

INSPECTION REPORT

MARSTON GREEN JUNIOR SCHOOL

Marston Green, Birmingham

LEA area: Solihull

Unique reference number: 104060

Headteacher: Miss L Chilton

Reporting inspector: Mr C Kessell
20695

Dates of inspection: 25th - 28th June 2001

Inspection number: 230854

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Junior |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 7 - 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Station Road Marston Green Birmingham |
| Postcode: | B37 7BA |
| Telephone number: | 0121 779 2227 |
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| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Cllr Robert Sleigh |
| Date of previous inspection: | 13 th May 1999 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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|--------------|--------------|----------------------|---|--|
| 20695 | Mr C Kessell | Registered inspector | Information and communication technology Physical education | The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught What the school should do to improve further |
| 19557 | Mrs E Halls | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents |
| 18709 | Mrs N Bee | Team inspector | Art and design Design and technology Religious education | How well the school is led and managed |
| 12172 | Mrs W Knight | Team inspector | Mathematics Music | |
| 18342 | Mrs M Spark | Team inspector | English History Provision for pupils with special educational needs English as an additional language Equal opportunities | |
| 10204 | Mr D Vincent | Team inspector | Science Geography | The curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school has 309 pupils on roll (157 boys and 152 girls) and is above average in size. It is situated in the northern part of Solihull and draws pupils from both private and council housing. The majority of pupils come from white United Kingdom ethnic backgrounds. However, 2.9% of pupils are from minority backgrounds. The number of pupils speaking English as an additional language is very low. Seventeen per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs; this is below the national average. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, currently 6% is below average. The attainment of the pupils when they start school is well above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. Standards are currently well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. There is a very strong commitment in the school to continue raising standards. The quality of teaching is good overall and a significant proportion is very good or better. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and the governors fulfil their responsibilities very effectively. The many strengths of the school far outweigh the areas for development. It provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science.
- The majority of teaching is good or better. Pupils are learning effectively and currently making good progress.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is very good.
- There are very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare.

What could be improved

- Standards in music.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual development in class and whole school assemblies.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since it was last inspected in November 1997 and was placed in special measures. The school is now unrecognisable from the description provided by the previous inspection report. Standards have not only improved in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science but also in geography and religious education which were judged as unsatisfactory in 1997. There have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching, the leadership and management of the school and the provision for pupils' personal development. The school was taken out of special measures by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) in May 1999. They also provided the school with key issues that have been very well addressed.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | | <i>Key</i> |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|---|
| | all schools | | | similar schools | |
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2000 | |
| English | C | B | C | C | Well above average A Above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E |
| Mathematics | C | C | E | E | |
| Science | B | C | C | D | |

The results of the 2000 national tests indicated that standards in English and science were average and in mathematics, well below average. When compared to similar schools standards were average in English, below average in science and well below average in mathematics. However, standards have improved significantly and are currently well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. This is a significant improvement on last year particularly in mathematics. The school is not complacent about its national test results and there is a very strong commitment to continue this improvement and with the current staff, the school has the capacity to succeed. The school's trend of improvement is in line with the national trend. Pupils' achievements are currently good overall and in most lessons pupils learn effectively and make good progress. The school will exceed its statutory targets for 2001. The targets for 2002 are realistic and challenging.

Standards in geography and history are above national expectations. In most other subjects, standards are in line with those expected of pupils at the age of eleven. Standards in music are not as high as they should be. Standards in geography, history and religious education have improved since the previous inspection.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Pupils are enthusiastic about school and settle quickly into lessons. They have very positive attitudes to learning. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Pupils' behaviour in lessons, during play and in the lunch break is very good. The pupils move around the school in a calm, quiet and orderly manner. |
| Personal development and relationships | Relationships are very good throughout the school. Pupils make very good progress in their personal development. They are eager and willing to take responsibility in class and in activities around the school. |
| Attendance | Attendance at the school is satisfactory. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Teaching of pupils: | aged 7-11 years |
| Lessons seen overall | Good |

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 has improved significantly since the previous inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory overall but with 33% less than satisfactory. During the current inspection 20% of lessons were satisfactory, 53% good, 23% very good and 4% excellent. The percentage of very good or better teaching has trebled in comparison to the previous inspection. There were no unsatisfactory lessons observed. The teachers' management and organisation of lessons is consistently very good and the majority of pupils are happy and confident learners. Pupils are well motivated and make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding. Teaching is interesting, exciting and enthusiastic and classrooms are calm and industrious. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and the national strategies in these areas of learning have been well implemented. All of the teachers work very hard and are very committed to the school. Support staff are used well and make a significant contribution to the positive learning experiences that pupils receive.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The school teaches all the subjects required by the National Curriculum and meets the related legal requirements. The curriculum offered provides a good range of opportunities for learning. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | The management of special educational needs is good, and there is very effective, caring provision for those pupils identified as having special educational needs. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Pupils have reached appropriate levels in their acquisition of basic language skills. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | The overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and there has been a significant improvement in this area since the previous inspection when it was reported as unsatisfactory. Moral and social development is very good. On some occasions assemblies do not meet statutory requirements. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school makes very good provision for the welfare, support and guidance of all pupils, in a caring and supportive environment. This has a beneficial effect on pupils' learning and gives them the ability and confidence to cope very effectively with the high expectations of school life. Parental links with the school are good and have improved since the previous inspection. |

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She has contributed much to the very good improvement since the previous inspection. She is well supported by other senior staff particularly the deputy-headteacher. The school has a very positive ethos where staff and pupils work very well together. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The role of the governing body has developed very well since the previous inspection. Governors are now better informed and have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They fulfil their responsibilities very well. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The school has identified appropriate priorities for improving standards and the quality of education. School performance data is used effectively to set challenging targets. |
| The strategic use of resources | Teaching staff are appropriately qualified and support staff are of a good quality and very effective. All areas of the school are kept bright and clean by the site manager and his staff. This makes a positive contribution to the learning environment. The accommodation, both inside and around the school, allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. The previous inspection identified weaknesses in the day-to-day organisation and administration of the school and these no longer exist. The office manager ensures that school administration is now a strength of the school. Subjects have adequate resources and this is an improvement on the previous inspection. The school has a good understanding of the principles of best value. |

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils make good progress and the teaching is good. Staff are available. • The school expects children to work hard and achieve his or her best. Discipline is good. • There is a community spirit and children are happy. • The regular communication with parents. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instability in the teaching staff. • The range of activities outside lessons. |

The above views are taken from the pre-inspection meeting that was attended by 32 parents and the 114 responses to the parents' questionnaire. The inspection team would support the parents' positive views. There has been a large turnover in teaching staff since the previous inspection when the school was placed in special measures. Although this has been a concern to parents, the school currently has a strong teaching team. Staffing is now more settled. The range of activities outside lessons is judged to be very good by the inspection team and a significant improvement on the previous inspection.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well above average. This is confirmed by the 2000 National Curriculum test results for the current Year 3 pupils. The national test results at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 showed that pupils' results were average in English and science, but well below average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools, standards were average in English, below average in science and well below average in mathematics. The standards were not high enough and the school is not complacent about its results. There is a very strong commitment to improvement that runs through the school. In the case of last year's cohort of Year 6 pupils there were also mitigating circumstances. It suffered from high mobility with nearly 30 per cent of the year group changing during the four years at the school and there was a larger percentage of pupils with special educational needs than normally found in the school. This year group would have also suffered significantly from the weaknesses identified during the previous inspection; for example, a high percentage of unsatisfactory teaching. Evidence provided by the school indicates that many of the pupils in this cohort actually exceeded the levels expected of them in relation to their prior attainment. Since the previous inspection standards in English and mathematics have been inconsistent and to some extent this reflects the development of the school. There have been considerable staff changes and it is only within the last two years that there has been stability amongst the teaching staff with the pupils receiving good quality teaching through the school. The school's trend of improvement has been broadly in line with the national trend and when taking the results of the three years 1998 to 2000 together, the performance of the pupils exceeded the national average in English and science. In mathematics, their performance fell below the national average and consequently this subject has been a particular focus for the school.

2 Standards are currently well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science at the end of Key Stage 2. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when standards were judged to be average in all three subjects. By the time the pupils are eleven, they have very good speaking and listening skills. Pupils listen attentively to the teachers' introductions and explanations and concentrate well on what is being said. They speak in clear, well-structured sentences, and many have an extensive vocabulary. Their reading is well above average and most pupils are expressive and responsive readers. They demonstrate an enjoyment of reading and respond to humour or interesting content. Pupils enjoy literature, talk enthusiastically about the plot and characters, and make confident predictions. Their experience of non-fiction books enables them to locate information reasonably quickly, using the index and table of contents. Pupils write in complex and compound sentences, punctuated well, and they use paragraphing very effectively to sequence their writing. Handwriting is generally of a high standard with very good presentation of work displaying pupils' clear pride in their work. In mathematics the pupils use a range of strategies to calculate mentally and are beginning to use algebra to solve simple equations. They have a good understanding of place value and understand the relationship between fractions and percentages. Most pupils have a well-developed facility with number. Their scientific knowledge and understanding is above average for their age. They are able to conduct scientific investigations with confidence and creativity. Pupils have a good understanding of plant and animal life, of the human body and of materials and their associated properties. Unconfirmed test results shows that the school has exceeded its statutory targets in English and mathematics for 2001.

3 The school is well placed to continue raising standards because there have been many very good improvements since the previous inspection; for example, the improvements in the quality of teaching, the curriculum and the leadership and management of the school. Pupils often make good progress in lessons particularly when teaching is good or better. Pupils' achievement through the

school is good overall. Many of the current Year 6 pupils will achieve levels higher than predicted in relation to their prior attainment, particularly in their writing and mathematics. However, much of this good work has been undertaken in the last two years. There are some differences in the performance of boys and girls particularly in mathematics and science. The school is responding well to this issue. In most subjects, higher attaining pupils are appropriately challenged and the percentage of pupils that achieve the higher level 5 will be better than last year, significantly so in English and mathematics.

4 Standards in geography and history are above national expectations. Standards in art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education and religious education are in line with those expected nationally and with the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. This represents an improvement on the previous inspection in geography, history and religious education. The improvement in geography and religious education is significant as they were judged to be below national expectations. Standards in music are lower than they should be. Composing is still underdeveloped, as it was at the time of the previous inspection and pupils do not have a secure subject knowledge. Progress in many of the subjects above is good particularly in geography, history and ICT. In the case of ICT, the high quality teaching and learning observed during the inspection has yet to make an impact on standards in this subject. Pupils' achievement in music is unsatisfactory.

5 The level of expertise offered by support staff working with pupils identified as having special educational needs ensures good progress for these pupils towards the specific targets in their individual education plans. Pupils with special educational needs generally have good attitudes to learning and they work with concentration in small groups and with individual support. Pupils with English as an additional language have reached appropriate levels in their acquisition of basic language skills and their achievement is the same as other pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6 Most pupils are enthusiastic to come to school and settle quickly into lessons. They have very positive attitudes to learning and behave very well in and around the school. At the meeting prior to the inspection, and in their questionnaires, parents were happy with the attitudes and behaviour of their children. Most children, including those with behavioural or special educational needs respond well to the school's rules and strong emphasis on positive behaviour. Each class has produced a class charter and has taken ownership of this. The school is often complimented on its very high standards of behaviour. Pupils are polite and friendly and kind and considerate. They demonstrate pride in their work and take care of their environment, for example picking up any litter they might see as they move around the school. Pupils develop very good personal skills and are active learners; they work very well both independently, and co-operatively with partners or in groups. These aspects make a significant contribution to their progress. Since the last inspection the school has successfully improved the standards of behaviour and fulfils its aims to promote discipline, self-confidence and responsibility. There have been no recent exclusions at the school.

7 Pupils make very good progress in their personal development. They are eager and willing to take responsibility in class and in activities around the school; for example, representing their class in class councils. Monitors help with daily routines such as assembly and their active involvement helps support the school community. Older pupils organise fairs, fund-raising initiatives and prefects run competitions. There are very good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and also to help others, for example sharing their skills in working as technicians to assist the teacher and other pupils in ICT lessons.

8 Relationships are very good throughout the school. The pupils form very good relationships with one another and the staff of the school. They respond well to the help and guidance available to

them and to being valued. Bullying or harassment are very rare and pupils report that any incidents that occur are dealt with promptly and effectively eliminated.

9 Attendance overall is satisfactory and is broadly in line with the national average. Most pupils attend school regularly and arrive at school on time. Most absence is authorised and due to sickness. The school has unauthorised absence higher than most schools as it is the policy to designate all holidays taken during term time as unauthorised. Attendance figures have improved since the last inspection and staff work hard to emphasise the importance of good attendance and punctuality and the impact that this has on standards and pupils' achievement.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

10 The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection where one in three lessons were less than satisfactory. Currently, the quality of teaching is good overall with a significant proportion that is very good or better. Fifty-three per cent of lessons were good, 23 per cent very good, four per cent excellent and 20 per cent satisfactory. At the previous inspection only ten per cent of lessons were judged to be very good or better and 33 per cent were identified as less than satisfactory. It comes as no surprise that when parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, 95 per cent of parents agreed with the statement: *The teaching is good*. However, in some lessons judged to be satisfactory there were areas for development particularly in one Year 4 class.

11 The teachers' management and organisation of lessons is consistently very good through the school. The teachers are very caring and the very good relationships that can be seen in the school contribute much to the very positive ethos that is found. Pupils are happy and confident learners who talk very enthusiastically about their work and learning experiences. Year 6 pupils stated that they would miss the teachers more than anything else when they moved on to secondary education places. Classrooms are calm, industrious and provide wonderful working environments. The teachers have high expectations both in terms of behaviour and academic performance. Consequently pupils are keen to learn, sustain their effort and concentrate for long periods of time. This is particularly noticeable during the long morning session in the school. Pupils are as keen about their work three hours into the day as when they first entered their classrooms and began work with their 'add-a-day' sessions in mathematics. During the inspection the weather was particularly hot, but this did not dampen or inhibit the enthusiasm of the pupils because activities are interesting and stimulating. The pupils respond well to the very good opportunities that are provided for class or group discussions. This is a particular feature of the school and in the majority of lessons time is always given to allow pupils to discuss topics or activities. In an excellent Year 6 ICT lesson, pupils were given timed opportunities to discuss questions provided by the class teacher and Year 3 pupils behaved very sensibly in a geography lesson when identifying specific features of a settlement from photographic evidence. In the best lessons, teachers ensure that all pupils are involved in discussion through carefully directed questions. Speaking and listening skills are consistently well promoted. Pupils show great maturity in their discussions because of what is expected of them by the teachers. This was well illustrated in a Year 6 discussion about violence against children. Another notable feature of lessons is that pupils always have a good understanding of their learning. Lesson objectives are always shared with the pupils and constant reference is made to them during the lessons. Pupils are always consulted about whether they feel they have achieved the objectives and opportunities are provided during lessons to reflect on how well the pupils' learning has developed. This is good practice.

12 Very good teaching or better teaching motivates pupils so that they make rapid progress in developing their knowledge or understanding of a subject or related skills. This teaching is always interesting and learning experiences are exciting. In a very good Year 3 science lesson about the factors that affect plant growth, the pupils prepared an investigation to test the elements essential to

plant growth. The class teacher demonstrated a very positive rapport with the pupils that resulted in the pupils having confidence in their learning and were able to successfully articulate their ideas and then to be challenged or questioned by their lesson partner. The enthusiasm for the subject communicated by the teacher ensured that pupils achieved their lesson objective. Similarly, a very good Year 4 ICT lesson ensured that the pupils applied very good effort to their work, sustained their concentration and were interested in what they were doing. The lesson was very well organised and the introduction provided by the teacher was clear and precise and very appropriate to the age and ability of the pupils. Time limits on the pupils' activities were imposed and this ensured that pupils stayed on task and worked quickly. In this lesson, very good examples of co-operative working were observed. Excellent teaching was seen in a Year 5 literacy lesson and in Year 6 ICT and PSHE (personal, social and health education) lessons.

13 All teachers in the school work exceptionally hard. There is a very noticeable shared commitment to continue to improve standards which contributes to the pupils learning effectively. The majority of classes are very consistent in their approach and this also contributes to the pupils' good acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. In the lessons judged to be satisfactory, there was not the pace seen in other lessons and pupils' learning was not so effective. In a minority of these lessons the very good relationships observed in other classes were lacking, and pupils did not enjoy their learning as much. In about six per cent of lessons insufficient attention was paid to the roles played by girls and boys. This resulted in the girls doing all of the writing or recording in group or paired activities. Girls were also treated differently in some numeracy lessons. There is a great deal of expertise and experience in the school and most teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, for example in history and science. The exception to this is in music, where teachers' subject knowledge is not so strong and lessons do not have the good pace observed in other subjects. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and the national strategies for these areas of learning have been well implemented and have had a positive impact on the standards of teaching in English and mathematics. Teachers are also very conscious of ensuring that the skills of literacy and numeracy are developed in other lessons across the curriculum. For example, in a very good Year 6 history lesson, pupils were expected to find other sources of information, makes notes and draw conclusions as they investigated the role of women in work during the 1930s.

14 Because the majority of lessons are dynamic and energetic the teachers' interactions with the pupils as they undertake their activities are good and often very good. This ensures that the teachers have a good understanding of what pupils are achieving in their classes, individually and in groups. Consequently, the teachers' day-to-day assessments are good. All teachers mark work regularly and some very good examples of marking were seen, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Not only are comments supportive and offer encouragement, there is a clear analysis of the pupils' attainment and targets for improvement. Regular homework is set to support the curriculum and enhance and extend pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy and other subjects. At the pre-inspection meeting with parents, the majority of those who attended were very clear about when homework was set for their children and felt that the quantity developed satisfactorily as the pupils moved through the school. Scrutiny of pupils' work provided some good examples of research projects that pupils had undertaken at home. However, some parents expressed concern about these projects and in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, 12 per cent of parents disagreed with the statement - *My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.*

15 The work provided within class for pupils with special educational needs is well matched to their needs, and in literacy and numeracy lessons meets the requirements of their individual education plans effectively. Support staff plan alongside teachers and complete Learning Logs of work completed and progress made. Learning Logs are monitored regularly by the special educational needs co-ordinator.

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

16 The school teaches all the subjects required by the National Curriculum and meets the related legal requirements. The requirements for religious education are also met. The curriculum offered provides a good range of opportunities for learning. In particular, opportunities for pupils to think independently and creatively are systematically developed. There is considerable enrichment of the curriculum through visits to places of educational value and through visitors to the school. The school places considerable emphasis upon English and mathematics but this is not at the expense of other subjects, all of which have a secure place in the overall programme. Good links between subjects are established and this has the effect of enhancing the relevance of learning. A visit to the River Cole, for example, not only provided a rich geographical experience but was also used to develop mathematical and writing skills. The school has introduced the National Literacy Strategy very effectively and English skills are used very constructively in other subjects. The National Numeracy Strategy is being implemented with consistency and care and this is having a good effect upon the provision for mathematics. The use of numeracy in other subjects is good. The school day is considerably longer than is normally found and this enables the school to implement its programme with depth and thoroughness. However, the composing element in music is weak.

17 The school is determined to provide an education which meets the particular needs of each of its pupils and lessons routinely contain activities designed specifically for the higher and lower achievers. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and the requirements of the Code of Practice are fully met. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is also satisfactory.

18 The governing body has approved an appropriate policy for the teaching of sex education and matters relating to health education are given considerable emphasis. The school's programme for health education includes the required emphasis upon the dangers associated with the misuse of drugs as the school seeks to ensure that pupils are provided with the knowledge and awareness which will help them make informed choices as they assume greater independence. The personal development of pupils is given a high priority and a programme that is both demanding and sensitive is very successfully delivered. Pupils are encouraged to consider a wide range of issues such as citizenship, racism and bereavement and do so with honesty and maturity. The development of good relationships and consideration for others is deeply embedded in the life and work of the school. Considerable efforts are made to develop pupils' self-esteem. The sensitivity and depth of this programme and the maturity with which pupils respond, is impressive. Overall, the provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.

19 The school has established detailed guidance in order to define what should be taught to each class. This documentation provides a sound basis for ensuring that knowledge and skills are built incrementally and that a balanced programme is delivered. Teachers of similarly aged pupils plan together so that expertise is pooled and classes receive a similar programme. There is keen awareness of the importance of reviewing the way subjects are taught and the staff meet regularly to discuss curricular matters and to improve their expertise. Substantial professional knowledge underpins such discussions and this has resulted in carefully considered priorities and improvements, which are implemented with consistency and rigour. Although not all the initiatives have yet worked through a full cycle there is a clear determination, shared by all associated with the school, to continue the process of curricular improvement.

20 The previous report identified a limited number of extra-curricular activities. The school has responded well to this criticism and the provision, which is largely dependant upon the voluntary efforts of teachers and others, is now very good. The clubs cover a wide range of activities and are generally open to all pupils. A good range of inter-school competitive events is also organised. Visits

to places of educational value, including residential visits, make valuable contributions to several curricular areas. For example, Year 6 pupils recently travelled to Ardres in France as part of their physical education programme.

21 Good links with the community are evident. The school has established valuable contacts with a number of local companies such as Severn Trent Water, Beezer Homes and Rover Cars and these are used productively to generate educational opportunities for pupils. A productive visit to Birmingham International Airport, for example, arose out of membership of the Solihull Business Partnership. Links with other educational institutions are satisfactory. Teachers meet regularly with their colleagues in other schools in order to pool ideas and to ensure that the move between the primary and secondary stages is as smooth as possible, but curricular links with the neighbouring infant school are not fully developed.

22 There has been a very good response to the curricular weaknesses identified in the last inspection. Wide-ranging improvements have been made to the geography and religious education programmes. The content of every subject is now specified much more precisely. Provision for health education is now very good. The governing body has approved an appropriate sex education policy and greater challenge is being provided for the higher achieving pupils.

23 The overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and there has been a significant improvement in this area since the previous inspection when it was reported as unsatisfactory. Moral and social development is very good and is reinforced and developed in everything the pupils do. It is a strength of the school. Cultural development is good. Although the provision for spiritual development is satisfactory overall, there are weaknesses in some whole school and class assemblies when the spiritual element is under-developed and opportunities are missed to promote spirituality. Candles are lit to try and achieve a spiritual atmosphere but this is not always successful. During assemblies there are too few opportunities for pupils to sit, think and reflect on what they have heard or discussed. Assemblies do not always meet statutory requirements as there is not always a recognition of a supreme being or opportunities for the pupils to pray or reflect on the content of the assembly. There are many planned opportunities for pupils to experience wonder such as in an ICT lesson in Year 4 when, after giving the screen turtle a number of instructions it completed the whole sequence in one go! Pupils in Year 5 showed amazement when a professional dancer who came in to work with them, started to dance. This element of spiritual development is an improvement since the previous inspection.

24 Provision for moral development is very good. All classrooms have clear guidelines regarding acceptable behaviour. Pupils are expected to behave well in classes, in the playground and as they move about the school. They are taught very effectively, to identify between right and wrong and the importance of treating others with respect. Adults who work in the school constantly reinforce thoughtful and good behaviour. The parents' questionnaire showed that 93 per cent of parents thought that behaviour was good in the school and that the school was helping their children become mature and responsible. Pupils regularly listen to stories in their classrooms to reinforce moral issues. For example, in Year 6, pupils maturely thought about and discussed sensitive issues such as child abuse. They show high levels of respect for adults and are very polite and helpful to visitors in the school. All adults, who work in the school, including the midday staff and adults who work in the office, provide good role models throughout the school day.

25 Very good provision is made for social development. A very well ordered framework has been created within which social development blossoms. Pupils confidently give their own points of view and listen well as others speak. All pupils show courtesy towards passing adults and pupils as they move maturely through the school. Pupils relate very well towards each other, in particular when they work together with a partner and in small groups, as they do in most lessons. In the dining hall,

and in the playground pupils get on very well with each other. Pupils have opportunities to represent their peers in class councils.

26 The provision for cultural development is good and has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Pupils begin to learn to value and understand their own cultural traditions through links with the community, educational visits and visitors invited into school. In religious education lessons they learn about different religions and visit places of worship, which enables them to begin to understand the many different cultural traditions in the world. In music lessons and during assemblies pupils are introduced to a range of composers and musicians but opportunities are missed to promote these. Pupils study a wide range of artists such as Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee and Vincent Van Gogh. They develop their own creative skills through art and in music lessons and workshops. These workshops promote the pupils' cultural development well, for example the Steel Pan workshop and the Cuban Cha Cha workshop. Pupils learn about other countries and cultures through planned topics in geography and religious education. There are satisfactory resources to promote cultural development, including religious artefacts, and multicultural books.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27 The school makes very good provision for the welfare, support and guidance of all pupils, in a caring and supportive environment. This has a beneficial effect on pupils' learning and gives them the ability and confidence to cope very effectively with the high expectations of school life. Parents expressed the view that the school provides consistently good support for their children and is a caring place in which their children feel safe. Inspection evidence confirms these opinions. The school is a very orderly, caring and sharing community, which abides by a few rules. These promote the pupils' development of self-discipline, personal and social skills. This results in very good standards of behaviour that encourage pupils to want to learn. The teachers and staff are very good role models and have a very good knowledge of individuals, which they use well to provide comprehensive policies and procedures that are appropriate to meet the academic and social needs of pupils.

28 Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. Most parents are conscientious in notifying the school and staff always follow up any unexplained absences. The headteacher and governors make clear their expectations that pupils should have good attendance and parents are actively discouraged from taking holidays during term time. Parents who book holidays in term time or take children out of school for any other reason than medical, sickness or other extreme circumstances are notified that this will be counted as an unauthorised absence. Punctuality is monitored carefully. The school works closely with the education welfare service where necessary.

29 There are very good procedures in place for child protection and promoting the well-being and health and safety of all pupils, with high staff awareness of the issues. The school has close links with other agencies and deals very effectively with any concerns they may have. The school is clean and well maintained and health and safety checks are carried out regularly.

30 The school has very good measures to promote and maintain very good discipline and behaviour with a reward system, which pupils highly value. There are very clear guidelines for staff who consistently implement the procedures. Appropriate procedures are in place for dealing with bullying or racial harassment and any incidents that arise are taken very seriously and promptly and effectively dealt with. The school actively seeks to teach children to respect differences and to develop tolerance through the strong emphasis it gives to personal and social education and, for example, by inviting the local police to speak to the pupils on issues such as racial abuse. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are managed well and the stimulating lessons and activities provided and very clear expectations of staff effectively create an environment conducive to learning. The school has significantly improved the provision for the support, welfare and guidance of the pupils since the previous inspection and this is a strength of the school.

31 Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have improved considerably since the previous inspection and are now very good. Thorough procedures for testing pupils at regular intervals are in place for English and mathematics and this information is used effectively for organising ability groups, targeting pupils for additional support and checking they are making expected progress. Data is also analysed to see if different groups of pupils are doing as well as others, and to identify any areas in the subjects which need to be taught more effectively. For example in mathematics, fractions and percentages were shown to be relatively weak and a whole-school focus setting appropriate targets for each year groups was subsequently pursued. Targets at class level and for individual pupils are also usefully set on the basis of information gathered. In science and most other subjects except art and design, design and technology, music and physical education, systematic recording of achievement against essential elements of learning also provides the required information on attainment. This ensures that work is appropriately matched to pupils' needs and subsequent work builds properly on what has previously been learnt. The school does not use assessment data to identify gifted and talented pupils and there is no register for these pupils.

Targets are appropriately discussed with parents at termly intervals and pupils are encouraged to participate in evaluating their own learning although this is less systematic.

32 Record keeping is exceedingly thorough for pupils with special educational needs and the co-ordinator tries successfully to involve parents and pupils themselves closely at all stages. Assessment and monitoring of progress of pupils identified as having special educational needs is very good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

33 The school's relationship with parents is good and benefits from the commitment of staff to working in partnership. From the response to the parents' questionnaire and at the parents' meeting prior to the inspection, it is apparent that parents are now very supportive of the school. They particularly like the way that the school communicates regularly with them and the approachability and availability of staff, both informally at the end of the school day and formally at parents' consultation evenings. They are supportive of the very active parent teacher association. Significant funds are raised each year, which are used to enhance the school's resources and educational experiences, which the pupils receive. Parents comment favourably on the openness of the school; they say that they are made to feel welcome and that the school values any help they provide. The Home School Agreement has been successfully implemented and school homework policy and home reading system are effectively explained at parents' forums and in the Home Community Links Policy.

34 The quality of information for parents is very good. Parents are kept well informed through regular letters and newsletters about school life. Curriculum letters are sent home each term and the school's prospectus and governors' annual report to parents provide up-to-date information and meet with statutory requirements. Written reports to parents have been recently revised and are generally good. They provide helpful information on pupils' achievements and progress. Some have pertinent comments about areas for improvement. Parents are invited to make written comments as well as the pupils. Curriculum evenings and workshops have been provided for parents to explain what is taught and these are generally well attended.

35 Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are drawn up to provide appropriate targets, which are shared with parents who attend meetings and reviews. Parents are given ideas on how to support their child's progress at home.

36 Parents are appreciative of the opportunities they have to see year group performances and special events. Parents regularly help in the school with reading, on outings and with special projects such as the Quiet Area. Since the previous inspection the school has worked hard to improve the relationships with parents and has successfully developed this and strives to promote partnership in learning to enable pupils to achieve their potential.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37 The headteacher provides excellent leadership. Since her appointment the rate of improvement and development has been very good. She provides excellent educational direction and very good support to all of her staff, which results in the teaching and non-teaching staff working very well together for the benefit of all pupils. The school is a positive, learning environment in which everyone is valued. There are consistently high expectations of all work that is undertaken and of pupils' behaviour, which results in pupils behaving very well during lessons, and when they sensibly and maturely move around inside and outside the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is excellent. This has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching, which has improved very significantly since the last inspection when 33 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. The pre-inspection meeting identified

that the leadership of the school had improved since the previous inspection and 89 per cent of parents agreed that the school was well led and managed when responding to the parents' questionnaire. The serious weaknesses in the management of the school, which were identified in the previous inspection, no longer exist.

38 The headteacher is very well supported by her deputy headteacher who was promoted after her appointment, from within the school. They work very well together and his efforts complement the work of the headteacher. He is a consistently good teacher who provides a very good role model for all other members of staff. The deputy headteacher is particularly involved in developing assessment and tracking procedures and analysing information, which enables the staff to track the progress of individual pupils. The year group leaders are all involved in co-ordinating the core subjects (English, mathematics and science) and ICT within the school and along with the deputy head have been heavily involved with the intensive monitoring of teaching and learning which has taken place. They work well supporting the staff in particular when planning lessons. Most of the remaining teachers have responsibility for the other subject areas and have worked hard at developing these subjects by improving in particular the guidelines that teachers follow, the quality of teaching and the resources with which they work. There is also an excellent shared commitment to continue the improvement in the school. However, there are weaknesses in the management of music.

39 The governors are confident and very supportive and fulfil their statutory responsibilities. At the previous inspection they were criticised heavily but now are fully involved in development planning and linking the identified needs of the school with financial planning. They are proud of their school and see it developing positively whilst acknowledging the enormous influence the new headteacher has had. The governors realise how much they have grown as a governing body and confidently undertake their important role in shaping the direction of the school. They are well informed and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Each governor is linked to a curriculum subject and regularly visits the classrooms. This is successful in developing the links that the governors have with the school and their understanding of how the school is developing. They are fully involved, as are all staff, in setting up the school budget. Governors, senior teachers and co-ordinators talk confidently about their individual input and involvement in this annual process. Financial management and administration are good and the principles of best value are applied well. The recent audit report indicates that there has been a noticeable improvement in this area since the last audit and states that financial control of the school is operating effectively. There are a few very minor recommendations to be addressed. All specific grants are used appropriately. The statutory targets in English and mathematics, which were agreed by the governors will be exceeded in this year because of the consistently good and often very good teaching which the pupils receive. Good data analysis has been used to set realistic and challenging targets for 2002. The statutory requirement for assemblies is not always met.

40 The school's policies and practices all strive to provide equality of access and opportunity, and most lessons seen during the inspection showed that teachers ensure that all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language are fully included. However there were a few instances noted when teachers did not effectively address minor gender issues. These were particularly noticeable during group work where boys consistently allowed the girls to complete writing or recording tasks.

41 The management of special educational needs is good, and there is very effective, caring provision for those pupils identified as having special educational needs. The recently appointed co-ordinator is directly responsible, together with class teachers and outside agencies, for compiling each pupil's individual education plan and he is fully involved in reviews and assessing pupils' progress. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to further develop procedures for early identification of need in order that appropriate steps may be taken at an early stage and progress carefully monitored. This will be undertaken as part of the school's response to the requirements of the new Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs.

42 Staffing is good. The school has sufficiently appropriately qualified teachers and other staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. All have job descriptions and are very clear about their duties and responsibilities. This was not the case at the previous inspection. At the pre-inspection meeting with parents, concerns were raised about the lack of stability in the teaching force and since the previous inspection there has been a significant turnover of staff. This pattern now seems to have ended and the school has a strong and stable teaching staff that provides a good quality education. Procedures for all aspects of induction are good and the newly qualified teachers on the staff appreciate the support and help they have been given. The school's strategy for performance management is good and there is a strong commitment to the development of teachers that can be seen in the school's programme and policy for professional development. All of the non-teaching staff contribute well to the quality of education provided by the school. The learning support assistants are well organised and professional and make a significant contribution to the positive learning experiences that pupils receive. The lunchtime supervisors are very much part of the school and have a good understanding of the procedures for supporting pupils at lunchtime and ensuring that they are safe and secure. The previous inspection identified weaknesses in the day-to-day organisation and administration of the school and these no longer exist. The office manager ensures that school administration is now a strength of the school and provides a helpful, friendly and supportive 'public face' to parents and visitors. She also contributes to the effective financial systems now found at the school.

43 The accommodation is good. All areas of the school are bright and clean and make a positive contribution to the learning environment that is enhanced by good quality displays in corridors and classrooms. These were inconsistent at the time of the previous inspection. The site manager and his cleaning staff, work very hard to keep the building clean and in good order. The accommodation, both inside and around the school, allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. The site is free of vandalism and graffiti and the grounds are attractively maintained. There are hard and grassed areas suitable for physical education and a 'Quiet Area' is being developed after consultation with the pupils. The school playground is being increased in size to provide more space for the pupils at break and lunchtimes.

44 Resources for learning are satisfactory overall, but there have been some significant improvements since the previous inspection. The weaknesses identified in English and mathematics have been overcome, particularly in providing good resources for the literacy and numeracy strategies, although there are insufficient library books. Geography and religious education resources are no longer unsatisfactory to the extent that there is a good range of artefacts and books for religious education. Resources for physical education and design and technology are also good. Resources are generally well organised and there is an appropriate balance between those resources stored centrally and those retained in classrooms.

45 With the very good improvement since the previous inspection, the pupils' very positive attitudes and behaviour, the consistently good teaching, the headteacher's excellent leadership and the commitment to continue improvement shown by the staff and governors, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46 The inspection team recognise the significant improvements since the previous inspection and the school's successful drive to raise standards. In addition to the good work already being undertaken, to improve the standards and quality of education further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

(1) Raise standards in music by:

Improving teachers' subject knowledge and confidence and the leadership and management of the subject; (paragraphs 103, 105 and 106)

Developing appropriate assessment procedures for the subject that can be used to monitor pupils' progress and guide future planning; (paragraphs 31 and 103)

Provide further opportunities for pupils to appreciate the range and styles of different music, for example in school assemblies. (paragraphs 23 and 105)

(2) Improve the contribution made to the pupils' spiritual development by whole school and class assemblies by:

Raising the profile and importance of these occasions and providing in-service training or professional development for teachers; (paragraphs 22 and 39)

Using examples of good practice to improve the consistency of assemblies and ensuring that spiritual development is clearly planned for; (paragraphs 23 and 115)

The rigorous monitoring and evaluation of school and class assemblies. (paragraph 37)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 69 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 39 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 4 | 23 | 53 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Nursery | Y3 – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | N/a | 309 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | N/a | 19 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | Y3 – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | N/a | 0 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | N/a | 52 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 4 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 1 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 9 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 3.6 |
| National comparative data | 5.2 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 1.4 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2000 | 29 | 37 | 66 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 19 | 18 | 24 |
| | Girls | 32 | 21 | 31 |
| | Total | 51 | 39 | 55 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 77 (88) | 59 (68) | 83 (84) |
| | National | 75 (70) | 72 (69) | 85 (78) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 17 | 19 | 25 |
| | Girls | 30 | 25 | 31 |
| | Total | 47 | 44 | 56 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 71 (81) | 67 (69) | 85 (81) |
| | 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 | 6 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 1 |
| Indian | 2 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 300 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 0 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 13 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 23.8 |
| Average class size | 25.8 |

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

| | |
|---|------|
| Total number of education support staff | 3 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 41.5 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

| | |
|--|---------|
| Financial year | 2000/01 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 546143 |
| Total expenditure | 553227 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1735 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 18434 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 11350 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 317 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 114 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 40 | 54 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 33 | 62 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 25 | 68 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 24 | 64 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good. | 32 | 63 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 29 | 58 | 10 | 3 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 39 | 54 | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 56 | 40 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 24 | 61 | 10 | 4 | 2 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 29 | 60 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 29 | 64 | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 30 | 57 | 9 | 4 | 1 |

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

ENGLISH

47 There has been a marked improvement in standards in English since the previous inspection. Results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests show standards to be average when compared with schools nationally and with schools in similar circumstances. By the time the pupils are eleven, standards are now well above average. Inspection evidence indicates that the measures that the school has taken to raise standards in English are now beginning to affect attainment, particularly for pupils towards the end of the key stage.

Speaking and listening

48 As a result of the emphasis the school places on language development, pupils' skills in speaking and listening are well above those expected nationally. By the age of eleven, pupils listen attentively to the teachers' introductions and explanations and concentrate well on what is being said. They speak in clear, well-structured sentences, and many have an extensive vocabulary, which allows them to articulate their ideas very effectively. Teachers lead discussions well, using open-ended questions very effectively to encourage pupils to extend their ideas and to build on the contributions of peers.

49 Planning for the development of speaking and listening skills across all subjects is a strength of the provision. Teachers create many opportunities in lessons for pupils to talk about their work, in whole class discussion, in collaborative work in small groups, and, most importantly, in paired work with a designated partner. Opportunities are created for pupils to develop their oral skills through debates, interviews, and role-play in many subjects. Pupils in Year 3, for example, were observed creating a radio news report where they applied their new found knowledge of the appropriate style to their report of Humpty Dumpty's fall and the reactions of the local community at the time. Year 6 pupils wrote and performed raps, with musical accompaniment, in their study of different forms of poetry.

Reading

50 Pupils' reading skills at eleven are well above average. Most pupils are expressive and responsive readers. Pupils demonstrate an enjoyment of reading and respond to humour or interesting content. They enjoy literature, talk enthusiastically about the plot and characters, and make confident predictions. Pupils' experience of non-fiction books enables them to locate information reasonably quickly, using the index and table of contents. Teachers promote dictionary skills well, encouraging younger pupils to locate letters of the alphabet quickly and to find words in their dictionaries using both first and second letters where necessary. There is an appropriate range of non-fiction books in the classrooms to help them to develop their skills; however, the reference material in the library is not sufficiently comprehensive to support independent research for the older pupils.

51 The vast majority of pupils read regularly for pleasure and have a wide range of literature available within the home. They know how a library is organised and understand the system used for cataloguing non-fiction books. Many pupils belong to a library and pupils regularly use the public library for personal research. Pupils scan quickly for information, and refer confidently to the text to support their arguments in discussion. Less confident readers lack the full range of strategies for working out unfamiliar words and none automatically refer to the text when expressing opinions. These pupils have restricted access to literature within the home and library skills are poor.

Writing

52 By the time they are eleven pupils' writing skills are well above average. Pupils write in well constructed sentences, punctuate appropriately, and they use paragraphing very effectively to sequence their writing. Pupils practise their skills in a wide range of subjects as opportunities are created for them to extend their writing. Handwriting is generally of a high standard with very good presentation of work displaying a clear pride in achievement.

53 The good teaching in literacy lessons ensures that pupils are making good progress overall, including pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. This progress is accelerated towards the end of the key stage where the teaching is particularly strong. Pupils are developing a good sense of audience and they adapt their writing for many different purposes. Pupils in Year 6, for example, have written high quality poetry in different styles; *Warm sun pleasurable delight*, *Beaming rays*, *Clouds a maze*, *Oh summer days*. They explore the use of dialect in their investigation of language and thoroughly enjoy work on *A Dip into Doomsday* in Birmingham dialect as well as Shakespeare's *Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?* Pupils were observed discussing the work of Ted Hughes and expressed opinions confidently about his poem *Cat and Mouse* - "I like it because it leaves you with a question." "The poem is not about the mouse, it's about are we in charge of our destiny or is God?" Most pupils in Year 6 use expressive, descriptive language very effectively in their writing. Pupils organise fiction and non-fiction writing for specific purposes, for example, stories, poems, accounts, diaries, and biographies. Pupils refine their writing very successfully through drafting and redrafting and pupils are beginning to use the computer to edit their writing.

54 The use of literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum is a strength of the school. Pupils apply writing skills learned in literacy lessons in many different subjects as they make notes, write letters, draft and redraft work. They use research skills with books, CD-Rom and the Internet at home for work in history, geography and religious education. Pupils apply their research skills very effectively to seek information for homework projects and then to organise their writing, using reports, diary form and notes to collate their findings. This work, done in their own time, is a clear example of the motivation and interest of the pupils.

55 The quality of teaching and learning was good in most lessons seen during the inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Progress in all aspects of English generally improves in Year 4 and is accelerated for higher attaining pupils in Year 5 and for all pupils in Year 6, where the quality of the teaching is frequently very good and even excellent.

56 Teachers have a good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy, which is making a significant contribution to raising standards. All lessons are well planned and carefully matched to the strategy. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge both of literature and of the use of language and this enables them to teach basic skills with great care and exactitude and to constantly challenge pupils to attain high standards. 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.

57 In the few lessons seen where subject knowledge was less secure the pace of the lesson dropped and progress was only sound. In a small minority of lessons, work planned does not always take into account the varying needs and abilities of pupils. It is not always sufficiently well supported for lower attaining pupils to be able to achieve independently, although pupils with special educational needs are usually well supported. As a consequence pupils are unable to work independently enough to allow the teacher to concentrate fully on the core group, with the result that pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.

58 The system by which pupils are organised in ability groups is beneficial in raising standards. It enables work to be targeted more closely to the specific needs of pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported in literacy lessons where support staff work effectively to meet their needs. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and who need extra help are well supported.

59 The subject is very well managed. Through regular evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning across the school, the co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths within teaching and of the areas where improvements could be made. Governors are kept regularly informed of developments in the subject and are also fully involved in the target-setting process. The co-ordinator gives a good lead in the subject and supports her colleagues well in terms of lesson planning. There is a good range of resources to support teaching, and the quality of both fiction and non-fiction materials, including dictionaries in classrooms is also good. These are well organised, allowing pupils easy access to their use.

60 The school has recently inaugurated a library and is beginning to build a comprehensive stock of both fiction and non-fiction. Books are high quality but as yet insufficient to meet the needs of pupils. The library has only very recently been timetabled for pupils to have access to a programme of work designed to develop their library skills effectively and there is currently no provision for pupils to use the facilities for independent research. The school is aware of the need to develop facilities and resources, and governors are seeking ways of fully implementing plans.

61 The school 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. All pupils have personal targets which they review themselves with the teacher. Pupils' progress in reading and writing is carefully tracked as they move through the school. The literacy co-ordinator is a highly skilled and enthusiastic teacher and keen to promote literacy and raise standards. There is a great deal of teacher expertise within the school and this is impacting very positively on standards. A range of theatre visits and entry to writing competitions very effectively enhances learning, broadens pupils' horizons and helps to raise standards ever higher.

MATHEMATICS

62 Standards of attainment in the 2000 national tests were well below average when compared with all schools nationally and schools of a similar nature. The school failed to meet its statutory target of 70 per cent at level 4 and above. However, within the group of Year 6 pupils in 2000 there was a high proportion of special educational needs and a significant number of pupils had left or joined the school in the four years of junior education. Inspectors judge standards currently to be well above average and likely to exceed the year's target. This is a considerable improvement on the previous year's results and on pupils' attainment at the time of the last inspection when weakness in mental arithmetic, measures, data handling and using and applying mathematics were identified. Progress for all pupils including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language is now good throughout the school.

63 Test scores over four years identify girls and higher attainers as achieving less well than peers. Pupils are now taught in ability groups and this ensures that higher attaining pupils are given more challenging work that extends their thinking. The school has rightly identified a need to investigate why girls do relatively less well, and provision does sometimes inadvertently discourage girls from active participation.

64 One of the elements of pupils' attainment that was previously judged to be weak was mental mathematics. It is now a strength. Nearly all Year 6 pupils rapidly recall their multiplication tables. They flexibly use a range of strategies to calculate mentally, such as doubling and rounding,

depending on the numbers they are using. The average attainers in Year 5 are already able to hold much information in their heads as they work out numbers on the other side of a pair of dice and calculate products. The highest attaining pupils in Year 4 already identify factors in numbers up to 100 while average attainers in Year 3 confidently count on and back in 2s, 10s, 5s, and 1000s.

65 Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 are beginning to use algebra to solve simple equations while average attainers use all four rules to calculate the cost effectiveness of purchasing items for a class party and lower attainers use simple formulae for finding the areas of rectangles and triangles. In Year 5, higher attaining pupils know the angle sum of a triangle, and can apply this knowledge and that of opposite and adjacent angles on straight and parallel lines to work out missing angles. Average attainers calculate the areas of compound shapes while lower attainers are able to find the areas of squares and rectangles by counting squares. Year 4 pupils are able to multiply two digit numbers by one digit using the standard method and partitioning, a few of the highest attainers extending this to decimals involving tenths. Pupils in Year 3 are starting to divide by sharing and to understand that multiplication can be done in any order. However, elements of work in using and applying mathematics are still less well developed than skills in calculating.

66 The good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has resulted in mathematics now being taught well which was not the situation at the time of the last inspection. Brisk quick-fire mental sessions which start lessons develop rapid recall amongst all pupils. Shared learning objectives make pupils aware of what they are expected to know, and in the best lessons they have the opportunity to judge how much they have improved. Direct class teaching effectively incorporates a good range of methods and utilises a wide variety of resources. Pupils are fully involved in practical demonstration, discussing their methods and showing their calculations to the class so that they develop understanding and practise skills regularly in different ways and situations. In the few less successful lessons where pupils' progress is satisfactory rather than good, work is not so accurately matched to pupils' prior attainment. However, in most lessons regular checking and assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding by effective questioning, marking and support enable teachers to build the work consistently on pupils' existing knowledge. Tasks set for pupils to practise the skill taught during the main part of the lesson are usually interesting and varied which results in sustained concentration and the completion of much written work, although insufficient work is occasionally set and quicker workers run out of work to do. Expectations of what pupils can do are usually high and pupils respond to this by making much effort to achieve what is set. Plenary sessions at the end of lessons usefully recapitulate what has been achieved. At best they provide further challenge through a 'killer question' which not only revises the work done but extends it. This is one of the additional strategies adopted by the school to improve learning which are beginning to have a positive impact. The use of 'mathematics partners' in lessons is effective in enabling higher attainers to argue the case for their method and lower attainers to assist each other in getting a correct result. 'Mini-plenaries' are being used well by some teachers to provide pupils with further information about how well they are doing. Much practice of basic skills through homework and 'add-a-day' sessions ensures regular consolidation.

67 A number of small incidents indicate some reasons why some girls are underachieving. Although girls who volunteer are equally involved in lessons, less confident girls are sometimes overlooked. Dominant boys are often eager to be first to give answers and their female classmates who have been equally successful do not contribute. Girls who precisely follow instructions are sometimes not praised for doing so when more vociferous boys who have answers as the result of working differently are encouraged. Where group tasks are included and girls are outnumbered in any group they often make little contribution, and in mixed partnerships a more confident boy sometimes does most of the work. If girls have quiet voices teachers are likely to take over and give their contributions rather than helping the pupils concerned to do so more effectively.

68 Comprehensive and regular assessment procedures which track pupils' progress and target support are significant in the improvement of standards. Displaying of targets and overtly using them in books helps pupils to know what they are expected to learn in the immediate future. Effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching by the headteacher and subject co-ordinator and school wide focus on issues raised are also having a positive impact on provision. The co-ordinator is keen to address the issue of girls' achievement. He has tried to find out reasons for the underachievement by girls in mathematics by reading the available research. A well attended mathematics club is another positive feature, encouraging pupils to enjoy the subject. Regular cross-curricular work in many other subjects such as charting the cross-section of a river in geography ensures pupils see the relevance of the subject. The school has spent much money on improving mathematical apparatus because of the criticism in the last inspection report and there are now sufficient resources to support the subject.

SCIENCE

69 The 2000 national test results indicated that overall attainment was similar to the national average. When these results were compared to those schools having pupils from similar backgrounds, they were below the average. Results for science have improved since the previous inspection. Over the past three years the performance of boys has been better than that of girls but, although this is a reversal of the national picture, the inspection found no inequity in approach. Inspectors judge that the standards being achieved by the present Year 6 pupils are above the national average.

70 By the age of eleven pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding is above the average for their age. Pupils are able to conduct scientific investigations with increasing confidence and creativity. Most have a very good understanding of fair testing with a higher proportion than is normally found able to appreciate the importance of isolating each variable. Most pupils are able to plan and record experiments using a sound scientific structure. Pupils are able to pose questions, design tests, hypothesize, predict outcomes and to reach conclusions and their independence in these investigational skills is well above average. In addition they have a good understanding of plant and animal life, of the human body and of materials and their associated properties. They are able to classify according to given criteria and can describe some of the advantages and disadvantages of forces such as magnetism and gravity. Most pupils have a keen appreciation of the importance and value of the environment to living things.

71 There is satisfactory use of information technology to support the subject but some elements are relatively new and this capability is not yet fully integrated into the programme or applied systematically as a scientific tool.

72 The quality of learning is good. Teachers work conscientiously to build scientific understanding and to enrich pupils' experience. Consistently good teaching interacts with the very positive attitudes of pupils and the carefully considered procedures to produce good progress as pupils move through the school. This also includes pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language.

73 Teaching is good. Work is carefully planned with the purpose of each lesson consistently shared with the pupils. Every observed lesson demonstrated how this approach gives shared purpose to the learning. When this is coupled with an evaluation at the end of the lesson it helps to provide a real sense of achievement and the opportunity to assess what has been learnt. The relationships between teachers and pupils are extremely productive and class control is very secure. Teaching is founded on good subject knowledge and teaching points are effectively communicated. There is particularly effective use of scientific inquiry as a means of developing knowledge and understanding across the various aspects of the subject. This was well demonstrated in two very good lessons relating to the conditions affecting plant growth and dissolving substances. Here the infectious

enthusiasm of the teachers, the thought-provoking questioning and the demanding use of scientific investigation successfully enhanced the pupils' interest and learning.

74 Most pupils have a very positive attitude towards science. They concentrate well, work industriously and demonstrate real interest in scientific inquiry. Pupils collaborate productively when engaged in practical work and are keen to demonstrate their growing knowledge by answering in class and by contributing to discussion. In a Year 6 lesson pupils strove to achieve high standards in relation to plant and animal adaptation in response to taxing demands of some very good teaching. Overall, pupils' attitude to science is very good.

75 The subject is led well and this is impacting strongly upon standards and learning. A well-defined programme has been established which has the effect of providing teachers with very good guidance regarding what should be taught and when. This, in turn, is helping to ensure that there is suitable balance between the required aspects of the subject and that skills and knowledge are built systematically. There is extremely good emphasis upon the experimental and investigational work. Learning is systematically assessed each half term and the information gained is used well in evaluating effectiveness and in determining what should be taught next. There is an excellent structure for monitoring the curriculum through observation of teaching, scrutiny of pupils' work and involvement in planning. Environmental issues are given considerable emphasis but the aesthetic appeal of the subject and the development of a sense of wonderment are less evident.

76 The previous report found that some more able pupils were under achieving. It reported shortcomings in the subject knowledge of some teachers and judged some scientific investigation to be too teacher-directed. There was general criticism of the planned programmes and of the assessment of pupils' learning. The current inspection finds that the proportion of pupils likely to achieve the higher grade in the national science tests is above average. Teachers' scientific knowledge is now good, Well-defined documentation is impacting strongly upon progress, which is monitored by good assessment procedures. Overall, the progress in addressing the issues raised in the last inspection has been very good.

ART AND DESIGN

77 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attain standards in art which are in line with national expectations. Standards have therefore been maintained since the previous inspection. Judgements are based on the two lessons observed, discussions with teachers and pupils and a scrutiny of planning and sketchbooks, photographic evidence, and work completed around the school. All pupils including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when negative attitudes from some pupils hindered progress. In lessons seen, learning was good. However, pupils have made satisfactory progress over time because the consistently good teaching, which was observed during the inspection, has not yet been in place long enough to impact on standards and progress.

78 As pupils move through the school, sketchbooks are used well and show how pupils learn to develop their ideas as they draw, sketch and work with pattern. Pupils in Year 3 identify that some colours are *hot* and others are *cold*. They study different art work and begin to describe how pictures make them feel and by looking carefully, try to decide the artist's mood and feelings. Pupils use pastels and experiment using line, shape and colour to express the way mood is shown. They begin to appraise their own work as well as the work of others. In Year 4, past planning shows that pupils draw mythical beasts. They continue to develop observational drawing skills as they look carefully at pieces of fruit and accurately draw the images they see. There are sound links with other subjects with pupils linking their artwork with religious education and ICT as they create stained glass windows using a computer program. Past work shows how pupils in Year 5 link art with history as

they draw and colour Tudor portraits of kings and queens. They develop a sound understanding of patterns as they look carefully at the patterns of bones in the human body and sketch what they see. Planning shows that they will transfer their pattern on to clay and make three-dimensional images on tiles. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use a satisfactory range of materials, tools and techniques, showing increasing accuracy to detail, in particular when drawing. They also demonstrate an appropriate understanding of three-dimensional artwork as they make masks from papier-mâché. Pupils work with visiting artists and using pastels and paints develop sound ideas of painting portraits after studying the work of Paul Klee, Vincent Van Gogh and Pablo Picasso.

79 In the lessons seen teaching is good. Lessons are well thought out and learning objectives are continually shared with the pupils which results in pupils having a good idea of what they are learning. Resources are used well and pupils have many opportunities to look at and comment on different artwork. Vocabulary which is specific to art such as *mood*, *line* and *tone* are emphasised well and pupils are encouraged to use these words when describing their own efforts and when they look at the work of famous artists. Teachers give clear instructions, manage classes well and interact successfully within groups giving supportive and helpful comments to the pupils. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They work enthusiastically at a good pace and this results in good learning during the lessons seen.

80 Teachers follow clear guidelines and lessons are well planned with interesting activities. Sketchbooks are used well in all year groups and there are many links with other curriculum areas. For example in Year 6, pupils' work is well linked to their history topic as they study the work of artists during the Second World War. The school takes part in whole school art projects, for example each year group recently worked on a different emotion and produced art related to *happiness*, *sadness*, *stress* and *worry*. The art club that is held weekly is very popular and involves all year groups. Some interesting pieces of artwork such as *The Flower Collage* have been completed by some pupils in Year 3.

81 The co-ordinator is aware that assessment procedures are underdeveloped and although ICT is used in all year groups there is a need to develop it more to enhance the curriculum further. The need for museum trips and visits to art galleries has been identified as an area to develop. However, all pupils have the opportunity to work in groups with artists who are invited into school. Recent work has promoted their cultural development as pupils in Years 3 and 5 have developed their understanding of Indian and Aboriginal batik work. The subject promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Art skills are used well in other subjects and throughout the school and art displays create an attractive visual environment and clearly demonstrate the sound progress pupils make in all year groups.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

82 Standards are in line with national expectations. Progress is satisfactory for all pupils including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. These standards reflect those reported in the previous report. Judgements are based on the two lessons observed in Years 4 and 6, discussions with teachers and pupils, a scrutiny of planning, photographic evidence and the work displayed around the school. The teachers plan for design and technology lessons using the national guidelines. Planning is clear and shows that pupils have regular opportunities to develop design and technology skills consistently throughout the school.

83 In Year 3, photographic evidence shows that pupils begin to develop an understanding of the need for kitchen hygiene as they make sandwich snacks. Pupils

previously looked at different kinds of packaging and designed, made and evaluated cereal boxes. Pupils in Year 4 look at different types of fasteners and decide which will be best to put on their money containers, which they plan to make. These pupils have previously completed pop-up storybooks and evaluated their designs carefully. In Year 5, pupils have made impressive musical instruments after firstly identifying the strengths and weaknesses from their early designs. After experimenting with making shelters from art straws, pupils in Year 6 identify where their structures need strengthening and start work on their second attempt. Past work shows that at Christmas, pupils in Year 6 made moving toys. These were carefully designed with pupils paying attention to the function and the quality of the finished model. By the age of eleven, evidence indicates that pupils have worked with a range of tools and components to make sound quality products. A scrutiny of past work shows that pupils develop an appropriate idea of the importance of the designing, making and evaluating aspects of the subject.

84 There is too little evidence to make an overall in judgement on teaching. However in the best lesson seen which was in Year 6, good questioning during the initial discussion enabled all pupils including those with special educational needs to understand how they could make structures stronger. The lesson was well planned with good opportunities to discuss and articulate thinking and develop labelled diagrams. The good relationships established in the class enhanced the learning, which was good. The pupils showed positive attitudes to learning and co-operated well with each other. All pupils listened well, were enthusiastic and worked at a good pace as they began recording their ideas.

85 At present the deputy headteacher is co-ordinating the subject. He is aware of the need to develop more opportunities for pupils to use ICT to enhance the subject. Resources for design and technology are good and assessment procedures have recently been developed. The subject promotes moral and social development effectively, as pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively and collaboratively. Basic skills taught in English and mathematics are used well as pupils measure materials carefully when they make their designs and as they develop labelled diagrams and write up their evaluations.

GEOGRAPHY

86 Standards in geography are above national expectations. The quality of learning is good and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress.

87 Pupils acquire a good understanding of the factors relating to development and to land use. They have an above average knowledge of their local area and of the countries and physical features of the United Kingdom. Year 3 pupils can describe some of the differences and similarities between their own area and Mawgan Porth in Wales, the chosen area for comparison. As pupils move through the school a comprehensive study of the village of Chembokolli in India provides a stark comparison between their own area and that of a developing country. Pupils appreciate the importance of climate and physical features in determining the development of agriculture, towns and industries. Their study of Ethiopia exemplifies such learning. The study of a river enables pupils to gain a good understanding of the importance of water to the economy and to the natural environment. There is good emphasis upon geographical skills as well as factual knowledge. Skills relating to weather and mapping are extended, as is the understanding of how development can result in both improvement and damage to the environment. In all these aspects the depth of knowledge and understanding is above that expected for pupils by the age of eleven.

88 Teaching is good. Lessons are conducted at a purposeful pace within a productive working atmosphere. Lesson content is stimulating and pupils are constantly challenged to think creatively, to offer opinions and to make interpretations. This has the effect of motivating pupils and of enhancing

their enjoyment of the subject. Most collaborate with other pupils in a mature and responsible fashion. Concentration is sustained and most pupils discuss their work with animation. Pupils of all ages display genuine concern for environmental issues. Particularly good teaching was demonstrated in a Year 5 lesson, which considered the effects of drought, flooding and pollution. Here the good relationship between teacher and pupils, the high demands made of the pupils to articulate and justify their thinking and the subject knowledge of the teacher combined with the response of the pupils produced very good gains in their understanding.

89 The co-ordinator for geography has recently left the school. She initiated substantial improvements to the subject, which the headteacher is continuing to implement with rigour. This very good leadership, together with the consistency with which agreed developments are applied throughout the school, are significant factors in the improvements which have been made.

90 The school has developed detailed guidance that provides a sound framework for planning the programme. There is good emphasis upon geographical skills as well as factual knowledge. What is to be taught to each year group is generally well defined although further detail of mapping skills is required in order to promote more advanced accomplishment. The integrity of the subject is preserved but very good cross-curricular links are established through the topic approach that the school has adopted. An example is the topic relating to Greece, which helps to show how the modern country has been influenced by historical factors.

91 Visits to places of educational interest are integral to the programme and these enhance the value and the stimulus of the subject. Visits to Birmingham International Airport and to the River Cole for example, both provide rich opportunities for geography, mathematics and writing.

92 The previous inspection found serious weaknesses in the provision for geography. Standards were judged to be well below national expectations with pupils making poor progress. There was much unsatisfactory teaching of the subject and insufficient attention was paid to building skills and knowledge systematically. All these shortcomings have been addressed with rigour and success. The school's response to these issues has been very good.

HISTORY

93 Pupils attain standards by the time they leave school that are above those of most eleven-year-olds. The programme for teaching enables teachers to take pupils through interesting and challenging work. This allows them to make good progress so that by the end of the key stage most pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language have a good understanding of the periods and people they study.

94 Teaching is very good. Teachers use their considerable knowledge of history to enable pupils to focus clearly on the events or circumstances that brought about changes. For example, pupils in Year 6 explore changes in the role of women in Britain since 1930 looking at their role within the family and society and the effects of the Second World War. They use a wide range of historical sources in their research and apply literacy skills very effectively in their work. Pupils use video and photographic evidence and skim and scan texts for information. They make notes of relevant points, hypothesize, and then collaborate with a partner to write their report with clear reasons for their findings and a constant awareness of the need for balance and a lack of bias.

95 A further strength of teaching is the way in which teachers develop pupils' skills of empathy. Pupils in Year 4 listened with care to a 'recording' of the Battle of Marathon between the Greeks and the Persians and then discussed animatedly their analysis of the likely victors. Pupils made notes of their analysis of the texts they were given, and then developed questions for the soldiers whom they then 'interviewed' in role to discover their reactions to the outcome of the battle.

96 Teachers use links with other subjects of the curriculum very effectively. A strength of the provision is the development of literacy skills through drama, debate, research, and the use of a range of writing styles such as note-making, report and diary writing. Links to art are strong, with the creation by pupils in Year 6, for example, of paintings based on *Images of War* after the style of Picasso. Year 3 pupils have created magnificent exemplars of mummies wrapped in crepe bandages, pyramids covered in sand and containing jewels, and an impressive three-dimensional model of Tutankhamun. This artwork, part of high-quality homework research projects, demonstrates the pupils' high level of interest and understanding in history.

97 Teachers enrich pupils' understanding of the reality of the past by visits to museums and historic buildings. Pupils visit Lunt Fort where they dress up as Romans and in Year 5 they visit the Tudor house of Baddesley Clinton. Local historians add to pupils' understanding of the Second World War as they talk to them of their personal experiences as evacuees.

98 The co-ordinator has recently left the school but her work has resulted in a clear improvement in standards since the previous inspection. Resources are sound giving pupils access to a wide range of research materials and the chance to handle artefacts first-hand. Teachers' planning is carefully monitored and teachers plan with care to ensure all pupils have access to the same curriculum. Assessment is effective and enables teachers to match work to pupils' needs and abilities.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

99 Standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations. Pupils are making good progress in the subject including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. The school is well placed to continue raising standards. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when there was an 'insufficient breadth of evidence' to make any firm judgements with respect to the subject. ICT now has a high profile in the school and is very well integrated into the curriculum. This is reflected in the many good quality displays of ICT work around the school. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

100 Pupils in Year 6 talk confidently and enthusiastically about their work and experiences. They have researched information about Martin Luther King using the CD-Rom and have processed data on spreadsheets. They discuss knowledgeably the use of ICT outside school and use a digital camera to take pictures of each other and then edit the faces. Using a multimedia package, pupils organise, refine and then present a set of linked pages and in literacy they word process their critical evaluations on the styles of individual poets. The school is unable to offer the pupils an opportunity to use e-mail or access the Internet. This is because the school is in the fourth phase of the national funding for ICT resources. However, many of the pupils are able to use these facilities either at home or at the local library. As part of their literacy work, Year 6 pupils have written explanatory text on rules for using the Internet. These are well presented and show a good understanding and awareness about the disadvantages of using the information superhighway.

101 There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory overall. Although only a limited number of lessons were observed, teaching is now judged to be good. Pupils are making good strides in their learning and they are achieving well. Much of this is due to the good quality of the teaching. During the current inspection the standard of teaching ranged from good to excellent. In very good or better lessons the teachers are confident and have good subject knowledge. Pupils have a good understanding about what they are learning because lesson objectives are consistently shared with them and the teachers recap very thoroughly previous work and activities that have been covered. Teachers use questions well to evaluate pupils' understanding and reinforce learning, but always ensure that all pupils are involved. In two very good Year 5 lessons about controlling devices through instructions, pupils were used to

demonstrate procedures and other pupils were encouraged to discuss the possible outcomes of certain instructions being used with this particular program. Good emphasis was placed by the class teachers on linking this work with real life situations as pupils attempted to create a sequence of instructions to control a set of traffic lights. The pupils undertook mature discussions and used the resources available to them sensibly. To ensure pupils of all abilities were making good progress there were good interactions from the class teachers with the pupils. This meant that lower attaining pupils were well supported, whilst higher attaining pupils were moved on at a quicker pace and challenged further, for example by extending their traffic light sequences. Overall, the pupils in Year 5 showed levels of attainment that exceeded that expected for their age. Because of the good teaching and learning in ICT the school is now well placed to raise standards beyond national expectations at the end of the key stage. The subject co-ordinator, who is also a Year 6 teacher, provided the excellent lesson. The pace of the lesson was superb and all pupils were challenged and involved. The monitoring of pupils and the teacher's interaction with them were excellent. Higher attainers were very well extended and some pupils who presented some potentially challenging behaviour were dealt with effectively and with the minimum of fuss. Time limits were imposed on the pupils to keep the lesson momentum going and this also included pupils swapping positions at the computer so that no one pupil dominated the keyboard or mouse controls. This is good practice.

102 The subject has developed well since the previous inspection and is well led by the subject co-ordinator. Although the school is in the fourth cohort to receive national funding for ICT, the decision was made to develop a computer suite to be used by all classes. When the school does receive its funding, it will be able to continue the development and provide e-mail and Internet links. The subject develops knowledge and understanding well because of the national scheme of work adopted by the school and the use that some teachers make of a commercial scheme. Appropriate assessment procedures are in place although they have not been in place long enough to make a significant impact on future planning. There has also been some innovative practice to help the subject develop. The subject co-ordinator has spent time with other teachers helping them plan lessons, allowing them to observe him teach and then using him as support with their classes. Pupils with a good understanding of ICT have been identified as class technicians to act as support for other pupils if they have minor technical difficulties. Links with other areas of the curriculum are good. For example, Year 3 pupils use music software to develop and refine musical composition and in links with numeracy, Year 5 pupils use spreadsheets to carry out calculations, such as the total attendance at all matches in a round of the FA Cup. School librarians use a computer in the library to scan the books. Year groups are also provided with time in the computer suite specifically to support the National Numeracy Strategy. During the inspection this was for Years 3 and 5 and good teaching was observed as Year 5 pupils used the computers to estimate and measure angles accurately. To further develop the pupils' experiences, a popular computer club is run every Wednesday. It has been organised in rotation to ensure that all year groups are able to attend. Computer software that is being used in specific year groups is made available to the pupils so that they have the opportunity to further extend their skills, knowledge and understanding. The subject co-ordinator has produced a very detailed action plan for his subject which is part of the overall school improvement plan and the school looks well placed to continue the good progress it has made in ICT since the previous inspection.

MUSIC

103 Pupils' attainment by the age of eleven is below expectations. Most of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection have not been dealt with satisfactorily. Composing is still weak and ICT is only just being integrated into the scheme of work for Year 3. Assessment to ensure work builds on prior knowledge has not been developed although there are procedures in most other subjects. Pupils' achievement, including those pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, is unsatisfactory.

104 Pupils throughout the school sing with gusto and with clear diction as they did at the time of the last inspection. While they can sing tunefully in lessons, in whole school sessions their enthusiasm too often results in shouting. Most pupils are confident performers when presenting their work to an audience, in assembly or in front of the class. However, in Year 6, pupils are still learning how to play the sleigh bells and tambourine effectively and not all pupils can keep the pulse to accompany a song. Year 6 pupils have a general idea about recognising mood in a piece of music and know that the Japanese music being played in assembly in the week of the inspection contrasts with the *Riverdance* music heard previously, but only the higher attaining pupils know how to go about attempting to create a particular mood. In Year 5, pupils recognise that the Haka war chant is intended to create aggression and the *Pomp and Circumstance March* pride. Pupils experience a range of music through having listened to different examples both in lessons and in assembly, but their understanding of differences and ability to apply their knowledge of elements such as tempo and dynamics is limited. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 know some relevant vocabulary, but few pupils use this confidently and accurately when discussing their own work. In Year 6, for instance, pupils give a list of elements that could be varied when singing the song *Stan*. However, when suggesting symbols for representing these on their graphic scores the weaknesses in their understanding become apparent. Year 6 pupils' compositions are very simple and do not combine those elements they have learnt in lessons. Year 4 recognise, when prompted, simple ternary structure in the piece they hear in the lesson, but few remember the binary structure of a piece previously discussed. Pupils are not secure about naming the percussion instruments they use, such as maracas and castanets, and only identify a few orchestral instruments.

105 The teaching of music has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory, but lessons lack the pace and structured approach of those in other subjects. Work planned is not always logically introduced and developed and as a result pupils fail to see how their present work links with what they have done previously which adversely affects long term progress. For example, Year 5 pupils try to understand texture through listening to complex professional examples rather than through practical work on their own song first. Teachers do give useful demonstrations such as singing *Stan* at a different tempo, with dynamics and with a change of pitch and this helps pupils to recall the meaning of the vocabulary. Their questioning is often very effective in advancing pupils' understanding of the work being done as in the discussion of timbre in the Greek Orthodox religious singing heard by Year 5. Teachers do introduce and revise the correct terminology in an attempt to enable pupils to talk about their experiences, and they make pertinent comments about pupils' individual work that results in improvement. Lack of confidence in the subject is sometimes evident, though, in the failure to organise resources so that pupils can see the music when required to play a glockenspiel or to see the words of a song in time to sing and accompany them as decided in discussion. Such lack of attention to organisation adversely affects the outcomes or makes it necessary for pupils to put their efforts into overcoming these problems rather than concentrating on the music. Pupils are also sometimes placed in inappropriate situations for good quality performance such as being squashed in a small space in hot conditions to sing. There is little opportunity to reflect on music. Assembly music is identified but not appraised nor are the feelings it evokes in personal terms explored. As a result pupils are only interested in popular music and show no appreciation of classical works. At worst, in one Year 4 class, pupils acted inappropriately in response to the Louis Armstrong jazz number *Cheesecake* rather than enjoying the fun of it.

106 Pupils are given many opportunities to take part in productions and workshops, including regular lessons with local education authority specialist staff who also introduce them to the music of different cultures. There are useful chances to play the recorder and to join the school choir in extra-curricular sessions although the choir session is too short for much progress to be made. The choir has appropriate opportunities to perform in the community and to increase skills by singing in two parts. In Year 5 a large group of pupils can have the valuable experience of a residential music school. A few parents expressed concern about the status of music in the school. Year 6 pupils and staff confirm that lessons were suspended for a number of weeks for revision towards national tests

and this is unsatisfactory. The leadership and management of the subject is unsatisfactory and is having insufficient impact on the development of the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

107 Although only a limited number of physical education lessons were observed, discussions with pupils and teachers and scrutiny of school documentation indicates that standards in physical education are in line with those expected nationally. By the time the pupils are eleven, standards in swimming exceed those expected nationally. The pupils' progress over time is satisfactory including pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. The pupils' achievements in swimming are good because of the wide range of experience and swimming-pool time provided for the pupils by the school. The subject has developed well since the previous inspection and the positive features identified then have been retained.

108 Pupils through the school showed enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment for the subject. Pupils in Year 4 readily discussed the changes in their body as they actively warm-up for a lesson developing their skills in rounders. They identified the specific muscles and parts of the body that they needed to focus on in their warm-up to be properly prepared for a the game. During the main session the pupils showed satisfactory co-ordination and control as they bowled, hit and fielded. Year 5 pupils demonstrated appropriate precision, control and fluency as they took part in a dance workshop provided by the local education authority (LEA) Arts Service. They showed they were able to work co-operatively with each other and were supportive of each other's performance. They were well behaved and patient as they waited their turn to perform and provided impromptu applause when the class teacher, who was participating in the lesson, completed a cartwheel. In another Year 5 class, pupils successfully developed their technique and performance in long-jump as part of their athletics activities. The pupils moved to different activities sensibly and maintained good physical effort throughout the lesson. They showed awareness of the safety principles required for the lesson and analysed their individual performances maturely. Year 6 pupils further developed their individual football skills as they worked with the LEA school development officer for football. Even though it was an extremely hot day, the pupils sustained tremendous effort and developed their football skills and techniques well.

109 Insufficient lessons were observed during the inspection to make an overall judgement on teaching; however, the quality of lessons observed was consistently good and this included contributions from LEA facilitators who provided a greater breadth of experience for the pupils and demonstrated good subject knowledge. In lessons undertaken by teachers from the school, relationships were always strong and there was good control and management of the classes. These lessons were undertaken in difficult circumstances with exceptional noise from Birmingham Airport nearby and a railway line that borders the school. None of this distracted the pupils or inhibited the performance of the teachers. It was as if the noise did not exist! Lessons were appropriately structured so that sufficient time was given to allow pupils to warm-up, undertake the main activity and then have a cooling down session. The importance of warming-up was always emphasised well and time was spent discussing changes in the body because of warming-up. In the Year 4 rounders lesson this was linked nicely to science. Lessons were always well organised and pupils were constantly encouraged to discuss and analyse their performance and that of others. The pupils had a good understanding of what was expected of them because lesson objectives were consistently shared with them and reinforced as the lesson developed. Consequently, pupils learnt effectively in these lessons and achieved well.

110 The subject is well managed by the subject co-ordinator who is well qualified and has good personal subject knowledge. He has led school in-service training on gymnastics, games and athletics and has also taught alongside other teachers to improve the quality of education in the subject. The school's scheme of work ensures that the subject develops progressively through the school and that

pupils are provided with a wide range of experiences. In the week preceding the inspection, Year 6 pupils had travelled to Ardres in France for outdoor and adventurous activities at a residential centre. This was good experience but the school would acknowledge the need to ensure that those pupils who remain behind are also provided with appropriate and similar activities. Year 4 and 5 pupils are provided with opportunities for orienteering at a local LEA field centre and good use is made of other LEA resources such as the dance and football expertise observed during the inspection. However, some parents at the pre-inspection meeting felt that some of the pupils had too much football in physical education and this view was reinforced by some of the Year 6 girls. Appropriate opportunities are provided for competitive sport through football for boys and girls, athletics and netball. The school has been particularly successful in some of the competitions it has entered and has good links with local industry. A nearby garage sponsors the football kit. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs and during the inspection a well attended athletics club was observed. This provision has improved since the previous inspection. Good links are made with other areas of the curriculum; for example during the Year 5 athletics the pupils were expected to accurately record the distances of standing long jumps. The only weakness in this otherwise positive activity was that on a majority of occasions, the girls did all the recording. A strength of the physical education provision is the consistency with which pupils are asked to make self-assessments of their work and performance. This is good practice and enables all pupils to have a good understanding of their work and what is expected of them. Resources for the subject are good and have improved since the previous inspection. The range of games resources is particularly notable and there is a good range of support materials available for teachers. The outside accommodation includes appropriate hard surfaces for games and large grassed areas for games and athletics. The school hall offers plenty of space for activities such as gymnastics, dance and games, and the floor is immaculately maintained by the site manager.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

111 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils reach standards in religious education which are in line with those required by the locally Agreed Syllabus. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were reported to be low. This marked improvement is related to the development of resources and the improvement of teaching, which has resulted in more positive attitudes from the pupils. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make satisfactory progress over time and again this is an improvement since the school was last inspected. In the majority of lessons seen, teaching and learning was good. However, this good teaching, which was observed during the inspection, has not been in place long enough to impact on standards and the pupils' progress over time.

112 Pupils record their work in the form of pictures and written and word-processed accounts that show satisfactory understanding of facts they have learnt. Learning was good in a Year 3 lesson as pupils looked at religious artefacts and talked about their importance in some people's lives. Pupils are developing a sound idea of the many different religions in the world, as they look at sacred places which people visit. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory and sometimes good progress as they record what they have learnt. A lower attaining pupil in Year 5 showed great empathy for Jesus whilst he was on the cross. He imagined that "Some of the people were throwing massive stones and rotten fruit and others were crying....he must have been in pain and agony". Pupils in Year 6 produce thought provoking written work, for example comparing the Christian thoughts about death to those of Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, which clearly show the satisfactory progress they have made. All pupils learn about festivals such as Easter, Christmas and Eid. Most pupils develop good listening skills and pupils in Year 6 talk confidently in whole class situations about the different religions they have studied. A few higher attaining pupils demonstrate a more detailed knowledge and use vocabulary related to the subject well. Pupils generally develop a mature approach to life, as was clearly demonstrated in the Year 5 lesson when they talked about their own beliefs. When writing about the word Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) one boy wrote; "My mind is my memories,

ambitions and dreams. My body is my limbs and bones and my blood and my spirit is my conscience". Pupils discuss and write sensitively about feelings such as their thoughts about what heaven is like.

113 Pupils in Year 3 reflect on things they have been afraid of and listen to stories from the Bible such as *The Creation*. Planning shows that they look at the lives of famous people such as Mother Teresa. In Year 4, pupils begin to realise that religious beliefs make a difference to people's lives as they listen to the story of Elijah. They continue to learn about different religions as they look at how Muslims respect and treat the Qu'ran. Pupils in Year 5 try to understand why Jesus challenged the Pharisees and look closely at the meaning of the word hypocritical. Pupils demonstrate confident dictionary skills as they look for words that begin with 'tri' and have a connection with the number three. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils begin to identify how beliefs and values can affect the lives of individuals and groups. They reflect on how it feels to be treated unjustly and look closely at outstanding people such as Terry Waite.

114 The quality of teaching is good and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers build on previous learning and questions are used well to challenge thinking. Planning is good and resources are used very well, which promotes good learning. Lessons are well managed and pupils show enthusiasm and interest in the activities they are offered. This is because teachers value their input during the lessons and in the marking of work. Literacy skills are well used to record information in all year groups and work is well presented and matched correctly to pupils' abilities.

115 Provision for religious education meets statutory requirements and planning is linked closely to the locally Agreed Syllabus. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has looked closely at the work produced in all year groups. Resources have been developed well since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to further develop the use of ICT to promote the subject in all year groups. She is also aware of the need to improve the number of visits and visitors into school to enrich pupils understanding of the beliefs and customs of others. There are sound links with other subjects, in particular with English and history. Assessment procedures are good and there are opportunities for pupils to self assess their work when they record what they have learnt and highlight areas they need to develop further. The subject promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.