunities are lost to teach basic skills through all subjects and this is something the school needs to address.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57 In order to raise standards, particularly in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and physical education, the school should: (paragraphs 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 77, 81, 82, 83, 99, 114, 139, 140, 141)

- Ensure that all subject co-ordinators are given the training, time and support they need to be able to manage their subjects efficiently and effectively; (paragraphs 50, 52, 88, 98, 104, 116, 122, 128, 144)
- Identify where the strongest and weakest teaching is and use that information to improve the quality of teaching across the school; (paragraphs 17, 18, 20, 21, 85, 90, 94, 97, 103, 120, 121, 127, 142, 148)
- Ensure that all Key Stage 2 teachers receive training in the subjects where they lack confidence, experience or expertise so that they all become good primary class teachers. Increase the opportunities for teaching basic skills through all subjects and reduce the time lost through changing classes between lessons; (paragraphs 20, 23, 28, 52, 96, 103, 115, 126, 135)
- Provide more planned opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills in all subjects; (paragraphs 5,23, 79, 80)
- Develop and implement a clear marking policy to ensure that pupils are told regularly and frequently what is good about their work and how to make it better; (paragraphs 23, 87)
- Build on the good systems currently in place in writing and mathematics to develop simple and effective assessment procedures throughout all subjects and across the school; (paragraphs 44, 50, 133, 135)
- Seek ways to improve attendance. (paragraphs 16, 43)

Minor issues

The governors may also wish to consider strategies to:

- Improve the quality of junior and whole school assemblies; (paragraphs 14, 35)
- Improve the behaviour of Key Stage 2 pupils in assemblies and in the playground; (paragraphs 14, 35)
- Ensure that teachers in the Foundation Stage have the necessary knowledge and understanding to be effective in that stage. (paragraphs 18, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76)

PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

58 These pupils form the largest group in the school and speak a range of languages at home. The commonest are Punjabi, Gujarati, Bengali and Urdu but there are others to be found in school. Many speak no English when they start school, others are not yet fluent. Some have recently arrived, joining the school in later years, such as the recent asylum seekers. They are of mixed levels of ability and are supported effectively by specialist teachers and bilingual classroom assistants. In the Foundation Stage, support is given within the classroom and is very effective in helping the children to settle and establish early skills in speaking English. From Year 1 to Year 5, about fifty pupils at the early stages of learning English are supported effectively in withdrawal groups during the literacy and numeracy hours. English is well established for most pupils by Year 6 but bilingual support is still available when needed. Higher order skills are enhanced in a booster class open to all Year 6 pupils. Pupils take a full part in the life of the school.

59 Achievement is at the same levels in all subjects as for other pupils in the school, in terms of their age and ability. The support they receive is effective in ensuring they make satisfactory progress. Standards in mathematics are slightly higher than in English, suggesting that their conceptual skills are developing well. There is no evidence that any minority ethnic group has significantly lower standards across all subjects. The school is starting to use an evaluation of results in English and mathematics in the 2000 end of key stage tests to identify any factors under their control that they can improve.

60 Work in literacy and numeracy is planned by the specialist teacher and the class teacher together so that all have the same opportunities to learn. Lessons are carried out in groups withdrawn from each year group. The quality of teaching in these groups is good overall. The work is well planned and objectives are clear. Pupils are given tasks that are appropriate for their level of understanding. They share reading, learn to read independently in English and to write using appropriate structures. Pupils learn to calculate numbers mentally, understand the value of numbers, and solve problems. Progress in speaking and listening would be enhanced by more opportunities, for example joining the rest of the class for a concluding session in which they could share their work with others in a larger group. Bilingual classroom assistants give valuable support in class lessons to consolidate learning and progress. They work well with groups of pupils, especially at the Foundation Stage. They organise a book club at lunchtime to encourage good habits in reading, as well as running a group for parents and toddlers to help give children a good start in school.

61 Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. There is a good range of bilingual staff from ethnic groups represented in the school who speak a number of community languages. These provide good models for pupils and valuable experience of the cultures of pupils. Specialist help is provided by 2.3 teachers and 2.5 bilingual assistants funded by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant. Because of changes to funding and the school, these staff have come through a difficult time in the last few years. The management of the school, including the governors, value their contribution and are funding their posts for the summer term. The headteacher takes responsibility for the management of provision. Pupils are assessed using the National Curriculum levels and tests. The school has only a partial assessment of pupils' competence in English at present using this method and is considering how to provide a more detailed assessment.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

89

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8	44	43	6	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons. Because of rounding up or down the total may not add up to exactly 100%.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	27	338
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		108

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	124

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	268

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	43
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	59

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	10.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	20	23	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	12	13
	Girls	18	21	22
	Total	27	33	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63 (77)	77 (80)	81 (84)
	National	83 (79)	84 (83)	90 (86)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	13	5
	Girls	19	22	10
	Total	28	35	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	65 (78)	81 (80)	35 (67)
	National	84 (82)	88 (80)	88 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	29	30	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	20	21
	Girls	20	16	21
	Total	41	36	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (54)	61 (65)	73 (62)
	National	75 (70)	82 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	19	19
	Girls	20	18	18
	Total	39	37	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (52)	63 (65)	63 (62)
	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	3
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	80
Pakistani	69
Bangladeshi	41
Chinese	1
White	78
Any other minority ethnic group	22

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other	5	
Indian	2	
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	4	
Other minority ethnic groups	6	

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	301

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	81

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.4
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	720248
Total expenditure	705071
Expenditure per pupil	1804
Balance brought forward from previous year	3107
Balance carried forward to next year	18284

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	365
Number of questionnaires returned	79

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	35	6	9	0
My child is making good progress in school.	37	53	3	5	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	30	15	5	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	39	16	9	10
The teaching is good.	49	42	5	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	33	14	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	34	10	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	41	4	1	6
The school works closely with parents.	33	41	14	8	5
The school is well led and managed.	35	34	10	11	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	47	8	5	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	30	16	5	14

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

62 Children in the Foundation Stage are taught in the nursery and in two parallel reception classes within the same large room. They are admitted to the nursery on a part-time basis in September or in January, following their third birthday. Children enter the reception classes at the beginning of the school year in which they will be five. Few children join the reception year without having attended the nursery or other pre-school setting. At the time of the inspection, there were fifty-five children placed in the nursery. A further twenty-one children joined the nursery during the week of the inspection. Of the forty-two children in the reception classes, twenty-nine were under five. One child in the nursery is identified as having special educational needs. The majority have English as an additional language. These children are well supported to enable them to participate fully in lessons.

63 On entry to the nursery, early assessment information indicates that most children's attainment is well below average in all the areas of learning for the Foundation Stage. While in the nursery they make considerable progress in their personal, social and emotional development, and at least satisfactory progress in the other areas of learning. Early assessment on entry to the reception year indicates that in communication, language and literacy and mathematics, children's attainment is below average. Although sound progress is made, skills in these areas remain below average by the age of five. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, the majority of the children attain the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development. This is due to the emphasis placed on this area of development. In communication, language and literacy a significant majority remain below average, particularly in early writing. The majority of children are unlikely to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage, except in their personal, social and emotional development. Children for whom English is an additional language make good progress in developing their understanding of English, because there is a good level of support to meet their needs.

64 The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is based on the Early Learning Goals for children of this age. However, there are weaknesses in the planning, particularly in the reception classes, where over-direction by teachers and insufficient opportunity for child-initiated activities sometimes result in long and unexciting sessions which fail to interest young children. A lack of knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and Early Learning Goals by the reception class teachers results in inappropriate tasks at times which are outside the children's interest and experience. For example, a group of children failed to understand about 'dehydrated food required by explorers in Antarctica'. At the same time another group struggled to cope with the concept of 'minutes' in time. On another occasion, children sat for half an hour while the date was written letter by letter. They were expected to understand terms such as 'phoneme'. Many children quickly lost interest and made few gains in their learning. The organisation into rigid ability groups in the reception year is a further hindrance to the progress of a significant number of children, particularly those children in the lower ability groups, who lack the necessary stimulation from more able children. Considerable time is lost when groups change over and move about the classroom.

65 Planning in the nursery is sound. Children are provided with a range of activities and experiences, but these do not always provide sufficient challenge, particularly for the more able children. Day-to-day assessments in the nursery add

useful information to the early records of achievement maintained in the Foundation Stage. Insufficient use is made of assessment information, particularly in the reception classes, to inform the next steps of learning.

66 Learning resources are adequate to promote all areas of learning. The secure outdoor area is used regularly, but activities are not always well structured to stimulate imaginative thinking. The outdoor playhouse, for example, does not promote good imaginative role-play because it is not well resourced and there is little adult intervention to extend this play. In the reception classes, imaginative play in the home-corner and the 'igloo' is limited by a lack of resources to extend ideas. The children have access to the hall in the main school to develop physical skills in addition to the resources provided in their own playground areas.

Personal, social and emotional development

67 Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is good. Nearly all the children enter the nursery with well below average skills. They make good progress in the nursery and this continues in the reception classes. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, the majority will achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area for development. Children enjoy coming to school. Adults in the nursery promote independence well. Children are encouraged to select activities and materials, share large toys in outdoor play, and tidy away at the end of an activity. As a result, the children quickly understand school routines and select activities and tidy up with confidence. Fewer opportunities are provided in the reception classes for children to make choices and initiate activities.

Communication, language and literacy

68 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in this area of learning. However the teaching of writing in the reception classes is unsatisfactory. In relation to their low level of attainment on entry to the nursery, most children make good progress in acquiring skills in speaking and listening. Much of this is due to the good intervention by support staff for children with English as an additional language, and the good opportunities in the nursery for children to extend their speaking and listening skills through daily discussions, stories, songs and rhymes. In the reception classes, speaking and listening skills are not built upon as well as they might be, as there are not enough opportunities created for children to engage in conversations and speak aloud to an audience because of the over-direction by teachers. The majority of children use one word answers and are not encouraged to extend their vocabulary and sentence structure. All children enjoy listening to stories, but a significant majority do not understand the purpose of books and have not learnt to handle books carefully. By contrast in the reception classes a small number of children are able to read familiar words and recognise initial letter sounds with the most able child reading fluently and expressively. Not enough attention is given to the needs of these higher-attaining children when planning work, and as a result they do not progress as well as they should do. Only one third of the reception children write their name independently. There are too few opportunities for children to record their ideas and experiences through drawing and writing activities. These skills are not well promoted through structured play activities. As a result, early writing skills are not systematically developed and are unsatisfactory by the time children reach Year 1.

Mathematical development

69 Teaching is satisfactory and children make sound progress overall. In the nursery children make good progress in sorting, matching and counting through a

range of activities which enable them to practise these skills. They complete jigsaws, build with construction kits and count objects with increasing accuracy, acquiring the appropriate mathematical vocabulary. Counting is reinforced through simple number rhymes and the adults make good use of opportunities such as registration to extend children's understanding of counting. Most children count competently to five and some count beyond this in the nursery. In the reception classes teachers build on these early number skills soundly, but on occasions unsatisfactory teaching results in few gains in learning. For example, in a number lesson the lower-attaining children struggled to understand how to put the right number of spots beneath numbers fixed to the board. The lack of appropriate resources and over-direction by the teacher, together with a lack of understanding about how children learn, resulted in several children losing interest and many children failing to understand. Teaching in this lesson was unimaginative and unsuccessful with few gains in learning. Most children begin to acquire some understanding of two-dimensional shapes such as triangles and circles. Children in the reception class match numbers and more able children begin to record basic addition, but little work is recorded. Consequently, they do not have sufficient opportunity to practise writing numbers correctly. The majority are unlikely to achieve the Early Learning Goals for children in the Foundation Stage by the time they reach Year 1. There are missed opportunities for children to develop mathematical understanding through practical experiences and imaginative play.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70 Teaching is satisfactory in the nursery and reception classes and children make steady progress. There are missed opportunities to extend children's knowledge and understanding, particularly in the reception classes, through tasks which are more appropriate to the needs and experiences of the children. The concept of explorers in the Antarctic was too difficult for the children as it was well beyond the experience and understanding of most of them. The resources for this lesson were not well prepared.

71 There is a lack of attention to hygiene. For example children were not required to wash their hands before mixing foods, which did not contribute effectively to their personal development. In a more successful lesson, children made gingerbread men, with the language support assistant. She focused well on extending children's vocabulary, improving their grasp of English and developing their practical skills. Children showed good recall of the story read earlier, and could explain how they had made the gingerbread men, although responses were mainly one-word answers. In the nursery, the adults use the story of *The Three Little Pigs* to develop children's knowledge and understanding of materials and houses. They have some understanding of the difference between straw, sticks and bricks and that the strongest house was made of bricks.

72 Children in the reception classes observed how water changes into ice when frozen. Levels of understanding remained below the expected level for the majority of children. Through daily discussion, children learn about the days of the week, the seasons and begin to develop an understanding of the passage of time. In the nursery and reception classes, children listen to, learn and sing simple songs and rhymes. The good opportunities in the nursery enable children to select materials, construct models and develop skills in cutting, sticking and joining materials together. There are fewer occasions in the reception classes for these skills to be developed. In both classes, there are not enough opportunities for children to develop confidence when using computers. Many have not acquired the early skills to enable them to control the mouse and use the computer independently. By the time they start in Year 1, children's knowledge and understanding of the world remains below average for all except the most able.

Physical development

73 Teaching is satisfactory overall and children make sound progress, but many do not achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. Daily opportunities are provided for children in the nursery and reception classes to enjoy outdoor play, but sometimes this session is not well planned and objectives are unclear. There is a satisfactory range of resources including wheeled vehicles and climbing apparatus which most children enjoy using. Good use is made of obstacle courses which vary each day, to develop co-ordination, body awareness and balance. The activities provided for outdoor play are not always sufficiently demanding and result in some higher-attaining children underachieving. Sometimes the pace of outdoor lessons is too slow and children do not make sufficient gains in learning when this is the case. The children handle scissors, paint brushes and pencils with satisfactory control. All children have the opportunity to use materials such as plasticine and 'playdough'. The use of clay is less evident. They make sound gains in developing their manipulative skills.

Creative development

74 Children enter the nursery with skills that are well below average. They make steady progress in the Foundation Stage, but skills are still below average by the time children leave the reception classes.

75 In the nursery they explore musical instruments, but few children know the names of any instruments. They have an increasing repertoire of songs and rhymes, although a number of children do not join in the singing. They are well supported by the language support staff who encourage participation and help children to understand the words. Most children enjoy singing. Satisfactory opportunities are presented for children to express their own ideas and communicate their feelings through role-play in the home corner with appropriate intervention by the adults to encourage speaking skills. In the reception classes, role-play is promoted through the home corner and the igloo. The missed opportunities to structure this play well, for example by providing appropriate resources to stimulate communication, result in unimaginative play in the igloo where children crawl in and out of the tunnel, but do not extend their ideas further. When play is supported in the home corner such as acting out the story of *The Gingerbread Boy*, the quality improves, but the lack of appropriate resourcing hinders the development of imaginative ideas and play is not well extended as a result.

76 Opportunities are provided in the nursery and reception classes for children to explore techniques such as painting, printing, drawing and collage. In the nursery, children paint characters from *The Three Little Pigs* and make collage houses of sticks and straw. Children in the reception classes paint gingerbread boys and sponge print a large gingerbread boy. They make collage pictures of 'day' and 'night' and work together on a food collage. As part of this topic, they print with a variety of fruits. The range of art experiences and techniques presented to children is fairly limited in the Foundation Stage and is reflected in the quality of art on display. Higher-attaining children are not well challenged through sufficiently demanding and interesting tasks, and some children underachieve as a result.

ENGLISH

77 Results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests show English standards in both key stages to be well below national averages when compared with schools nationally. When compared with similar schools standards are above average at Key Stage 2 and in writing at Key Stage 1. Standards of reading at Key Stage 1 are below those of similar schools. However, overall standards in English are still too low.

78 Inspection evidence indicates that, despite good progress in many lessons, standards in English remain below average in both key stages. Approximately 70% of the pupils entering the school have English as an additional language and this is impacting on their attainment across the key stages. Too few pupils in Year 2 are performing at nationally expected levels for their age and the percentage expected to achieve the higher level 3 is low. Although many Key Stage 2 pupils are expected to achieve the average standard of level 4, very few will reach the higher level 5 and a significant minority may struggle to achieve level 3.

Speaking and listening

79 Pupils start from a very low baseline, with a significant proportion of children entering school with little knowledge of the English language. Recent assessments indicate that most of the Foundation Stage children will not achieve the Early Learning Goals set for them nationally by the time they leave the reception classes. By the time they are seven, pupils' speaking and listening skills are still below those expected nationally. The majority listen attentively to the teachers' introductions and explanations but many find it difficult to concentrate fully on what is being said. Whilst some pupils speak in clear sentences, many have a very limited vocabulary, which prevents them from articulating their ideas effectively. These pupils often answer questions with one-word answers and find it difficult to find the vocabulary they need to describe or explain.

80 Pupils make satisfactory progress through the key stages in developing their speaking and listening skills within the limited opportunities available to them, but, because they start from such a low baseline, standards are still below average by the time they leave the school. Grammatical errors such as "*he's took it*" and "*it would of been*", are common and, although pupils have developed their vocabulary significantly, many are unable to use Standard English effectively. These errors are transferred to written work even in Year 6. In some lessons, pupils' speaking and listening skills are well promoted, with many opportunities for them to talk about their work, whilst in others the teacher does most of the talking and opportunities are missed for pupils to refine their oral skills through extended conversations. Planning for the development of speaking and listening skills across all subjects is inconsistent and has not yet been addressed by the subject co-ordinator. Opportunities are missed for pupils to develop their oral skills through debates, interviews, and role-play situations in all subjects. There is no effective monitoring of progress in speaking and listening to enable teachers to plan opportunities for the pupils to develop their skills in a structured way.

Reading

81 By the age of seven, standards in reading are below average. The more able pupils demonstrate an enjoyment of reading and respond to the humour or interesting content. They read fluently and expressively and talk about aspects they particularly like. They use their knowledge of phonics and picture cues to work out unfamiliar words but rarely use contextual or grammatical cues. They enjoy literature, talk enthusiastically about the plot and characters, and make simple predictions. They

know the meaning of 'title', 'author', and 'illustrator'. Pupils have limited experience of non-fiction books but locate information reasonably quickly, using the index and table of contents. There is a good range of both fiction and non-fiction books in the libraries and classrooms to help them to develop their skills. Average readers are much more hesitant. They read without expression and basic word building skills are insecure. They are reluctant to discuss their books in any detail and have a much narrower experience of reading in the home. Below average readers have a basic sight vocabulary, recognising a few words but they are unable to use their knowledge of phonics to tackle unfamiliar words.

82 In Key Stage 2, pupils' reading skills remain below average. The most able readers are expressive and responsive readers. They know how a library is organised and understand the system used for cataloguing non-fiction books. Only the most able pupils, however, tend to belong to a library and pupils do not use the school library for personal research. Many pupils have not yet learned to scan quickly for information. Reading books are not always well matched to the pupils' ability and several more able pupils can read fluently from much more difficult books whereas others are trying to read material that is far too difficult. Readers of middle ability lack the full range of strategies for working out unfamiliar words and none automatically refer to the text when expressing opinions. The least confident readers are hesitant and mechanistic readers and make many errors. The majority of pupils read at home but rarely to an adult and many pupils say that they don't often have a reading time in school. A pupil in Year 3/4 comments that he reads in school "for a few minutes sometimes after we've chosen our books".

Writing

83 Pupils' writing skills are below average throughout the school. Children enter the nursery with well below average language skills and by the time they enter the Year 1 classes, their performance is still below average. Progress in Key Stage 1 is sound. The most able write in simple sentences that are mainly punctuated with full stops but opportunities for them to extend their writing are limited. Although the majority of pupils know that sentences have capital letters and full stops, few transfer this knowledge into their everyday writing. Handwriting varies from well-formed letters that are consistent in size and appropriately spaced to poorly formed letters with no spaces between the words. No pupils join their writing at this stage. Many pupils place capital letters in the middle of sentences and words.

84 In Key Stage 2, pupils are making sound progress. They are developing a good sense of audience and the most able pupils adapt their writing for different purposes. More able pupils in Year 6 are beginning to use expressive, descriptive language in their writing. They organise fiction and non-fiction writing for specific purposes, for example, stories, poems, accounts, diaries, and biographies. However, written work often reflects weaknesses in spoken language, with many grammatical errors such as mixed tenses. Spelling improves as pupils move through the key stages. Pupils' handwriting is mostly joined and consistent in size and proportion, although some writing is less well formed. In Year 6 pupils refine their writing very successfully through drafting and redrafting, for example when they write a dramatic first-person account of the experiences of evacuees during World War II, and many use the computer very effectively to edit their writing. There is little evidence of a whole-school approach to writing across all subjects.

85 The quality of teaching and learning is good in most lessons, with some inconsistencies in both key stages. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen in English and as a result the children make sound progress across the key stages. Progress is

accelerated in Year 6 where the quality of the teaching is very good. Very good lessons contain features such as high expectations of work and behaviour and enthusiasm for literature and the power of language. In these lessons teachers inspire the pupils, carrying them along with their own energy, enthusiasm and enjoyment.

86 Teachers work hard to raise standards in literacy. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy, which is making a significant contribution to raising standards. In a few lessons, work planned does not always take into account the varying needs and abilities of pupils. It is not always demanding enough for the more able pupils and occasionally too difficult for those with special educational needs. Consequently, pupils are unable to work independently enough to allow the teacher to concentrate fully on the focus group, with the result that pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable. Pupils who receive support through the Additional Literacy Strategy and those who receive support for special educational needs make good progress overall, with well-focused teaching designed to meet their identified needs. The use of setting to allow more focused work for different groups of pupils is beneficial in raising standards, particularly for the least able. Pupils who have English as an additional language are well supported in literacy sets.

87 Pupils' workbooks show that there are differences in expectations with regard to the quantity and quality of work. Although there are good examples of well-annotated work that show good use of ongoing assessment, there are inconsistencies in assessment and recording of pupils' progress. An example may be found in teachers' reading records. Some are very detailed, indicate all skills required and show progress very clearly. In other cases, reading records highlight books read but there is no evidence of diagnostic comments or targets for improvement. This is unsatisfactory. Marking of pupils' work varies from positive comments to helpful guidance on how to improve, but is unsatisfactory overall.

88 The recently appointed co-ordinator has worked very hard to set up systems to track pupils' progress. Test results are carefully analysed and the results used to inform target setting. Pupils' progress in writing is carefully tracked as they move through the key stages. The literacy co-ordinator is a highly skilled and enthusiastic teacher and keen to promote literacy and raise standards. However, opportunities for her to monitor teaching and learning throughout the school are limited and she is unaware of the inconsistencies that exist within and across year groups. There is a great deal of teacher expertise within the school and numerous examples of good practice that could be shared.

MATHEMATICS

89 The results of national tests in 2000 for seven-year-olds indicate that standards were well below the national average mainly because of the small number of pupils gaining the higher level of attainment (level 3). At eleven, by contrast, the number achieving the higher level (level 5) matched the national figures but fewer gained the expected level 4 standard resulting in below average attainment overall. At the end of both key stages, standards were above average when compared with schools of a similar type. The school achieved its target for results in 2000 at the end of Key Stage 2 and a similar target for 2001 appears to be realistic.

90 Inspection evidence supports the school's prediction, based on this cohort's baseline test¹ results, that standards in Key Stage 1 will rise slightly this year because a few more pupils should gain the higher level 3. Overall, pupils are currently working

¹ Taken on entry to nursery.

at below average, rather than well below average levels. The decision to create a third class in each year where a group of average pupils can be better targeted to achieve their potential, is having an effect on standards and, since some of these pupils do not have English as their first language, this is enabling them to make good progress. Good support is also available for pupils with special educational needs and many of them make good progress. Progress for pupils as a whole however is satisfactory. The work in the books shows that they are often attempting the same tasks, regardless of ability. This contrasts with the lessons seen during the inspection when teachers planned different activities to meet the needs of the specific ability groups within their class. All lessons seen in the key stage during the inspection were at least satisfactory and half were better than this including one very good lesson.

91 Most seven-year-olds have a satisfactory understanding of numbers to 100 and count on and back in tens from a given number accurately, using a 100-square to help. Mentally, many add ten to a given number successfully and some can also subtract ten. Above average pupils are beginning to understand the value of each digit in numbers up to 1000 and use their knowledge of doubles to calculate amounts of money. They name two-dimensional shapes and can halve and quarter a circle. Average pupils explain why one number is smaller or larger than another and plot missing numbers on a 100-square. Below average pupils work confidently with numbers to 20 and distinguish between odd and even.

92 Most eleven-year-olds are adept at doubling numbers and mentally recalling facts from the 2, 3, 5 and 10 times tables but other table facts are not secure. Many use mathematical terms such as 'multiple' and 'factor' correctly. Above average pupils have a sound understanding of the value of each digit in a number containing tenths and hundredths. They work out the area of an irregular shape. Average pupils use their understanding of co-ordinates to draw a dog on squared paper. They list the factors of two-digit numbers but find this difficult when the number is above 100. Below average pupils develop strategies for working out problems such as 17×7 by breaking down the 17 into smaller numbers (10, 5 and 2), multiplying each by 7 and adding the answers. This is challenging work for some.

93 Pupils in both key stages are given sufficient opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems. For example, in Year 2, number patterns are explored using cubes that increase by three as a similar shape is enlarged. In Year 4, pupils produce a graph following a survey of favourite crisp flavours and pose and answer questions that arise from the results.

94 Pupils in Key Stage 2 are grouped by ability based on data from the national test at seven and other standardised tests given at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5. Good use is made of this data and of teacher assessments and the grouping arrangements enable teachers to focus the work more closely on the needs of pupils, thus affecting standards. However, not all teachers acknowledge that, within these groups, there is still a wide range of ability. In some lessons, all pupils complete the same work instead of having separate tasks aimed at advancing their learning from their current level of understanding. This is evident too from the work in pupils' books with different ability groups within the same class completing the same work. Books also reveal a variation in the quality of marking. Nearly all teachers acknowledge the good work that pupils produce but few write comments that indicate to the pupils what they could do to improve. Such targets are useful because they enable pupils to become more aware of their own learning. The school is beginning to set up a system of targets but, while the teachers know what they are, pupils often do not. Only in Year 6 are there individual targets for improvement. In other years there are group targets. Pupils are helped to become aware of their own learning when the teacher states the learning objective at

the start of the lesson and returns to it at the end, enabling pupils to judge whether they have learnt what was intended. This is not a feature of all lessons.

95 Teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall, taking into account the lessons seen and the work in the books judged over time. During the inspection, teaching in lessons varied from satisfactory to very good. More than half the teaching seen was good with one of these lessons being judged very good. Teaching of the lower ability groups in Years 3, 4 and 6 is consistently good and, since these groups contain a high number of pupils with special educational needs, their progress is usually good. The recent formation of such a group in Year 6 is already having an effect and work in their books shows improvement over last term in terms of neat presentation and the volume of work completed. Pupils who do not have English as their first language make satisfactory progress in line with the majority of their classmates.

96 Teaching throughout the school is satisfactory overall. The National Numeracy Strategy is well established and teachers plan and deliver their lessons in line with the requirements. Numeracy skills are practised in other subjects of the curriculum though evidence of this is thin. However, Year 1 pupils consider the shapes that they have used in the construction of vehicles and measures are used in geography. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support mathematics. Year 6 pupils explain how they enter data into a program to produce a graph and programs are used throughout the school to measure progress. Pupils regularly work on these programs to answer test questions that measure their level of understanding of the various aspects of mathematics. The program then produces results that can be analysed to reveal gaps in knowledge and the need for further practice. This analysis is particularly well used in Year 6 and the co-ordinator's claim that standards have been affected seems undeniable.

97 All teachers have a secure understanding of the subject and are quick to realise when something is too easy or too hard in a particular lesson. In a Year 3 lesson for example, it becomes obvious that some lower ability pupils are finding it difficult to pick out from a list, pairs of numbers that add to ten. The teacher immediately suggests using counting apparatus to help and the problem is solved. Teachers have extension activities available as in a Year 2 lesson where some pupils rapidly fill in the missing numbers on a 100-square and need further work. Basic skills are soundly taught and good use is made of the mental maths session at the beginning of lessons to improve the speed of calculation. Teachers try to involve everyone in question-and-answer sessions but some fail to target those who do not have their hands up and they remain passive. Most teachers are skilful questioners, phrasing their questions in such a way as to make pupils think clearly and explain their strategies for working out a problem without suggesting the answer. Pupils enjoy their lessons. Many Year 6 pupils give mathematics as one of their favourite subjects and all teachers have a good, warm relationship with their pupils. This is particularly evident in a Year 6 lesson where the teacher of the below average group has a particular word of encouragement for each pupil as she reviews and marks their work. Teachers therefore do not have difficulty in controlling their classes. Only in one lesson did the need to correct inappropriate behaviour slow the lesson and here the teacher invoked the school code correctly to give a 'time out' to one boy. The brisk pace and very clear explanations in two lessons, in Years 2 and 3, distinguish them as very good with particularly good use being made of classroom assistants to help groups of below average pupils.

98 Mathematics is led by a competent co-ordinator who has only recently taken over responsibility for the whole school with little previous knowledge of how the subject is delivered in Key Stage 1. He has observed a few lessons in this key stage

but opportunities for this type of monitoring are limited and most of his understanding of what is being delivered in the school comes from scrutinising teachers' plans. He has not yet carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work by taking a sample of books. There is therefore room for development. However, the correct areas for improvement are identified in the School Effectiveness Plan with particular emphasis on developing the record-keeping system that is just beginning and ensuring that pupils know about the targets that are set for their improvement. There are adequate resources to support work in mathematics.

SCIENCE

99 Standards by the end of both key stages are below average. The most recent national tests at Key Stage 2 show standards to be well below average because, although the proportion gaining the expected level 4 exceeded the average, far fewer than average attained the higher level 5. The inspection findings show that while many pupils achieve around the expected levels with teacher support, few achieve the more advanced ones.

- 100 Most pupils in Year 2 have learned:
- The names of some of the joints in the human body;
 - Which parts of which vegetables we eat;
 - How to classify foods into categories like dairy, vegetable, cereal;
 - The names of some farm animals and their babies;
 - To sort some animals into types like mammals, birds, reptiles;
 - The names of many parts of a flower;
 - The attributes of some materials.

They are also learning ways in which to record and present their science work and how to create graphs to show the findings of their investigations. For example some pupils conducted a survey on favourite fruits and produced the results in a simple block graph. This was one of the very few examples of science work making use of mathematics and helping to develop basic numeracy skills.

- 101 By the time pupils reach Year 6 most pupils have learned:
- That some changes in materials are reversible, like condensation, but others are not;
 - Some of the sources of light;
 - How light reacts through a prism;
 - That fire requires oxygen;
 - Everyday items which use electricity;
 - The names of some of the bones in the human body.

Much of the work at Year 6 seems to be revision of earlier work in preparation for the national tests and the school needs to be sure of the difference between repeating early work and revising it. For example some of the work Year 6 pupils were doing on skeletons seemed little different to work being done by much younger pupils further down the school. In discussion with inspectors Year 6 pupils also demonstrated that they know about the importance of fair testing but that there is little opportunity to devise and conduct their own tests and investigations. When practical work is given to pupils it is usually set by the teacher to help them to learn scientific facts rather than to encourage pupils to ask questions and develop skills in hypothesising, testing and recording the results of investigations and experiments they themselves have suggested or devised.

102 Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons and therefore achieve well. The books show that pupils largely do the same work whatever their ability. The higher attaining pupils produce more writing with their work and the lower attaining pupils are sometimes confined to illustrations and drawings to show what they have done. There is a danger in this approach that the higher attaining pupils might not be challenged sufficiently by being always required to present their work in the same format and that lower attaining pupils will not acquire the vocabulary they need to do well in the tests. Pupils' work is mainly neatly laid out and well presented demonstrating their positive attitudes to their lessons. They are enthusiastic and listen to their teachers and to each other. Some pupils in the Year 3 and 4 classes get a bit over enthusiastic at times and this leads to noisy lessons and makes it difficult for the teachers to keep control of the pupils.

103 Teaching overall is satisfactory at both key stages. Teachers prepare lessons thoroughly and make sure that all the materials and equipment pupils will need are available. Lessons include practical experiments with pupils using tools and simple equipment as when Year 3 and 4 pupils made and tested simple circuits. All the right tools and equipment were provided and pupils thoroughly enjoyed being able to join wires to bulb holders and make the bulb light up, particularly when it featured as a clown's nose in a face they had drawn and coloured earlier. Teachers know about the science they teach so they can show pupils confidently what to do and help them to learn more effectively. In most lessons teachers control the pupils well and keep their attention. However in some of these more practical lessons with younger junior pupils the enthusiasm gets a bit out of hand at times and teachers have to slow down the pace of the lesson to ensure they retain control and that everyone is paying attention before moving the lesson on. While teachers support pupils well enough for them to achieve the objectives of the lesson, there is much less evidence of effective marking of work or feedback to pupils which tells them what is good about their work and how to make it better. There is also a tendency for the work and the way it is presented to be over prescriptive so that opportunities are lost to get pupils to present their work for different audiences and in different formats. Teachers also miss opportunities to teach basic numeracy and literacy skills through science and there was little evidence of the use of information and communications technology.

104 Science is based on the national guidelines and as such covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum and ensures that pupils build upon earlier learning. As a consequence pupils' learning is satisfactory in lessons and across the school. However the procedures for assessing what pupils know, understand and can do and the use of that information to plan future lessons are unsatisfactory. The two co-ordinators are both fairly new to the role and neither have enough experience or expertise of co-ordinating science to be fully effective yet. They would benefit from training in the management and leadership skills required of effective subject co-ordinators. Although the school appears to have adequate resources for science the newness of the school and the co-ordinators means that there has not been time to do a full audit of them. This is planned for the near future.

ART AND DESIGN

105 Standards in art and design are satisfactory at the end of both key stages. In Key Stage 1 good standards of work by higher-attaining pupils were observed in an observational drawing lesson. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language participate fully. They make good progress in Key Stage 1 given their starting point at the end of the Foundation Stage.

106 In Key Stage 2, progress is satisfactory. Judgements are based on a limited number of lessons observed, discussions with teachers and pupils and scrutiny of planning and work in sketchbooks, folders and on display about the school. Displays around the school indicate that pupils are offered a good range of experiences through a broad and balanced curriculum. Skills are systematically developed as pupils progress through the school. A weakness in the curriculum is the limited focus on artists and their work. Few pupils in Year 6 could identify an artist or give an example of an artist's work when asked. Skills in drawing, printing, collage and painting are carefully developed. Pupils are given opportunities to work with fabric and clay, and to produce three-dimensional art work, using a range of tools and equipment safely and confidently.

107 In Year 1, pupils produce colourful patterns on paper plates in Islamic style. They use pastels and crayons to create portraits of a friend. In a good lesson observed, pupils were introduced to weaving. Pupils selected materials to weave, developing their own ideas about colours and fabrics used. The good teaching and support for pupils helped them to acquire and develop these new skills well. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils produced a still life drawing and good support for the lower-attaining pupils enabled them to achieve standards in line with those expected of this age. Pupils had learned the importance of looking carefully and of representing what they see. Many pupils produced drawings of a good standard. Teachers and support staff used the opportunity to engage the pupils in conversation, developing their language skills and extending their artistic vocabulary. Nevertheless, language does impede progress at times, as when one pupil assumed the adult meant green when she was saying 'cream'. Pupils concentrate very hard on their drawings and are proud of the work they produce. In Year 2, pupils extend their drawing techniques, focusing on a small part of an interesting picture and are introduced to the idea of using a 'viewfinder' to reproduce part of the picture. They construct models of wheeled vehicles linking art and design to design and technology.

108 Pupils in Key Stage 2 build steadily on these skills, making sound progress. In some classes sketchbooks are used to extend ideas and practise techniques. The use of sketchbooks makes an effective contribution to skill progression, but this practice is not consistent across the key stage.

109 Pupils in Year 3 further develop skills in portraits while in Year 4 pupils complete fine line drawing of faces using half of a picture from a magazine. They demonstrate good attention to line and detail. In Year 5, pupils draw Tudor houses using pastels, following a visit to Oak House. They work with increasing skill to produce drawings of trainers and musical instruments, using shade and tone to good effect in some cases. By the age of eleven, pupils are able to reproduce repeat patterns in the style of William Morris with variable success. They work neatly and carefully in many cases. Art is evident in other areas of the curriculum, such as the World War II posters and posters highlighting safety on the railways. Pupils use pencils, pastels and felt pens as well as paints. Examples of pupils' observational drawings and 'still life' paintings are framed in corridors, valuing pupils' efforts and celebrating their success.

110 In both key stages there is little evidence of the use of computers to aid work in art and design. Pupils' work reflects the limited attention to the work of artists and crafts people.

111 Teaching of art and design is good in Key Stage 1. It is satisfactory in Key Stage 2 where some teachers lack knowledge and understanding of the subject, and confidence to teach art. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. When teachers have a

good subject knowledge this is reflected in the quality of work pupils produce. In these lessons, resources are well prepared, instructions are clear and skills are carefully developed. There is a good focus on independence. Support staff are used well and make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy art and design. They behave well in lessons, sharing resources and helping one another. They are well motivated by the tasks set and take pride in their work in many cases. Some of the most successful weaving in the Year 2 lesson was produced by pupils with special educational needs.

112 The subject co-ordinator provides good guidance to teachers. She recognises that the lack of assessment is a weakness and plans to develop this as well as extending her monitoring to include pupils' learning. At present, she sees teachers' planning and is able to check the coverage of the subject. The newly created art and design technology room provides a very good resource creating an appropriate environment with readily accessible and well-organised equipment. Although the school has a kiln it is currently out of action. This affects the development of skills using clay.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

113 The organisation of the school's timetable meant that only two lessons were observed, those being in Key Stage 2. There was a very limited sample of work available. No overall judgement on the quality of teaching is possible. The following judgements are based on a study of teachers' planning, talking to pupils in lessons, discussion with the staff, the two lessons and the sample of work.

114 Pupils have a limited experience of design and technology. In a lesson with Years 3 and 4 pupils, the teacher had to start by reminding them what the subject entailed. Year 6 pupils could only remember one previous activity, making a Tudor House, when they were in Year 5. They are now continuing by doing initial research on designing and making another structure. The work included jointed puppets made of card in Year 1, three-dimensional models in Year 2 and a sewed sampler in Year 6. There was no evidence available of the process used to make these products, except one unfinished design for a sampler. The evidence suggests that standards are below average at the end of Key Stage 2 and pupils make unsatisfactory progress.

115 In the lessons observed in Key Stage 2, teaching was satisfactory, with good features evident in the use of practical activities, good questioning and clear objectives. The pace was slow due to the pupils' lack of experience for their age. However, not all teachers in Key Stage 2 have the confidence or subject knowledge to teach design and technology. Some Key Stage 2 teachers do not teach the subject.

116 The school has made a good start in improving the subject and is now beginning to use a nationally recognised scheme of work. The subject plan within the school effectiveness plan is good, including the development of an assessment system and a new record of progress. Current resources are adequate but will be insufficient for the new scheme of work. There is a new co-ordinator who works hard but needs more training in managing the subject across a large primary school.

GEOGRAPHY

117 Pupils make steady progress and attain broadly satisfactory standards at the end of both key stages. The school ensures that they have adequate opportunities to study geography.

118 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a growing understanding of the layout of their school and the area around it. They recognise and correctly name different forms of building and houses. Pupils understand how to use a simple grid to plot positions and routes, and learn to record what they do simply and clearly. They start to use appropriate geographical vocabulary such as 'distance' and 'reverse', and are aware of directions.

119 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are familiar with maps of Britain and the world, and they make deductions about settlements from studying maps. They learn about changes in farming during the twentieth century and the reasons for those changes. They study physical processes such as tides and weather, and discuss what happens when there is erosion around the coasts and how people are affected.

120 Three lessons were observed which were all at least satisfactory and one was of good quality. The good lesson was very clearly planned and ensured that pupils understood each step and therefore made good progress in their learning during the session. The task was carefully adjusted to suit pupils' different levels of understanding. Pupils had good opportunities to learn and use geographical vocabulary and terms. In the satisfactory lessons good attention was paid to practising the pupils' literacy skills but in both cases opportunities were missed to promote the pupils' awareness and use of geographical vocabulary or to ensure that the main focus of the lesson was geographical. Opportunities for pupils to improve their speaking skills were incidental rather than carefully structured.

121 The range of work done throughout the school last term shows little evidence that teachers plan different tasks at levels which would challenge pupils of differing abilities appropriately and therefore give them all the opportunity to make good progress. Two year groups at Key Stage 2 submitted work that was nearly all incomplete and generally poorly presented. This indicates low expectations of what pupils can achieve. Most work in another year group in Key Stage 2 is on worksheets that limits pupils' ability to practise their literacy skills and think independently. There is some evidence of numeracy being practised in geography, for example in the form of graphs, and pupils say they use information and communication technology skills for research. Marking throughout the school is mainly by ticks and with varied use of positive critical comments.

122 The co-ordinator has taken up the post this term and has yet to find her feet although she is positive and has good ideas as to the direction in which the subject should move.

123 The scheme of work is being revised in the light of new government requirements but there is no overall plan at present. A new policy has been drafted. It is not customary for the co-ordinator to visit lessons at present, or to look at pupils' work throughout the school, but the new co-ordinator plans to do both. There is no system in place for assessing pupils' attainment yet. Resources are satisfactory and used appropriately.

HISTORY

124 Due to timetable constraints it was only possible to observe one lesson so additional evidence has been gathered by analysing work done last term and talking to pupils. Pupils show satisfactory levels of attainment at the end of both key stages. All groups of pupils including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make broadly sound progress.

125 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good understanding that people in the past lived very different lives to theirs today, for example by studying the food carried on the *Mayflower* and learning about life in London at the time of the Great Fire. There is limited evidence that pupils understand that the past can be represented in different ways. Pupils have some opportunities to practise and develop their literacy skills when making lists of food, but the use of worksheets in many of the books seen indicates that there is scope for devising further opportunities. There is little evidence that the pupils practise their numeracy or information and communication technology skills during history lessons.

126 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of many aspects of British history. Years 3 and 4 study the Romans, and pupils in Year 5 learn about Tudor England and Ancient Greece. By the end of Year 6, pupils' understanding of life in specific periods in the past is well developed. They recognise, for example, that in Victorian times the quality of life for rich and poor was very different from the present day, but conditions were made better for the poor through Acts of Parliament that led to improvements in public health. The extensive use of worksheets in Years 3 and 4 limits the opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills, but in Years 5 and 6 there are good links with literacy. Pupils in Year 5 write accounts of Theseus and the Minotaur, and in Year 6 they write diaries and reports about their historical discoveries. Pupils say that they use books from the library and the computers to research information. There is little evidence that pupils use numeracy skills in history at present.

127 Not enough lessons were seen to judge the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Although the work seen from last term indicates that it is generally satisfactory, there are few occasions when the task is adapted to suit pupils of differing ability within the same class. Teaching in the one lesson observed was of good quality with sound support from the classroom assistant, and learning was satisfactory.

128 The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and aware that there is much to do. Her part-time teaching post makes her role as co-ordinator more difficult to sustain efficiently since she is only in school in the mornings. She has reorganised the scheme of work but has not yet considered how to assess its success. She has written a new policy that has still to be approved by the governors. At present she sees teachers' plans but does not visit classrooms during teaching nor does she look at pupils' books. There is no written assessment of the standard of pupils' work yet. Resources are satisfactory, but it was impossible to judge whether they are used effectively because so few lessons were observed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

129 Attainment at the end of both key stages is broadly in line with that expected nationally in most aspects of the subject. ICT is used to support different areas of the curriculum, but because of the current lack of resources within classrooms pupils are only able to practise and develop their skills when access is available to the information technology suites.

130 Standards at Key Stage 2 are broadly in line with national averages in most aspects despite the fact that the school has not yet benefited fully from the installation of new machines connected to the National Grid for Learning (NGFL). Most of the work pupils do in Year 6 is satisfactory and in many aspects of the subject attainment is in line with that of many eleven-year-olds. Pupils have satisfactory word-processing skills and they are beginning to use 'cut and paste' techniques and simple desktop

publishing programs. They do not, however, know how to use a CD-ROM to find information, and they are unable to search and sort the information on a computer database. Their understanding and use of spreadsheets is weak. An area of weakness still exists in sensing and control, but this will be addressed later in the year when the NGFL is finally implemented.

131 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have satisfactory control of a computer 'mouse'. They enter information by using the keyboard, and have basic word-processing skills including using functions such as changing the font size and typing capital letters. They have limited experience of computer control, and most pupils are unable to sort, classify, and present their findings. Their competence in using ICT in other subjects is a weakness. They use a paint program, very successfully, to draw pictures by dragging lines and changing colours.

132 Pupils are interested and confident about their ability to manage computer systems. Pupils learn quickly and well. Good use is made of the ICT room throughout the day enabling pupils to boost their mathematical skills through the use of ICT. Pupils make good progress in developing basic skills within lessons at both key stages, but progress in applying their knowledge to other subjects is unsatisfactory and there are insufficient resources for ready access to computers within the classroom. For reasons beyond the school's control, connection with the Internet has only just been established and as a consequence pupils lack knowledge and skill in this area.

133 Training for ICT has been a priority and the skills of teachers and support staff are good. Staff speak knowledgeably about programs and show confidence and dexterity in managing them on screen. They coach pupils sensitively and nurture their confidence from an early age. Samples of pupils' work are kept for each class, but the work is not annotated or dated, so has limited use as a tool to help the co-ordinator monitor pupils' progress. There are no formal assessment procedures to track the progress of individuals, or to inform personal targets and so further enhance standards.

134 The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 with clear objectives and effective support to ensure pupils learn appropriately. Teachers make good use of support staff to enable high levels of support to be given so that pupils learn basic skills effectively. Lessons are planned carefully and staff show confidence and increased expertise in the subject. Teaching is sound in Key Stage 2 but sometimes there is insufficient clear explanation and demonstration of new skills to enable pupils to learn effectively and to achieve the appropriate standard. Recent in-service training has improved teachers' subject knowledge. Management of pupils is good, with effective questioning to involve pupils and to support their learning. When new skills are taught to the whole class with appropriate consolidation tasks pupils make good gains in understanding. This was seen in a Year 3/4 class where pupils learned the basic functions of the symmetry tool and then practised for themselves to explore and investigate before beginning the intended design. Pupils enjoy the subject and are keen to work on computers. They listen well to instructions and always stay on task, showing good concentration. Their behaviour is good, showing respect for equipment and for each other. They co-operate well, and work happily in pairs, in groups or individually.

MUSIC

135 At the end of Key Stage 1, standards are in line with what is expected nationally. Since it was not possible to see any music in Year 6, there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards at the end of Key Stage 2, but the

evidence from lessons in other year groups is that they are below expectations. Music in the former junior school was all taught by a music specialist on the staff who has left and some Key Stage 2 teachers lack confidence and expertise now that they are required to take their own music. The programme of work is also difficult to implement since it is not easy to interpret for non-specialists. Key Stage 1 teachers continue to use the commercial scheme that was formerly employed in the infant school and this *does* provide good guidance for planning lessons. The school is eagerly awaiting the publication of a new scheme of work from the local authority and anticipates that all teachers will receive training so that they will be able to take their own class music lessons. There are no systems in place for assessing the standards that individual pupils attain. The recently appointed co-ordinator is enthusiastic about the future and has suitably high expectations that the quality of music provision will improve. She recognises that there is insufficient use being made of information and communication technology to support music.

136 Pupils in Year 2 listen carefully to a song from Jamaica and then clap the beat accurately recognising that they can count four beats continuously. They then pick out the first and third beats and decide on an action for their hands that acknowledges the rests. Most carry out the task successfully and relish the opportunity to demonstrate their skill when instruments are given out. Both teachers in this year group deliver similar lessons but while one has secure control of the class and conducts a good lesson, the other has some difficulty with one or two pupils misbehaving and time is lost correcting them. This lesson is therefore only satisfactory. The good lesson is also characterised by confidence in the subject matter and a steady build-up in the level of challenge. Harder clapping patterns are attempted, for example clap/rest/rest/clap, and the teacher correctly expects pupils to cope. Pupils in this key stage make satisfactory progress including those with special educational needs and those who do not have English as their first language. An appropriate lesson is conducted with Year 1 pupils who sensibly listen to a piece of music and recognise when an echo occurs. From this, they explore loud and quiet sounds helped by their teacher who captures their attention by donning ankle bells and demonstrating fierce and gentle stamping movements in two Indian dances that produce contrasting jingles from the bells.

137 Classes in Key Stage 2 are not always taught by their teacher and Year 6 do not have regular weekly lessons. They take blocks of time for music through the year. For example, in the summer term they spend time learning songs from World War II. This makes it more difficult to develop skills systematically but, without seeing lessons, it is not possible to judge whether standards are affected. One teacher takes all the Year 3 and 4 classes and another takes both Year 5 classes. Teaching varies from good to unsatisfactory. In a good lesson where the teacher plans a variety of activities and conveys her own enthusiasm, pupils explore the appropriateness of sounds to represent actions, such as 'glug' for a drinking sound. They recognise how Saint-Saëns characterises different animals through the music of *The Carnival of the Animals* but, because of difficulties with English, some explanation of an elephant's characteristics has to be given before the lesson can proceed. In the unsatisfactory lesson, pupils explore the rhythms contained within their names and within the names of football teams. This is easy work for most pupils. The teacher lacks confidence and confuses them by practising one rhythm for 'Wolverhampton Wanderers' and changing it when the clapping pattern for 'Leeds United' is added. Time is also lost dealing with some inappropriate behaviour from a few pupils.

138 The Music Support Service is giving increasingly valuable assistance, enabling a small number of pupils to learn instruments such as the recorder and flute. A group of eleven more advanced recorder players perform a difficult 'Andante' by Mozart in two parts during an assembly and the choir also perform a two-part song in Swedish,

creating a pleasant sound. Singing by the whole school in assemblies is not impressive. Many pupils choose not to join in and the volume of sound is muted for such a large gathering. By contrast, the singing in Key Stage 1 assemblies is enthusiastic, lively and reasonably tuneful. The school is fortunate in having a separate, spacious music room and sufficient resources to deliver the curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

139 Pupils attain standards that are below the nationally expected levels at the end of both key stages. During recent years the hall has been out of action and the subject has suffered as a result. Not all teachers in Key Stage 2 are confident to teach the subject as some lack sufficient knowledge and understanding of how the subject should be taught. In swimming, the levels achieved by pupils by the time they leave the school are below the national average target. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress through the school. However, there are variations in the rates of progress. This is directly linked to the quality of teaching and the level of teachers' understanding and expertise in the subject.

140 Pupils in Key Stage 1 work with enthusiasm and enjoyment in gymnastics. Year 2 pupils use the hall space sensibly as they travel in different ways, changing directions. They make wide, narrow and twisted shapes, most being able to hold the shape in a balance. They are less co-ordinated when required to run and make a shape in the air on a signal, particularly some of the girls who are more inhibited than the boys in their movements. Good teaching in this lesson ensured that the skills were carefully introduced and systematically developed, although levels of performance were below those expected for seven-year-olds in most cases. Although opportunity was provided by the teacher for some self evaluation, pupils lack experience of this and such evaluation was at a very superficial level.

141 At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' achievement in swimming is below average with only 50 per cent gaining their 25 metres award. Pupils understand the reasons for warm up activities at the beginning of lessons, although there are missed opportunities to reinforce the effects of exercise on the body. In gymnastics, pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of counterbalance, when working in pairs. They practise to refine their balances, but the skills are not as well developed as expected for pupils in Year 6. Behaviour of some older boys is boisterous and the high noise level has a negative effect on the progress being made. Co-ordination and the ability to sustain a balance are below average for many pupils. Pupils evaluate each other's performance, but these skills are at an early stage of development. Routines for putting out the apparatus are clearly established. The instructions given by the teacher in this lesson ensured pupils were clear about what is expected. In spite of this, some pupils lack the self-discipline required to complete the task properly without constant reminders from the teacher.

142 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with some good teaching observed in Key Stage 1, where teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and maintain good discipline. When skills are carefully taught, pupils gain increasing control and co-ordination of their movements. At times, pupils do not work with a sufficient effort and rigour, because the pace at which the lesson proceeds is too slow. There is insufficient attention paid to teachers' own footwear which does not provide a good example for pupils.

143 Most pupils enjoy physical education and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. When tasks are sufficiently demanding, most concentrate well, work with

sustained effort and behave well. A few older pupils, particularly boys, are immature in their behaviour which sometimes affects the progress of lessons when they become silly or overexcited.

144 The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has good expertise. With support from a colleague he has implemented the scheme of work and rewritten the policy which has yet to be shared with governors. He does not have knowledge about standards throughout the school because monitoring of teaching and learning in physical education is not yet established. There are no formal assessment strategies in place, although consideration is being given to a pupil checklist of experiences and skills. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to address these issues in order to gain a clear picture of the quality of physical education throughout the school. Resources are good. They make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. They are well organised and accessible. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities contributes positively to pupils' learning and to their personal development. These include sporting clubs such as football, rounders and athletics. An Indian dance club is a popular choice and provides cultural enrichment for those attending. Older pupils have the opportunity for a residential experience at Kingswood and Bryntisilio where they enjoy a wide range of outdoor pursuits. Such experiences enrich the curriculum offered and contribute to pupils' personal development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

145 Standards at the end of both key stages in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus being used. Pupils, including those with special needs and those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. In Year 6, as a result of some very good teaching, progress is good.

146 Only three lessons were observed, in Years 5 and 6, but a good sample of work was analysed in each year group. In Year 1, pupils compare religious symbols of a range of faiths and consider the holy places of these faiths, for example a Christian church, a Sikh Gurdwara and a Muslim mosque. They enjoy celebrating Diwali and Christmas. By Year 2, they are familiar with Bible stories such as Jonah and the Whale and the Christmas story. They begin to understand festivals, rites and celebrations, for example, of Sikhs, and the significance of holy books. They know why rules are important and write a set of rules for playing a game or swimming. They consider the different groups of which they are members, such as class, choir, swimming, football, family, mosque. In Years 3 and 4, they broaden their knowledge of different faiths, studying Hanukkah and Eid alongside Christmas. They have a good knowledge of the Old Testament stories, and the stories of Jesus as well as some stories from other faiths, such as *The Guru's Cloak*. They study how God talks to people through 'messengers', for example, Abraham, Guru Nanak, Moses, Muhammed and Jesus. In Year 5, pupils learn about marriage rites and customs in a variety of faiths. They consider the ideas of keeping promises and having commitment. By Year 6, they understand ideas such as fairness and justice. They are beginning to develop skills such as how to reach an agreement. They show deep insight for their age when thinking about death, writing about feelings of sadness, anger and being devastated. After reading the story of Jesus' healing of the paralysed man, they demonstrated very good understanding of Jesus, the Son of Man, being 'the son of everyone'. Follow-up work, written as a newspaper report, resulted in many shared insights and emotions.

147 Pupils' attitudes in lessons are positive. They are interested, concentrate hard and enjoy lessons. They behave well and the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

148 No overall judgement is possible about the quality of teaching. In the three lessons seen, teaching in Key Stage 2 is inconsistent in quality, varying from just satisfactory to very good. In the best teaching, there were clear objectives, learning enhanced by very good use of questions, high expectations and a brisk pace. In weaker teaching, objectives were unclear at times and pupils were not given enough opportunities for independent work to consolidate their ideas. The practice of teaching Key Stage 2 pupils in groups based on their prior attainment in English limits opportunities for pupils of mixed ability to share their valuable experiences and for learning to be supported in friendship groups.

149 The co-ordinator for religious education has good qualifications and knowledge of the subject. The school effectiveness plan includes a sound plan to further develop the subject. The school is moving towards revising the curriculum to bring it in line with revisions to the Agreed Syllabus and to formulate a procedure for assessment to be used to plan work. The co-ordinator is aware of the need for professional development to equip teachers to plan and teach across this new primary school and to raise their confidence in teaching religious education. Resources are adequate but some need to be renewed. More books are needed to support independent work.