

INSPECTION REPORT

ST FRANCIS XAVIER CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Oldbury

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 103998

Headteacher: Mrs M Simmons

Reporting inspector: Mr A C Jolly
RgI's OIN 8750

Dates of inspection: 14th – 16th January 2002

Inspection number: 230862

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	McKean Road Oldbury West Midlands
Postcode:	B69 4BA
Telephone number:	0121 552 1485
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Beckett
Date of previous inspection:	12 th January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8750	Mr A C Jolly	Registered inspector	English Physical Education Equal Opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements. How well are the pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
19491	Mr R Jones	Lay inspector		Pupils', attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22489	Mr I Barker	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and Communication Technology Art	How well is the school led and managed?
26405	Mrs C Bond	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage English as an additional language Design and Technology Music	
19897	Mr A Evans	Team inspector	Science Geography History Special Educational Needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7 - 10
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
 PART B: COMMENTARY	
 HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	 11 - 12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
 HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	 12 - 13
 HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	 13 - 15
 HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	 16
 HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	 16 - 17
 HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	 17 - 18
 WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	 18
 THE PROVISION FOR AND STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE.	 19
 PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	 20 - 24
 PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	 25 - 39

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Francis Xavier is a Roman Catholic Primary School situated in Oldbury, an area of high social and economic deprivation. About half the pupils come from Roman Catholic families. The school educates pupils from the age of 3 to 11 and has 36 part-time pupils in the nursery school. Twenty-nine per cent of the 214 pupils in the main school come from minority ethnic backgrounds of whom 49 have English as an additional language, which is a high proportion. Only a small number of those pupils are at an early stage of English acquisition. The number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The percentages of pupils identified as having special educational needs and, specifically, those having statements are just above the national average. The pupils' attainment on entry to the nursery is below what is expected for their age according to baseline assessment measures.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Primary School is a happy, effective school, which has sustained the significant improvement made in recent years. It has a clear vision and purpose and a strong Roman Catholic ethos. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by key staff and the governors. Standards and test results are in line with the national average and compare well with schools in similar settings. Teaching is good and pupils behave very well. The school is very well managed and provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good.
- The provision for pupils' social development is very good.
- Relationships are very good throughout the school.
- The school has a clear vision and purpose.

What could be improved

- Standards in art.
- The marking of pupils' work.
- The use of information and communication technology.
- Levels of attendance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1999, by Her Majesty's Inspectors who decided that it no longer required the special measures that had been directed at an earlier inspection in 1997.

The significant improvement identified in the last report has been sustained. The school has broadened the provision for lunchtime and other extra-curricular activities. Subject co-ordinators are now fully monitoring planning and standards and giving helpful advice on subjects to class teachers. Standards have risen in science at Key Stage 2 and the overall quality of teaching has improved

further. Staff responsibilities are allocated equitably. The school has continued to act on a rolling programme to improve the accommodation and resources. It has planned soundly for future development.

Standards have remained the same at the end of both key stages and the school's performance continues to compare favourably with schools in similar contexts. There is a commitment to the achievement of high standards and a positive ethos that confirms the school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	D	C	B
mathematics	C	D	C	B
science	E	E	B	A

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

This table shows that standards last year were in line with the national average in English and mathematics and above the national average in science. This reflects an improvement from 2000 in all subjects, particularly science. The results are even better when compared with schools in similar contexts. In English and mathematics the results of the national tests were above average and in science well above average.

In the 2001 Key Stage 1 National Tests the results were average in reading and mathematics but below average in writing. The writing result showed a decline from previous years and was particularly influenced by the low attainment of the boys in this particular cohort; it does not reflect a long-term trend. When compared with schools in similar contexts, the results are average for writing, above average for mathematics and well above average in reading. Results have followed the national trend since the last report at the ends of both keys stages with the exception of writing in Key Stage 1 in 2001.

Standards in literacy and numeracy are sound. Standards in all subjects are average with the exception of art where they are below average. Pupils of all abilities achieve well in relation to their low attainment on entry to the nursery. The school monitors carefully the standards of pupils for whom English is an additional language and different ethnic groups and it is clear they achieve well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils like school and participate enthusiastically in lessons and other

	activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well. They are friendly and polite and treat school property with care.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils work and play together co-operatively, and the older pupils in particular, relish the opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative.
Attendance	Attendance is currently well below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Sound	Good	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.

There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Seventeen per cent of the teaching is very good and a further 39 per cent is good. The remainder is satisfactory. The teaching is sound or better in all lessons. This is an improvement on the last inspection. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught consistently well. The school has identified the needs of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and those for whom English is an additional language so that teaching is targeted to their needs. The teaching effectively meets the learning needs of all pupils, with challenging tasks set for able pupils and good support given to those pupils who have special needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides overall a sound curriculum that caters successfully for all pupils. It is reasonably broad and balanced.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision, with valuable support from the special educational needs co-ordinator, class teachers and learning practitioners.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils' needs are well identified and addressed effectively. Their progress is carefully monitored.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision overall for the pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and cultural development. The provision for social development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring school that gives priority to pupils' welfare. The pupils' personal development and academic progress are well supported.

The school has a very effective working relationship with parents and keeps them well informed about developments in school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
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Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by the teachers with management responsibilities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and give effective support to the school. They fulfil all their statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is very detailed monitoring of both teaching and standards of attainment and future plans to develop this further.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes satisfactory use of its resources and manages the various funds at its disposal effectively.

The school has continued to develop its accommodation and learning resources and is well staffed. The school adheres effectively to 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"> • The school has high expectations. • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. • The school is well managed and led. • Teaching is good. • Behaviour is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons.

Parents are extremely positive about the school and the improvement it has made in recent years. The inspection team share this confidence and judges the range of activities outside of lessons to be satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school's performance in the 2001 National Tests at the end of Key Stage 2 compared appropriately with the national average and was even more favourable when compared with schools in a similar setting. The results for English and mathematics were in line with the national average and above average when compared with schools in a similar context. In science the results were above the national average and well above those found in schools in similar contexts. These tests sustained the significant improvement reported at the last inspection, when standards in all tests had risen rapidly to almost the present level. The pattern of performance in Key Stage 1 has broadly matched the national average in reading and mathematics. The results for writing, however, which from 1998-2000 were above the national average dipped in 2001 and were below the national average. When compared with schools in a similar context, the results for Key Stage 1 National Curriculum Tests in 2001 were average in writing, above average in mathematics and well above average in reading.

2. Able pupils perform particularly well in the National Tests at the ends of both key stages. Thus at Key Stage 1 the percentage attaining the higher level, Level 3, in 2001 in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average and well above the percentage found in similar schools. At Key Stage 2 able pupils also exceeded the national average in science. They matched the national average in English and were just below in mathematics. The percentage was well above that found in schools in similar contexts in science and English, and broadly the same in mathematics.

3. The pattern of performance has been similar for boys and girls in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 1. In writing, however, boys have attained less well than girls for the last three years, measured against national figures. From 1999-2001 in Key Stage 2 boys performed better than girls compared with their national counterparts in English and science but less well in mathematics. However the pattern varies from one year to another and does not constitute a consistent trend.

4. Pupils achieve well. The school has very thoroughly monitored the progress of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and those for whom English is an additional language. There is an effective tracking system that shows there is no evidence of underachievement by any group. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they respond well to it.

5. The quality of provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and reception children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in all six areas by the time they move to Year 1.

6. The standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 are currently average, maintaining the improvement identified in the last report. Although control technology is under-emphasised in information and communication technology, standards are in line overall with what would be expected at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in all other subjects are average except for art where they are below average. The school has very effective ways of tracking pupils' attainment and has made a very thorough analysis of previous assessment data to inform future planning, teaching and target setting. It has set itself ambitious targets, which, if attained, will ensure continued improvement and build upon the considerable progress made since 1997.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They are interested and attentive in lessons and activities such as assemblies. Many talk enthusiastically about the work they are doing, such as demonstrating the mechanisms for making a “pop up” book in a design and technology lesson. In a class assembly they listened with respect while others talked about their resolutions to improve themselves. In discussions pupils say they like school and their parents confirm this.

8. Levels of attendance are well below national averages. There was a slight improvement last year and this is being maintained during the current year. Attendance figures have been depressed by some protracted absences due to sickness. Nevertheless there are too many children who have unsatisfactory attendance records. The school has started to address this issue through closer monitoring and targeting of poor attendees. Analysis of attendance data shows no major differences in attendance rates between boys and girls, different ethnic groups or specific year groups.

9. Relationships throughout the school are very good. At lunchtimes pupils play sociably. There is a “Friendship Stop” in the playground where pupils wanting someone to play with can wait and are almost immediately included by others in their activities. In lessons they work collaboratively, for example, when researching information about Anglo Saxons in a Year 3 history lesson.

10. Standards of behaviour are also very good. Pupils are very polite and friendly and school property is treated with care. When they come into school they settle quickly and quietly to the day’s activities and clearly understand what is expected of them. Parents agree that behaviour is good. There have been no exclusions.

11. The school effectively assists pupils’ personal development, providing a range of opportunities for them to take responsibility. For example, an elected School Council has recently been set up with its own small budget and has already started work looking at pupils’ suggestions. Year 6 monitors have a range of duties around the school and older pupils have taken the initiative in developing a school newspaper. Year 5 and 6 pupils undertake residential trips and pupils are also active in supporting charities. Pupils are encouraged in lessons, circle time and assemblies to act responsibly and thoughtfully and the school has been successful in promoting these ideals.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

12. The teaching at the Foundation Stage is at its best in the nursery where it is good in half of the lessons. This is a major contribution to the good progress pupils make in the Foundation Stage after below average standards of attainment on entry to the school. Teaching in reception is always at least satisfactory. There is more very good teaching in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1 but overall the quality of teaching is similar in both key stages.

13. The teaching is never less than sound and it is good overall. This reflects a further improvement since the last inspection report when there was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Fifty six percent of the teaching is good or better, which is also an improvement on the last report when it was only one-third.

14. Several factors have contributed to the good teaching. Teachers have implemented the new national strategies for literacy and numeracy well and these provide a good structure for successful lessons. The teaching of basic skills, particularly in numeracy and literacy is consistently good. Teachers in all classes question pupils in an open-ended and stimulating way to create interest in what they are doing. One characteristic of effective teaching in Year 3 is the consistent use of subject-specific language. This is evident in science, mathematics and English where pupils are confidently using words such as ‘genre’ and ‘fiction’. In these lessons pupils are given precisely timed tasks that helped the sense of urgency and purpose. Paired discussion is used effectively,

particularly in Key Stage 2, where pupils respond well to the opportunity to discuss ideas. There are high expectations of behaviour that are almost always met by pupils.

15. It is clear from the improvement in the work of the oldest pupils that there has been good teaching over time. Homework is consistently set and parents attending the parents' meeting reported that they understood homework arrangements. The marking of pupils' work, however, is variable. Helpful comments to suggest how pupils can improve are given too infrequently to some classes.

16. The teaching is well directed to meet the learning needs of all pupils. It is clear that able pupils are regularly pushed near the limits of their capability with challenging work. Those pupils with special educational needs receive effective support from learning practitioners and specially designed tasks. The teaching is informed by a close analysis of the performance and needs of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and those for whom English is an additional language.

17. One feature of the less effective teaching is that introductory sessions are sometimes too prolonged. In one, atypical example, pupils uncharacteristically became very restless and started to shout out inappropriately and lose concentration. Another weakness is that there is very little use of information and communication technology to aid the teaching of the other subjects.

18. The quality of teaching has continued to improve since the last inspection report and underpinning this are the effective planning and clear lesson objectives. The school has set itself suitably ambitious targets. Pupils are also given clear targets, particularly in English, mathematics and science. In this way pupils are involved in evaluating their own learning and motivated to make consistent progress.

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

19. The school provides a sound curriculum, although certain aspects of information and communication technology and art are under-emphasised. There is swimming for pupils in Years 3 and 4 and about fifteen pupils take advantage of opportunities for violin lessons. Total weekly teaching time meets national recommendations. The school meets its obligations to provide a daily act of collective worship. There is an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics and the school is implementing the national strategies for literacy and numeracy well. Regular homework is set in these two subjects and occasionally in others. The amount increases as the pupils move up towards Year 6, in preparation for secondary school.

20. There are clear, up to date policies and schemes of work for all subjects. Long-term plans are soundly based on guidelines provided by the National Literacy Strategy, the National Numeracy Strategy and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. These are supplemented by the use of commercial schemes in some subjects, such as mathematics. The teachers plan carefully for the work that the pupils will do each term and each week, bearing in mind the wide range of academic ability in each class. This reflects the findings of the previous report.

21. All pupils, regardless of academic ability or gender, are included in the full curriculum and in extra-curricular activities. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, which reflects the findings of the previous report. Pupils who need extra support are identified at an early stage and good quality individual education plans (IEP) are drawn up for them. These provide clear and achievable targets for the pupils to aim at and they are easily accessible for reference by the teachers. The staff work hard to ensure that these pupils make good progress. The school works closely with relevant outside agencies. During the inspection, a member of Learning Support Services worked effectively with a visually impaired pupil. The progress of pupils with SEN is reviewed each term and new targets are set as appropriate. Parents are fully involved in this process. Most SEN support

is provided in normal lesson situations, although pupils are sometimes withdrawn for support outside classrooms. There are adequate resources to support SEN work, but there is no specialist room. There is a register of more able pupils and the teachers generally provide an appropriate challenge for these pupils within lessons.

22. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing a key issue of the previous report, which was to broaden the scope of extra-curricular activities. Although a number of parents feel that this is still insufficient, the range of activities outside lessons is broadly satisfactory. After-school basketball and football clubs were observed during the inspection. Teachers and visiting coaches also lead netball, gymnastics, Irish dancing and computer clubs. No competitive sports fixtures with other schools are held. A choir is organised periodically. The teachers enrich the curriculum by organising a sound range of school visits and by using the knowledge and expertise of visitors whenever possible.

23. The school makes good use of the community to enhance pupils' academic and personal development. Visits are made to Sandwell Valley Park, McKean Road's centre for the mentally ill, local mosques, Sandwell Hospital, Oldbury library and various museums. Visitors have included a life-saving skills group, the local history group, emergency services, the school nurse, librarians, theatre groups, the priest and elderly residents. Archaeological digs in the school grounds during the past two years have unearthed interesting finds, which the borough archaeologist has documented. There are close links with the Xaverian Club. Some pupils switched on Oldbury's Christmas lights this winter and sang carols for local elderly and infirm residents.

24. There are good links with the high school to which most Year 6 pupils transfer. Secondary staff come to talk to the pupils, prior to transfer and academic and personal records are passed on. The pupils have benefited from teaching by a visiting physical education teacher from the high school. There is an opportunity for Year 5 pupils to have a 'taster' day at the high school.

25. There is a clear policy for the pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and provision is good. Relevant issues, such as relationships, feelings, health, drugs misuse and social responsibilities, are discussed in 'circle' time and assemblies and in lessons, such as science and religious education. Formal sex education is provided for pupils in Years 5 and 6, with help from the school nurse. The school participates in the Healthy Schools Initiative.

26. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The previous report found it to be satisfactory overall. There is good provision for the pupils' spiritual development. The school has a very positive ethos. Its clear mission statement, displayed in all classrooms, embodies the school's aim to provide a Catholic education, with particular emphasis on developing respect, tolerance and co-operation. Assemblies observed during the inspection fostered spiritual development well, on themes such as New Year resolutions, friendship and the baptism of Jesus. Pupils cannot fail to be aware of attractive displays of prayers and thanks to God. Teaching sessions start and end with prayers, in which all the pupils participate. Last October, a number of Key Stage 2 pupils met once a week to pray for world peace. Year 3 pupils have a 'friendship book', which allows them to write about why others are their special friends. They have also written their promises for 2002. The teachers try to instil a sense of awe and wonder in learning. For example, Reception children were thrilled in a lesson on making a kite and pupils in Year 6 thoroughly enjoyed a science lesson about mixing various materials.

27. Provision for the pupils' moral development is also good. A clear behaviour policy sets out the school's expectations about standards. School rules and 'golden rules' are displayed in all classrooms. The teachers reward good behaviour and effort through a system of house points and a 'golden book'. Achievement is celebrated in a weekly congratulations assembly. In one assembly observed during the inspection, the story of Martin Luther King focussed the pupils' thinking about

racism and morality. Some IEPs for pupils with SEN include appropriate targets for improving behaviour.

28. There is very good provision for the pupils' social development. Parents believe that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. All pupils help with classroom tasks and Year 6 pupils can be monitors, with extra responsibilities, such as reading with younger pupils, organising games with them and organising the school tuck shop. The teachers make the pupils aware of environmental concerns and some older pupils have worked with the borough's Parks Department to design improvements to the school grounds. There is a School Council, which gives some pupils the opportunity to participate in decision making. The pupils have generously supported a number of local and national charities and some have sung for residents of Beeches Road Old Peoples' Home and Simpson Street Day Centre. The pupils are able to develop social skills on school visits and in Easter and Christmas productions. Older pupils develop social skills during residential visits to Alton Castle and Edgmond Hall.

29. There is sound provision for the pupils' development with regard to traditional British and European culture. The teachers organise visits to local museums to support work in history and the pupils participated in a 'Victorian Day' at school. The school took part in last year's World Book Day and in last term's National Poetry Day. Visitors have included storytellers and theatre groups. In art, the pupils are made aware of the work of some famous artists. In geography, Year 4 pupils learn about the culture of India. In religious education, the pupils study Christianity and other faiths and they have visited local mosques. In one assembly observed, the pupils listened to some Caribbean music. The school curriculum makes due reference to the range of cultures represented within the school population and the equal opportunities policy is effectively implemented.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. This is a caring school where the welfare and support of pupils is given a high priority. There are effective procedures to deal with child protection issues and staff have received the appropriate training. Detailed policies and guidelines have been developed to deal with the requirements of health and safety legislation. There are regular site inspections and relevant risk assessments have been carried out. Pupils enjoy a safe and secure environment.

31. There are good systems for recording and monitoring attendance although the school recognises that a minority of parents do not give sufficient priority to the regular attendance of their children. Unexplained absences are immediately followed up and the school works closely with the Education Welfare Service when there are problems. The school is working hard to increase attendance levels and promote the importance of this issue with parents.

32. There are good arrangements for monitoring behaviour and personal development. Class teachers keep records of behaviour and receive reports from lunchtime supervisors on any incidents. Senior staff regularly check records so that problems can be spotted and parents involved. For example the school is currently closely monitoring and working with a group of Year 4 pupils whose behaviour is giving some cause for concern. Recording systems are supplemented by the effective informal exchange of information possible within a relatively small school.

33. Visiting professionals such as the school nurse enhance pastoral support for pupils and, as part of a 'Healthy School' award scheme, the school has developed a detailed action plan covering such issues as drugs, bullying, safety and the environment.

34. The school has worked hard over the last year to develop computerised systems for monitoring and recording pupils' academic progress so that they can be effectively supported and lesson planning adjusted to suit their needs. Very detailed arrangements are now in place for tracking individual pupil's progress in English, mathematics and science against a checklist of key learning targets. All pupils take a variety of nationally recognised tests and the data from these, together with teacher's own assessments, are recorded and systematically monitored each half term. A framework is also in place for monitoring and recording performance in other subjects against national expectations but this is still being developed and is so far at a more basic level.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. The relationships with parents are good. Parents express many very positive views about the school and the way it is led.

36. There are effective means of communication, regular letters and meetings with alternative arrangements being made for parents who cannot attend. Each term parents are given information on what is being studied together with specific learning objectives for their children. The school has also produced advice booklets for the parents of nursery and reception pupils. For the parents of pupils taking Standard Assessment Tests, special meetings are held to explain the arrangements and give them ways to help and support their children. These measures, together with personalised and detailed annual reports on progress, reading diaries, targets and homework, enable parents to be fully involved in their children's learning.

37. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school. A number support the school through fundraising activities that have, for example, in part funded the setting up of the information and communication technology suite. A very committed group helps regularly with the 'Enable' project, which provides additional help with literacy work for small groups of Year 2 pupils, and have given up their time to undertake some training for this. Others help with educational visits and other school activities. The parents who are able to help in these ways have made a valuable contribution to the learning resources and opportunities available to pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

38. Very good leadership by the headteacher has brought about continued improvement since the last inspection. The school has worked hard to achieve the Investors in People and the Basic Skills Awards. The headteacher is well supported by teachers with management responsibilities, governors and parents. There is a school commitment to further improvement. The leadership of the school is well focused on monitoring both attainment and teaching. Monitoring procedures are well developed in core subjects.

39. The school undertakes a substantial analysis of the National Test and QCA assessment data. It identifies the strengths and weaknesses in progress of specific groups of pupils, such as those from different ethnic origin backgrounds and boys and girls. The outcomes from this analysis are used well to identify groups of pupils for extra support and monitoring. The schools monitoring procedures of teaching are thorough, particularly in the core subjects, and it is planned to develop the system further in foundation subjects by giving subject co-ordinators the opportunity to undertake lesson observation.

40. The School Improvement and Development Plans contain a wealth of information and the former plan clearly identifies priorities for improvement. School development planning could be further improved by stating starting and finishing times for actions to help overall management and by more clear links to the budget. The mechanisms for monitoring are specified. The process for planning is good involving both staff and governors.

41. The governors are keen, interested and give effective support to the school. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are involved in shaping its direction. There are committees which meet regularly and governors have responsibilities for the oversight of the core subjects and special needs. The headteacher keeps the governors well informed about what is happening in the school.

42. The school has an appropriate number of teachers whose qualifications and experience match the needs of the National Curriculum. The learning practitioners work closely with the teachers and provide effective support. The professional development system is good and ensures that all members of staff have the opportunity to benefit from training. Induction procedures are in place for all new governors and members of staff. There is a satisfactory process for performance management.

43. The overall range and quality of learning resources are adequate and the school makes satisfactory use of its resources. Since the last inspection the school has continued to develop its accommodation and resources and is well staffed. Resources have improved significantly in information and communication technology (ICT) recently. Further equipment is required in art and for the control technology aspects of ICT. Both the resources and display are insufficient to support multicultural education. Accommodation is satisfactory.

44. Financial management is good. The finance committee of the governors monitors the expenditure on a regular basis. Care is taken to obtain value for money on all purchases and the principles of best value are applied satisfactorily. The smooth and effective day-to-day management of the school by efficient office staff supports the teachers well. The school has a substantial surplus to its budget, which is being used appropriately to deal with identified priorities. It is the intention of the Governing Body to reduce this surplus. The income per pupil is above the national average but, taking into account the standards achieved and the overall quality of education, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

45. WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

***Improve standards in art (paragraphs 6, 99 – 104) by:**

- monitoring to identify clearly the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching of the subject;
- giving pupils more regular opportunities to promote basic skills;
- resourcing the subject sufficiently to meet curricular requirements;
- giving the teachers opportunity to undertake training in art and further develop the work portfolio to raise standards.

***Develop a more consistent approach to the marking of pupils' work including regular comments on how they might improve (paragraphs 15, 91, 98).**

***Extend the provision for information and communication technology (paragraphs 6, 108, 121, 123) by:**

- providing more opportunities for its use across the curriculum:

- giving greater emphasis to control technology, particularly in Key Stage 2.

***Improve attendance levels by developing further procedures for monitoring and targeting pupils with poor attendance records (paragraphs 8, 31).**

Other less important issues:

Ensure that the variety of cultures represented by the pupils is more fully recognised in the displays around the school and the resources available (paragraphs 43, 49, 69).

THE PROVISION FOR AND STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

46. The school receives a grant of £13,782.00 for supporting minority ethnic pupils. It uses this grant well to ensure there is effective provision for pupils whose first language is not English. Twenty nine per cent of pupils in the school speak English as an additional language. They make good progress in their learning in all key stages.

47. Teachers and support staff are funded by the local education authority and by national grants. The deployment of the staff is strictly on the basis of children's needs, identified through school assessment and tracking procedures, and negotiated through staff discussion. Teachers analyse pupils' achievements to pinpoint specific areas of need.

48. The teachers and the learning practitioners are well briefed and work their way through tasks with the children carefully, focusing on appropriate vocabulary and consolidating their understanding. Teachers use information from initial assessment tasks, undertaken as soon as children are identified, and plan appropriate curriculum content. They give pupils a 'survival' vocabulary but extend this as necessary to move learning on quickly. A bi-lingual assistant translates when it is appropriate to do so, giving good support to parents newly arrived at the school. Speakers of other languages are available to the school if the need arises.

49. An initiative introduced last term to involve and include nursery parents whose first language is not English proved very successful in supporting nursery children's personal and social development. The school's resources are limited at present and very little around the school reflects the rich contribution made to the school population by the presence of pupils from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

49

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

10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	8	19	21	0	0	0
Percentage	0	17	39	44	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	15	229
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	47

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	55

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	49

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.9
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	12	18	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	10
	Girls	16	16	17
	Total	23	23	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77(83)	77(86)	90(86)
	National	84(83)	86(84)	91(90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	10	9
	Girls	16	17	15
	Total	24	27	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80(86)	90(86)	80(83)
	National	85(84)	89(88)	89(88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	17	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	13	13
	Girls	12	11	15
	Total	23	24	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74(78)	77(75)	90(88)
	National	75(75)	71(72)	87(85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	13
	Girls	12	13	16
	Total	24	26	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77(78)	84(75)	94(87)
	National	72(70)	74(72)	82(79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	8
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	8
Indian	22
Pakistani	15
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	161

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.4 : 1
Average class size	30.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	203

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15 : 1
Total number of education support staff	0.2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	27
Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.5: 1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	462,589.0
Total expenditure	479,473.0
Expenditure per pupil	2,024
Balance brought forward from previous year	63,454.0
Balance carried forward to next year	46,570.0

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	233
Number of questionnaires returned	31

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	16	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	32	0	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	68	29	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	48	0	0	3
The teaching is good.	71	29	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	39	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	29	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	16	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	58	39	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	71	29	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	74	26	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	35	23	0	3

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

THE FOUNDATION STAGE

50. The standard of provision for children in the Foundation Stage continues to be satisfactory, as it was at the time of the last inspection. There is some good teaching in both the nursery and reception classes, enabling all children to be very involved in the activities offered.

51. Children enter the nursery with widely varying early experiences, and many with below average skills in language and mathematical development. This is confirmed by assessments carried out during the early weeks following admission. The curriculum in the nursery is well planned and appropriately broad, and children make good progress. By the time they move to reception, all but a few achieve standards expected of four-year old children. Validated baseline assessments confirm this. Reception children enjoy a wide range of appropriate activities, which are planned thoroughly and carefully. They continue to make good progress, and it is likely that most children will achieve the early learning goals in all six areas by the time they move to Year 1. Teaching overall is sound, with some good features, but management of some activities in both classes could be improved, enabling children to extend their learning further. This would be particularly beneficial to higher attaining children.

52. Children with special educational needs are identified sensitively and effectively. Appropriate support is given through school provision and advice from external agencies, such as the health authority. Those for whom English is an additional language are targeted for very suitable individual help from a learning practitioner, enabling them to make good progress alongside their peers. A new project to involve their parents in workshops in the nursery has been well supported.

Personal and social development

53. There is a satisfactory induction process for new nursery children. Most of them enter school with a positive and confident attitude, able to take full advantage of the secure and caring environment created by the staff. By the time they leave the nursery, they are very familiar with their new location, and are well integrated with their peers. Most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area by the time they leave the reception class.

54. Nursery children join in the routine on arrival each day, selecting from an appropriately wide range of activities set out for them. Adults are based at two structured activities, designed to develop specific learning. They also monitor children's choices and development at some of the free-choice tasks. Most children are able to choose freely, and show good perseverance and concentration as they get involved in, for example, making pizzas, building with Duplo or playing in the sand. Relationships are very positive, children know what is expected of them, and happily respond to the nursery routine. In the reception class, opportunities for 'think-talk' have been very effectively developed. Circle times there give children ample opportunity to develop their awareness of the views and feelings of other people, including the adults. Support staff often undertakes clearing up in both classes, as children move to the next activity. This is limiting children's opportunities to learn independence, and to understand the consequences of their own actions.

55. Reception children mostly demonstrate good concentration when completing set activities such as story sequencing or kite making. They converse well with each other, offering support and help over choice of tools or equipment. Sometimes they require more support than they are offered, for example in literacy and numeracy sessions, but they persevere with tasks even if they have little

understanding. Everyone is treated with courtesy and respect by the staff, providing good role models, which the children happily emulate. Humour at the children's level is a regular feature of carpet sessions.

56. Children in both classes have daily opportunities to explore outside, in a safe and secure environment. There is challenge in the physical equipment provided such as scooters and bikes, and a limited element of risk for them to overcome.

57. Both teachers have a thorough knowledge of the developmental needs of their children, keeping careful daily notes of progress and setting targets in planning for specific children. The generally good teaching in personal and social development contributes effectively to the progress of all children. The learning practitioners also give very effective support.

Communication, language and literacy

58. Most children make sound progress in this area of learning in both year groups. Many are admitted to the nursery with below average development in language skills, but the good staff role models and easy interaction of the nursery routine enable them to remedy the deficit soon after admission. Most of the class are likely to reach the early learning goals by the time they move to Year 1.

59. All children listen attentively to their teachers. Reception children enjoy answering in the lively questioning sessions on the carpet, and respond easily to adults during individual and group activities. Children in both classes demonstrate high levels of confidence when they speak, and are given every encouragement in the supportive responses of the staff. Although they have free-play sessions during some afternoons, they have limited opportunities to practise their newly learned vocabulary in structured child-led play sessions throughout each day.

60. Most reception children are able to recognise initial letter sounds well, and some are beginning to understand the concept of last and middle letter sounds. They can all recognise their names. Most children are familiar with the characters of the school's reading scheme, recognising them without picture clues, and reading short sentences or phrases. Lower achieving children are beginning to predict story endings in familiar books and higher achievers can talk freely about beginnings and ends of stories, reading the limited text fluently. This is satisfactory progress since joining the school. There is a limited range of good quality reading material available for children to use, and current books offer too little challenge to the higher achieving children in the reception class. This has been identified and planned for in the subject development plan.

61. By the end of the year, higher achieving children are beginning to write simple sentences unaided, and to understand the use of capital letters and full stops. Nursery children are beginning to trace over their names and to make marks to express ideas at the writing table. All reception children can write their own names, and most show good pencil control.

62. Children whose first language is not English are given effective support in developing a survival language initially, and move on to mastering the early skills of reading. Children with special educational needs also make good progress.

Mathematical development

63. On admission to the nursery, many children have below average mathematical understanding, particularly in their grasp of mathematical concepts. Many can count to six and beyond, and some can recognise numerals to five. They find it difficult to count objects accurately, however, or to recognise, for example, that a group of two objects is different from a group of four. Very few can

recognise mathematical shapes such as square and circle. The curriculum is appropriately planned to develop these key areas of learning, and children make good progress. Most are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

Knowledge and understanding of the world.

64. All children make good progress in both classes in this area of learning, and most are likely to achieve the early learning goals at the end of the reception year. The children demonstrate a curiosity about their world, finding interesting objects to comment on in the classrooms, such as telephones and different types of material. Good planning and provision enables nursery children to enjoy building with different construction equipment, investigating effective joints and ensuring their tower does not collapse. Reception children explore how various toys work by taking them apart and studying their make-up. They respond with wonder as items of a kite kit unfold before them, carried along by the teacher's inspiring questioning. The group chosen to fly the completed kite could talk excitedly about the tug of the wind and how the string pulled them along. They are encouraged to think about why things happen by carrying out experiments with pieces of different material, to see which one will be 'moved along' by blowing.

65. There are limited opportunities for children to find things out for themselves in the nursery, as much of the provision is pre-selected. Adults are generally involved with highly structured activities at specific tables, limiting opportunities for children to ask questions about their environment. But very appropriate encouragement is given as children choose their tasks, particularly over computer activities and play sequences in Bob the Builder's den. Most children approach the computer with confidence, and many are able to use the mouse to direct responses to a shapes program. Everyone printed out his or her name and initial letter with help. There is very little opportunity for reception children to use a computer for their learning at present, due to recent whole-school difficulties over ICT provision.

Physical development

66. Most children's attainment on admission to school is similar to that expected of three and four-year-old children. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory in both classes, enabling children to make sound progress. Most are likely to achieve the early learning goals in physical development by the end of their reception year.

67. Children demonstrate high self-esteem and confidence, and are prepared to take limited risks as they ride bikes, run after each other in the playground, and use apparatus in the hall. Most are aware of the need to avoid each other and can adjust their speed accordingly without advice from adults. Nursery children have outdoor sessions with a range of appropriate equipment every day, although there is a lack of climbing equipment and slides. Health and safety issues are very carefully acknowledged as adults supervise behaviour with appropriate care and attention. But there is little structure to any of these sessions beyond provision of play equipment. Reception children enjoy a variety of activities outside including wheeled toys. They use paintbrushes with water pots to 'draw' on benches and the floor, and coloured chalks to produce 'murals' on the school walls. In P.E. lessons, however, too much time is spent on organising the apparatus for reception children limiting children's opportunities to develop their physical skills.

Creative development

68. Nursery children are eager to use the activities provided to develop their creative and imaginative learning. They show satisfactory progress in their learning in this area, as do reception children, enabling most of them to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the summer term.

69. There are regular opportunities in both classes for children to reflect on their experiences and develop their ideas. The nursery is attractively decorated with many examples of children's work, mounted pleasingly to display their experiences in paper collage, printing, painting, clay and plasticine, and sticking. The children are proud of their achievements. They like to talk about how they set about the tasks, and their contributions to the pictures. There is less evidence of reception children's work. There is no celebration in either classroom of the cultural diversity in the school. Role-play areas are available for children's use in both classrooms, and children enjoy activities there. Equipment in the reception class is of poor quality, and very limited.

70. Musical instruments are regularly chosen in nursery free-play times, children occasionally playing together with enjoyment. In music sessions, children explore sounds made by groups of instruments, and accompany their own singing of favourite rhymes such as 'Twinkle Twinkle'. Reception children are well taught by the visiting music teacher, and also enjoy singing every day as their teacher effectively encourages them through song. They learn to join in school hymns, with adult support and guidance to help them achieve well. Their imaginations are appropriately stimulated as they listen to classical music in assemblies.

ENGLISH

71. Standards in English are average by the time the pupils leave the school, which reflects the findings of the last inspection report. This shows good progress in relation to the below average attainment when pupils enter the nursery.

72. The results in the 2001 Key Stage 2 National Test were in line with the national average and above average when compared with schools in a similar context. The percentage of pupils attaining the expected level, Level 4, is above average and the percentage attaining the higher level, Level 5, is well above average when compared with similar schools. The results from 1999 – 2001 have risen with the national trend.

73. Results in reading in Key Stage 1 have also followed the national trend since 1999 and are in line with the national average. However, in writing, after successive years of above average performance, the results fell significantly in Key Stage 1 in 2001. This was predominantly because a lower percentage of pupils attained the expected level, Level 2. The percentage of pupils who attained the higher Level 3 was above average in both reading and writing demonstrating that while standards had fallen in general for that cohort of pupils, the more able continued to do relatively well.

74. The school's performance at Key Stage 1 compared well with schools in similar contexts. In reading its performance is well above average and in writing it is above average. Over the last three years, and particularly in 2001, boys' performance in writing lagged behind girls to a greater degree than is found nationally. The school has made a careful analysis of previous test results and has developed strategies to improve performance in weaker areas. Greater emphasis has been given to writing throughout the school and opportunities found to timetable writing as a specific activity outside the Literacy Hour teaching programme.

75. Standards in writing are average for the oldest pupils and show clear and progressive improvement since the start of the academic year. There is clear guidance on display boards so that pupils understand how they can achieve the expected level and higher level in writing in the Key Stage 2 National Tests. The Year 6 pupils have experienced a range of writing tasks, including non-chronological reports, play dialogues, letters, poetry and extended writing. The most able pupils are able to write using a wide, accurate vocabulary and include imaginative ideas. In Year 5 pupils have been asked to write diaries for their homework. They have also written a number of clear instructional texts. Year 4 pupils can write lively, descriptive introductions to stories and in Year 2

many pupils can develop ideas into a sequence of clear sentences, although sentence punctuation is infrequent .

76. Standards in reading are average. In Key Stage 1 pupils use phonic cues to aid word recognition and most read with reasonable fluency, conveying meaning. Older pupils can confidently identify the author and title of favourite stories and talk about aspects of the book they have enjoyed or disliked. The most able pupils in Year 6 read most expressively, responding to the style or humour in the context. They are able to make quite accurate predictions about how a plot will continue and compare the story to others.

77. Standards in handwriting have improved since the last inspection report in Key Stage 1 and are now in line with the standards expected. In Key Stage 2 standards remain sound, with many pupils writing legibly, neatly and fluently. Most pupils are also able to spell simple words accurately in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2 they can spell most of the common vocabulary they use. Attention is given to high frequency words, phonic rules and current vocabulary in regular spelling tests.

78. Standards in speaking and listening are good, particularly for the pupils in the final two years of the school who listen carefully and politely in lessons before responding clearly and enthusiastically to questions. This is a marked feature of both the introduction and the word level work in the Literacy Hour sessions.

79. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is always good in Key Stage 2 where teachers have very clear learning objectives and set specific targets for pupils. On the occasions when teaching is very good there is a very close match of tasks to the pupils' abilities. The more able pupils are consistently challenged in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs receive valuable support from learning practitioners and more structured tasks. There are sound displays in all rooms and some link well with the theme being studied. In Year 5 for example, pupils were reading and discussing 'The Tortoise and the Baboon' and there was an effective display outlining the distinct features of myths, fables and legends.

80. Pupils are generally very well managed and the main characteristic of the least effective teaching seen was when insufficient control allowed pupils' concentration to wander. The different elements of the Literacy Hour are generally well planned and managed but there is a tendency for the introductions to be too prolonged which makes the plenary session rather hurried and less effective. There is a good learning atmosphere in the school and it is noticeable that pupils from different ethnic origins are well integrated in all ability groups. The school has good tracking arrangements to measure the attainment of pupils for whom English is an additional language and it is clear they make good progress. Pupils achievement is good when it is measured against the below average language skills on entry to the nursery. This is also confirmed by attainment being above average when measured against the results attained in schools in similar contexts.

81. Important priorities have been established in English. The subject is soundly led and the co-ordinator gives a clear educational direction. There are full assessment arrangements and effective monitoring of planning and the standard of pupils' work. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have systematically monitored teaching. The school has set itself formidable targets for this year, which may not be achieved. However, they testify to the commitment to raise standards further and the necessary sense of ambition to sustain the improvement identified in the last inspection report.

MATHEMATICS

82. Standards in mathematics are average throughout the school, which confirms the findings of the last report. The 2001 National Test results in mathematics show that by the end of Key Stage 1 standards are in line with the national average but above average for similar schools. The number of

pupils achieving the higher level was above the national average. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards were in line with national averages but above the average for similar schools. The number of pupils achieving the higher level, were below the national average but matched that achieved by pupils in similar schools. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

83. Most pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 work at levels relevant to their age and abilities. They can recognise equivalent fractions, change mixed numbers into improper fractions, operate square numbers and produce block graphs. Pupils are less able to apply their mathematical knowledge to real life situations as they do not have enough practical experience across the key stage. However a very good lesson was observed where a group of more able pupils in Year 6 were choosing a holiday costing up to £999 and calculating how much it would cost if payment was made over 20 weeks. Pupils develop a sound understanding of mathematical language due to its reinforcement during lessons and mathematical displays. Problem solving is often linked to number. In a Year 5 class, pupils showed their growing understanding of number when they found the product of multiplication facts in a variety of ways. Pupils in a Year 4 class were observed finding the product of simpler multiplication facts. By the end of Key stage 2 the majority of pupils have a secure knowledge of multiplication tables and number bonds.

84. Pupils in Year 2 are developing an understanding of place value up to a hundred. They are able to write in figures and words numbers up to a hundred and more able pupils can place large numbers on a number line up to a thousand. Less able pupils can with some adult assistance, recognise the place of numbers on a line up to 20. Pupils in Year 1 can count in tens up to a hundred, starting at any number.

85. By the ends of both key stages, standards in shape, space and measure are in line with those expected nationally. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know about two dimensional shapes and straight and curved lines. Pupils at Key stage 2 continue to study shape properties, calculate the perimeter of shapes and position shapes using coordinates.

86. Little evidence of data handling was seen in lessons or in previous work but it is obvious from planning that this does take place during the year. The best finished work seen was in a Year 3 lesson when information technology was used to produce a tally chart, pictograms and block graphs, followed by questioning to analyse the data. Apart from the evidence quoted above very little was seen of the use of information technology in maths.

87. The mental mathematics at the beginning of lessons is delivered with enthusiasm and is well linked to the main teaching activity. In a Year 5 lesson a metre stick was used to help the pupils' understanding of the eight times table and this knowledge was then used in the main part of the lesson. Planning for the mental mathematics session is good, including reference to resources and how to carry out the task.

88. Linking mathematics to other subject areas is beginning to take place. In a Year 4 geography lesson pupils were using calculators to find the average number of litres of water used in a day in this country. The pupils then calculated how many litres a bucket would hold. Finally they used this information to calculate how many buckets a person in rural India would have to carry from the well daily.

89. Overall the pupils make satisfactory progress. The school policy of giving regular homework has a positive effect on the progress of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, often due to the help they receive from the learning practitioners. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress. The careful planning of lessons and differentiation of work meets the learning needs of all pupils but higher attaining pupils, who are clearly identified, require more constant challenge.

90. The response of pupils to mathematics is never less than satisfactory and in Key Stage 2 it is good or better. In Years 5 and 6 it is very good. In each lesson there is a productive working atmosphere that helps to promote learning. Pupils like the initial mental mathematics activity and are well behaved. They work with concentration and effort both individually and when discussing in pairs. They have good attitudes to their work and want to learn.

91. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and in Key Stage 2 is good or better. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of mathematics is sound. Lesson planning at times is comprehensive but could be further improved by indicating the level of attainment being aimed for with each group in the lesson and giving some indication of the timings for activities. In one or two lessons the pace slowed a little, with teachers talking for too long, with a resultant lack of time for pupils to be actively engaged on their own tasks. In a Year 6 lesson observed, which was very good, the pace, challenge and expectations were high and the pupils responded to the differentiated tasks with both enjoyment and hard work. Marking is consistently done but there are frequent occasions when more focused constructive comments could be made to help pupils make further progress, such as in graph work. Teachers make very good use of the resources available to them.

92. Mathematics is well led by the subject co-ordinator who monitors the work of colleagues and is willing to offer help. Assessment and tracking procedures are in place. However the quality of day-to-day assessment is variable and needs to be more rigorous if it is to inform teachers planning regularly. There is a well structured scheme of work, supplemented by appropriate textbooks. Other resources for the subject are adequate.

SCIENCE

93. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are average. This reflects the findings of the previous report, which nevertheless, argued that standards in Year 6 should be higher. In 2001, teacher assessment of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 was estimated to be well below average compared with schools nationally and with similar schools at the expected National Curriculum level, Level 2. However, at the higher level, Level 3, attainment was assessed as well above average. In 2001, attainment in the end-of-Key Stage 2 national tests was above the national average and well above average compared with similar schools, so that the concern raised in the previous report was successfully addressed. Standards by the end of Year 6 have risen significantly over the past five years from a very low point. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are making good progress. Although boys outperformed girls in the Key Stage 2 tests in 2001, there is currently no significant difference in attainment by gender.

94. By the age of seven, the pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of diet and exercise in maintaining good health. They have used their mathematical skills to draw sound bar charts of their favourite foods. They know that medicines sometimes help us recover from illness, whilst it is not safe to take some drugs. They can undertake practical investigations into the habitats of small creatures in the school grounds, different materials in the classroom and the conditions necessary for the growth of seeds. The pupils are beginning to understand the need to make any scientific test fair. They are able to look up information about animals in reference books and they know something about the life cycle of a butterfly.

95. By the age of eleven, most pupils have a sound understanding of fair testing and prediction as they conduct practical investigations into, for instance, different soil types in the school grounds, the growth of bacteria on foodstuffs, evaporation and condensation and sound insulation. They know the

functions of roots and leaves in plant growth. They have a sound understanding of how animals are adapted to the environment and of the concept of food chains.

96. The quality of teaching and learning is good in both key stages and this is promoting good progress by most pupils. It also ensures that the pupils have very positive attitudes to work. They behave very well in lessons and they are keen to learn. In all classes, the teachers plan their lessons well and they place an appropriate emphasis on developing the pupils' skills in scientific enquiry. They maintain a good balance between giving information and allowing the pupils to find out for themselves through practical investigations and research from books. Lessons generally move along briskly, with the teachers setting time limits for activities. The teachers, together with learning practitioners, make sure that all the pupils are fully included in learning. Work is well matched to academic ability, with an appropriate challenge for higher attainers. There is little evidence of the use of information and communication technology to enhance learning. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher's enthusiasm for science motivated the pupils to explore various materials by using appropriate senses. She had prepared resources well for the lesson and encouraged the pupils to use correct scientific terms. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher blindfolded some pupils and they had to use various senses to describe materials put into their hands. She used questioning well, in order to make the pupils think, "How could you identify the properties of this object?" She showed large flash cards, which helped the pupils learn terms, such as 'rough', 'smooth' and 'transparent'.

97. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher paid due attention to safety as the pupils undertook practical investigations into irreversible change in materials. The teacher was very secure in her subject knowledge, with the result that the pupils clearly understood the differences between reversible and irreversible change and they began to learn the chemical names of common household products. The teacher succeeded in making learning real by relating science to everyday situations. She encouraged the development of the scientific skills of careful observation, prediction and accurate recording. In a Year 5 lesson in which the pupils were learning that air has weight, the teacher used questioning well to recapitulate previous learning about air resistance. He encouraged the pupils to discuss ideas in groups as they devised experiments, which might prove that air can be weighed.

98. A clear subject policy meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The newly appointed co-ordinator has made a good start in managing the subject and she has monitored planning, work samples and teaching. Planning is soundly based on guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. There are good procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress and information gained from the results of national tests and other assessments is used soundly to plan subsequent work. There is a useful collection of samples of pupils' work at agreed National Curriculum levels of attainment, which helps the teachers in the accuracy and consistency of their assessments. The quality of marking of pupils' work, however, is variable. Too often, there is insufficient guidance on how pupils might improve their work. There is a good range of resources to support teaching and learning, including a wide range of science reference books in the school library. The teachers also make good use of the schools' library service. The subject is making a positive contribution to the pupils' personal development, for example, through encouraging collaborative work and developing an awareness of the need to conserve the environment and wildlife.

ART AND DESIGN

99. Observation of two lessons and a close examination of artwork by pupils displayed around the school and in sketchbooks and folders at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 indicate the standard of attainment is below average at both key stages. Pupils enjoy art but lack many of the skills to make significant progress. In drawing there is no evidence of shading to give pictures a solid, three-dimensional quality. Painting shows very little progression between key stages; there is limited use of the colour palette, and brush control is not developed. Overall, pupils have too little experience of a

range of media and the skills needed to control them. Art, when linked to other subjects, is limited to illustrative purposes, with less emphasis on the expression and exploration of ideas.

100. When pupils draw illustrations in sketchbooks or are working at observational drawings the results are often disappointing. However in a Year 2 lesson in observational drawing some evidence was seen of the potential of the pupils when using a limited choice of mixed media to draw natural objects. In many cases there are too few detailed features seen in their drawings and too frequently work is not finished. Drawing skills do not appear to be taught in a systematic way. In Key Stage 2 the use of sketchbooks is underdeveloped. Pupils know about artists from different times in western culture but this knowledge needs to include other cultures.

101. There is insufficient three-dimensional work in fabric or clay at Key stage 2. In Key Stage 1 pupils had made puppets as part of another subject but no concentrated attempt had been made to develop simple stitching techniques.

102. The school's current planning does not contain the detail and support material required to help staff plan more challenging tasks so that standards can be raised progressively. Links with information and communication technology are just beginning. The time given to art requires better management to allow pupils to practise art skills more frequently.

103. Pupils attitudes and behaviour are good. They listen attentively and are anxious to interpret instructions correctly. However the older pupils lack confidence drawing in workbooks. They are not always sure of the standard required and how to attain it.

104. The subject co-ordinators are enthusiastic and committed to developing the subject. There are weaknesses in assessment, teacher support material and the management of the subject. More rigorous monitoring is required to raise standards. Art resources are inadequate to cover the range of experiences pupils require. There is a limited range of art books for teachers' use but few children's books to support the study of art history. There is a good range of displayed artwork from different times in western culture but this should be expanded to reflect the cultural mix of the school. The amount, range and quality of work on display are limited. The school is aware that art requires attention and has signed up for an art initiative called 'The Black Country Creative Partnership'.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

105. There was insufficient evidence to form a firm judgment on standards of attainment at the ends of both key stages. There has been an improvement since the last inspection in the planning of teaching and in the development of teachers' subject knowledge. Pupils have an appropriate range of experiences across the school. The quality of their work is satisfactory but the subject lacks due status. Teachers have to find opportunities in the timetable to complete units of work, and although most pupils make sound progress in learning the key skills of designing and making objects, too little emphasis is placed on the finished effect.

106. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, but there is evidence of pupils' achievements in their sketchbooks and around the school. Pupils in Year 4 are able to plan and make prototype mechanisms. Accuracy of measurement is insufficiently emphasised when teachers mark work in sketchbooks.

107. Teachers record pupils' experiences at the end of each unit of work, but there is no coherent build up of knowledge about pupils' learning in this subject. Assessment has no specific focus related to skills or understanding, or the quality of work produced.

108. The co-ordinator has great enthusiasm for improving the provision of this subject over the next year. She has already had a positive impact on the quality of teachers' planning. There is a good policy, and the school uses a nationally produced scheme of work to guide curriculum content. Resources are satisfactory, but the random nature of timetabling this subject creates confusion over storage arrangements. The school has experienced considerable difficulties over ICT recently; consequently, no use is made of computer-generated design or control, which are key elements in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

109. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are average. All pupils are fully included in lessons and pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress. Boys and girls attain equally. Their attitudes towards work and their behaviour in lessons are very good and they are keen to learn.

110. By the age of seven, many pupils are beginning to have a clear understanding of a map as a view from above. They can draw plans of their tables and classrooms. They have drawn simple, pictorial plans of their route to school. They can talk about features of the school that they like or dislike. From their work in literacy on the Katie Morag stories, the pupils know about aspects of life on a Scottish island. They have used their literacy skills soundly to write to island residents about life in Oldbury.

111. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good and this is promoting good progress by most pupils. The teachers plan their lessons well and they place an appropriate emphasis on developing the pupils' mapping skills. In a very good Year 2 lesson, the teacher made very effective use of a story about a bear as a means of introducing pupils to geographical concepts and vocabulary. She used questioning well to make the pupils think: "Why do his clothes give is a clue to where he has been?" By observing the contents of 'Ted's' suitcase, his clothes, passport and a collection of photographs, the pupils learnt how he had been skiing in Austria. They discussed ways in which he might have reached that country. The teacher encouraged the pupils to use appropriate terms, such as 'mountains', 'snow', 'weather' and 'passport'. The pupils used their literacy skills to write simple accounts of 'Ted's' holiday, with higher attainers being expected to write more sentences and to pay greater attention to punctuation and spelling.

112. Eleven year olds have a sound grasp of a variety of concepts in physical and environmental geography. They have used a large-scale map to trace the course of the River Tame and they can use atlases to locate some major rivers of Britain and the world. The pupils have a sound understanding of mountain environments and their impact on human geography. They know about environmental pollution, including some of Oldbury's problems. They have investigated noise pollution in the school and they have used their mathematical skills to draw sound bar charts of noise levels in the school foyer at different times of the day. Younger pupils have investigated at first hand land use and communications in Oldbury. They have looked through their classroom window and talked about features that could be improved. They have used their literacy skills soundly to write a non-fiction report about places to visit in Oldbury.

113. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher did much to correct pupils' misconceptions about life in a Third World country, with the result that they learnt that there are rich people, as well as millions of poor people, in India. The teacher used questioning well to recapitulate what the pupils had learnt about life in Bombay from a video that they had watched in the previous lesson. She made a very useful link with mathematics, which helped the pupils learn that it would take many trips to the village well in rural India to use the equivalent amount of water taken from the taps in a normal day in their homes. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher made good use of practical fieldwork to enhance the pupils' understanding of some of the environmental problems of the school's locality, such as broken

windows, graffiti and dog mess. As the pupils walked around Broadwell Park, the teacher encouraged them to observe physical and human features carefully. She stressed the need for safety whilst outside the classroom. She matched tasks well to varying needs. Lower attainers enjoyed recording their observations by means of a camera and instant photographs. Whilst there is some evidence of the use of information and communication technology to enhance learning, this is not a common feature of teaching throughout the school.

114. A clear subject policy meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and coordination of the subject has improved since the previous report by Her Majesty's Inspectors. The co-ordinator has monitored planning and samples of pupils' work and she offers colleagues help and advice as necessary. Planning is soundly based on guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' progress and the coordinator maintains a collection of samples of pupils' work. She has increased the amount of resources to support teaching and learning and these are now adequate. The teachers enrich learning through local fieldwork and through visits to Sandwell Country Park and Edgmond Hall. The subject contributes positively to the pupils' personal development by making them aware of environmental concerns and the cultures of other countries.

HISTORY

115. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are average. The teachers ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons, with the result that pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are making good progress. Boys and girls attain equally and all the pupils have very positive attitudes towards work. They enjoy their history lessons. They behave very well and are keen to learn.

116. By the age of seven, most pupils are beginning to have a sound understanding of how things, such as telephones and means of transport, have changed over time. They know how a timeline can show important events in British history. They know about some famous people in the past, including Florence Nightingale, Alexander Graham Bell and George Stephenson. The pupils are able to use reference books to find out information for themselves.

117. By the age of eleven, the pupils know about aspects of life in ancient Greece, such as education and sports. They have used their literacy skills soundly to write curriculum vitae about some famous philosophers, such as Socrates. They can research information from books. The pupils know what life was like in Victorian Britain. They have a sound understanding of the conditions in which many poor children had to work and they have used their literacy skills soundly to write imaginatively as a Victorian child. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 know about aspects of life in Roman and Tudor times. They can use historical artefacts to find clues about the past. The teachers encourage the pupils to use correct historical terms and they ensure that the pupils understand the need to find evidence about the past.

118. A clear subject policy meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The newly appointed co-ordinator has made a sound start in managing the subject. She has monitored planning and samples of pupils' work. Co-ordination of the subject has improved somewhat since the previous report by Her Majesty's Inspectors. Planning is soundly based on guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' progress, though marking of their work is variable and often unhelpful in advising them on how they might improve. There are adequate books and historical artefacts to support teaching and learning. The teachers enrich learning by organising worthwhile visits to local museums, Edgmond Hall, The Oak House and the local churchyard. The school has useful links with the local community history group and has been to the sites of some interesting archaeological digs. In helping the pupils to understand the

legacy of past cultures and in making them aware of the value of museums, the subject makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119. The standard of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in information and communications technology (ICT) is average. Since the opening of the new computer suite pupils have more regular lessons in ICT and their skills are improving rapidly in this subject. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Only two lessons of ICT were seen during the inspection so additional evidence was drawn from a scrutiny of pupils' work on display, pupil computer files and discussion with pupils.

120. Attainment for pupils at the end of Key stage 1 is average. They have experienced text writing and created pictures using an art software package. Pupils have also experienced control technology and with help can program a simple robot's movements.

121. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 develop their understanding further. In one classroom the oldest pupils have mapped out their computer suite by importing pictures from 'Clip Art', inserting objects into a file and manipulating them. They also use the multi-copy and paste facility, as well as changing the colour and texture of the background to the piece of work. There is limited evidence of the use of ICT in other subjects of the curriculum, though evidence was seen of work on instructional texts and drawing in literacy by the Year 5 class. In Year 3 and 4 a graph package was used to produce pictograms, block graphs and a questionnaire interrogating the graphs. Pupils were also learning to create fields on a file using a card system, initially to illustrate the practical advantages technology can bring to their lives. Progression in computer skills can be clearly seen in Key Stage 2 although there are still areas to develop such as using the computers regularly for research in other subject areas and for control technology.

122. Pupils enjoy computer work and it is noticeable how much concentration and effort they put into their work. They co-operate by discussing the work and helping each other. Teachers are receiving training and many are already conversant and skilled at using text packages on the computer.

123. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic, very knowledgeable and skilled. Although relatively new to the school, he is already having a positive impact in ICT. He has had the opportunity during non-contact time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in each class, to help raise standards to a higher level, but has not yet done so. Control technology is underdeveloped in the school, as is the opportunity to make ICT links with other subjects of the curriculum. The school has started an Internet club.

MUSIC

124. Standards of attainment in music have been maintained since the last inspection, and continue to match national expectations at the ends of both key stages.

125. Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are of a sound standard in all year groups. They have a wide and suitable range of experiences in listening to, and appreciating music, and in learning to compose and perform. There is some very good teaching by the co-ordinator and by the visiting teacher from the local authority's music service. The availability of this expertise is having a positive impact on pupils' learning, and is improving the class teachers' subject knowledge and confidence.

Very good support is given to pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, enabling them to make good progress.

126. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are able to sing sweetly with good concentration and enthusiasm, many holding a tune well in a two-part song. All year groups are able to talk about pitch and rhythm, and Year 6 pupils know the meaning of tempo. Understanding of other musical vocabulary, such as 'dynamics' and 'texture' is less well developed, however, even though pupils are keenly involved in activities that employ these aspects. Pupils in Year 4, for example, were able to suggest different instruments to develop the mood of Grieg's 'Morning', selecting rhythm sticks and a caterpillar rattle with the rainmaker. Evaluation of the effect contributes well to pupils' understanding of how to influence the sounds they hear, but is voiced in the colloquial language of 'too loud' and 'too heavy', and there are missed opportunities to extend pupils' technical vocabulary.

127. The very good selection of musical instruments, including some from other cultures, has been extended this year. Pupils are able to name some of these, such as triangles and glockenspiels, and can describe how to vary the notes on violins and guitars. Younger pupils know how to play chime bars to best effect without guidance from their teachers, creating music as they develop an awareness of pitch. Higher achieving Year 2 pupils are able to compose a rhythm, which they record with their own chosen notation.

128. Some of these skills are being built on as pupils move through the school, but planning does not include clear guidance to aid a systematic build-up of pupils' learning across all areas. The visiting music teacher is allocated specific thirty minute slots of half a term for each class in Key Stage 2, when appropriate aspects of the National Curriculum for music are addressed through commercially produced schemes of work. Class teachers contribute to these lessons well, following up some of the learning during the week. They then take on the teaching of music to their class. Good support is given by the co-ordinator, who also monitors planning thoroughly. But the scheme of work does not include important learning such as key skills and vocabulary, which limits the opportunity to build on pupils' prior attainment as effectively as it might.

129. A few older pupils learn to play violins in school, and their prowess is celebrated in school assemblies. Choirs are formed for special occasions, such as Christmas or the Millennium Concert, and groups sing in Nursing Homes. Each year there is a school production, but there are few other opportunities for pupils to perform to an audience. Pupils are enthusiastic about music, and are able to talk about famous composers, such as Sibelius after listening to a few bars of 'Finlandia'. The whole school enjoys the annual visits of local orchestras and bands.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

130. Standards in physical education are average, which reflects the findings of the last inspection report. It was only possible to observe gymnastics, although the school does cover the full range of activities.

131. In Key stage 2 pupils using the floor and on apparatus are able to hold good balances and are quite perceptive in evaluating each other's performance. They can suggest ways of improving movement by changing direction or height. In Key Stage 1 pupils are able to form effective shapes on the floor and can hold less complicated balances on the apparatus. Pupils are agile and in most cases can perform rolls and jumps with the correct technique.

132. The teaching is always sound and is good or very good when the teacher has good subject knowledge. In Year 6, pupils were given very good guidance on the key elements of gymnastics with a strong focus on self-evaluation and quality. The pupils are managed well sometimes but

insufficient guidance is given on how they can improve. All the teaching has a consistent and appropriate emphasis on health and safety.

133. The subject is well led and pupils have positive attitudes. There are extra-curricular clubs for girls' and boys' football for older pupils, basketball for Year 4 and gymnastics in Year 6. A mixed sports club is held and Irish Dancing takes place in the Spring Term for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The co-ordinator monitors all planning and relates it to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority documents. A programme of lesson observation is underway to help raise all teaching to consistently good standards. The school has adequate resources and a reasonably sized hall. It has good outdoor playgrounds but has to use the local park for any activity on grass.