

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **MEADOW GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Wythall

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116763

Headteacher: Mrs S Watkins

Reporting inspector: Mr M J Mayhew

OIN: 22197

Dates of inspection: 20 – 23 May 2002

Inspection number: 243449

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Meadow Road Wythall Birmingham
Post code:	B47 6EQ
Telephone number:	01564 823495
Fax number:	01564 822218
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Tremlett
Date of previous inspection:	September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22197	Mr M J Mayhew	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Foundation stage; Music; Religious education.	How high are standards (results and achievements)? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve?
14066	Ms G Hoggard	<i>Lay inspector</i>		How high are standards (pupils' attitudes, values and personal development)? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23658	Dr S Parker	<i>Team inspector</i>	Special educational needs; English as an additional language; English; Geography; History.	
22831	Mr C Lewis	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Art; Physical education.	How good are curricular and learning opportunities offered to pupils?
23031	Mr I A Knight	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Design and technology; Information and communication technology; Equal opportunities.	

The inspection contractor was:

*Westminster Education Consultants  
Old Garden House  
The Lanterns  
Bridge Lane  
London  
SW11 3AD*

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London  
WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This larger than average primary school, with a Nursery, is in a semi-rural area on the southern edge of Birmingham. About one-third of pupils come from the immediate surrounding area of mainly privately owned housing. The rest of the pupils come from outside the catchment area towards the city. There are 284 pupils on roll in the main school, and 49 children who attend the Nursery on a part-time basis. Twenty-two per cent of pupils (61 pupils) in the main school are on the school's register for special educational needs, a proportion that matches the national average. Five children in the Nursery have special educational needs. Three per cent of pupils (nine pupils) have Statements of Special Educational Need, a proportion that is above the national average. Six pupils speak English as an additional language. Ten per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, a figure below the national average. However, as the local education authority does not provide midday meals, the accuracy of this statistic, and its comparison with other schools nationally, should be treated with some caution. Assessments made of children when they enter Reception show significant variation from year to year, but are generally average over time.

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

This school provides its pupils with a good education. All pupils have access to a wide range of interesting learning opportunities that prepare them well for the next stage of their education. They make good progress in English, and progress is satisfactory in mathematics and science. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some significant strengths, especially in the Foundation Stage and in the infant classes. The school is well led by the headteacher, who has built an effective and committed management team. The school gives good value for money.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

- Standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 in English are above those normally expected of pupils of their age.
- The school is well led and managed.
- Children in the Early Years unit benefit from a very good quality of education.
- In the main school, there is a good range of learning opportunities to which all pupils have equal access, with the result that most take a real interest in their work and try hard to do their best.
- The school provides well for pupils' personal development in a harmonious working atmosphere, with the result that they have very good attitudes to learning, confidence to face challenge, and the ability to relate very well to each other and to adults.
- The staff work hard, and successfully, to help lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to achieve higher standards.
- The very good relationship between the school and parents has a significant impact on pupils' learning.

## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The rate of learning achieved across the juniors to the more consistently high level of that achieved in the infants.
- Assessment results are not used adequately to plan work that matches all pupils' needs.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made a satisfactory level of improvement since its previous inspection in 1997. Despite a fall in average scores at the end of the juniors in English, mathematics and science, the proportion of pupils attaining nationally expected standards has broadly remained the same, with some variations from year to year.

Standards in religious education are better than they were. The school has done much to improve pupils' learning about different cultures and now provides well for their spiritual development. This is partly due to the improved range of learning opportunities offered to pupils. The school has given some attention to its use of worksheets in lessons, but there is still more it could do to make sure that their use consistently matches pupils' levels of attainment. The establishment of an Early Years unit has already had a significant impact on children's learning, based as it is on a very well run Nursery. Recent considerable alterations and extensions to the building have resulted in a more practical learning environment. Nevertheless, standards across the core subjects are not yet consistently high enough.

## STANDARDS

The table below 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	A	B	C	E
mathematics	A	B	C	D
science	A	D	D	E

**Key**

*well above average*    A

*above average*        B

*average*                    C

*below average*         D

*well below average*    E

The table above shows that over the past two years the school's average test scores have fallen in each of the core subjects, and the trend has been below the national trend. There are reasons for this. For example, the proportion of more able pupils in 1999 was particularly high that year. In 2000 and 2001, the percentage of pupils attaining the nationally expected Level 4, and above, was in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. However, the percentage reaching the higher Level 5 in science was not as high as the national average. Comparison of results with similar schools nationally, based on the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, are not reliable. This is because the school, in accordance with local authority policy, does not serve meals and pupils are encouraged to bring sandwiches. The trend in results for Year 6 pupils has been below the national average in the years since the unusually high results of 1999.



Test results for pupils aged seven, based upon average scores, have been variable over the past three years, ranging from above average in mathematics to well below average in reading. The results in 2001 were average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing. Inspection findings show that pupils currently in Year 2 achieve well and attain above national expectations, overall, in reading, writing and mathematics. In the first two years of the juniors, most pupils continue to make good progress in English, mathematics and science. However, their rate of progress drops to a satisfactory rate in mathematics and science in Years 5 and 6. Currently, the pupils at the end of Year 6 reach standards that are above national expectations in English, and in line with expectations for their age in mathematics and science.

Children in the Early Years unit, which includes the Nursery and Reception Classes, learn at a good rate. By the time they enter Year 1, in the infants, most children at present in the Reception Class are likely to achieve all the early learning goals. Their personal, social and emotional development is of a particularly high standard.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the infant classes, where the teaching style is particularly well focused upon their needs. They make satisfactory progress through the school as the level of difficulty of the work increases in all subjects.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils are interested in their lessons and take advantage of all that the school has to offer
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good, both in the classrooms and around the school. Pupils have high regard for the school rules and behave well as a matter of course.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils value each other's contributions to school life and take delight in both their own achievements and those of others. Most pupils work and play together harmoniously and respect the adults who help them
Attendance	Good, above the national average. Most pupils enjoy their schooling.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Nursery and Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching was at least good in all lessons seen in the Foundation Stage in the Early Years unit. It was very good in all the lessons in the Nursery. The teachers have a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and apply it well. The standard of provision for these young children represents an improvement since the previous inspection, and is a strength of the school. The quality of teaching in the rest of the school is similar to that noted at the previous inspection. All teachers manage their pupils well, and relationships between teachers and pupils are good, which produces a good working atmosphere with very little misbehaviour. There are considerable strengths in, particularly in the infants and in the first two years of the juniors, where pupils make good

progress overall. It is these strengths that have the greatest impact on pupils' learning. However, the balance of high quality teaching is not consistent across the juniors. Most teaching is satisfactory or better, but there are aspects of some lessons that need improvement, to ensure that all pupils are consistently challenged to make best progress. Nevertheless, literacy and numeracy lessons are well embedded in the school, and most are effective in taking pupils' learning forward. As a result, current Year 6 pupils achieve above expected standards in English.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is enhanced by a rich variety of supportive learning opportunities. There is a good range of out-of-school activities to which all pupils have access over their time in the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	These pupils are well supported overall. The support and guidance given to pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need is very good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The few pupils who speak English as an additional language make progress similar to that of their peers, because they are quickly incorporated into the life of the school and play a full part in it.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. There is very good provision for pupils' social development. The school has done much to improve pupils' spiritual and multicultural awareness and understanding, to a standard above that reported at the time of the previous inspection.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils very well. Child protection procedures are very good, and the exemplary health and safety procedures help to ensure the welfare of pupils and staff on a day-to-day basis. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' progress, but they are not always used consistently to plan challenging lessons for all pupils, especially in the juniors.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Parents have good views of the school, and most hold it in high esteem. The strong partnership with parents clearly has a significant impact on pupils' learning. Most parents give good support to the full range of school activities.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher, aided well by her deputy, has established a calm and well-organised school, and this encourages staff and pupils to work efficiently and to a good standard.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors take their role seriously. They employ successfully a good level of expertise and enthusiasm, and have accurate knowledge of the school's strengths.
The school's evaluation of its performance	At all levels of responsibility, the school is developing well its ability to evaluate its effectiveness. School improvement planning is thorough. The monitoring of teaching and learning requires more precision.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources efficiently. Finances available to the school are used prudently. The school satisfactorily applies the principles of best value.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the pupils and the curriculum. The accommodation is suited to its purpose. Recent extensive improvements are beginning to have a good effect on the quality of pupils' learning.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children enjoy school and make good progress.</li> <li>• The teaching is good, and their children are helped to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount and frequency of homework.</li> <li>• The information they receive about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with most of the positive feelings the parents express about the school. They disagree with some parents' views about the information the school provides on their children's progress, and the range of extra-curricular activities. There are formal written reports, two parents' evenings per year, and good opportunities for parents to converse informally with staff. These are just a few of the ways in which parents have access to information about their children's progress. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, which take place either at lunchtimes or after school. These activities are open to all pupils at some time in their life at the school, although mainly when they are in the juniors. The inspectors agree with some parents' critical views about homework arrangements. In general, pupils up to and including Years 3 and 4 have homework of the right amount and on a regular basis, in accordance with school policy. However, this is not so for many pupils in Years 5 and 6. Here, the setting and follow up of homework is not consistent.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

1. In communications, language and literature, and the mathematical area of learning, children enter the Reception Classes with levels of attainment in line with what is expected for their age. Most are above what is normally expected in terms of their personal, social and emotional development. They make good progress across the Foundation Stage of learning in the Early Years unit, which comprises the Nursery and two Reception Classes. By the time they reach the end of the Reception Year, most children meet the early learning goals in all areas of learning, and many are capable of working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum in English and mathematics. Teachers, the Nursery nurse, and teaching assistants take every opportunity to use a wide range of teaching techniques to extend children's knowledge and understanding. They provide interesting resources and a variety of stimulating tasks to expand learning.

2. The table below shows attainment in English, mathematics and science.

	<b>National tests 2001</b> Pupils aged 7	<b>Inspection judgements</b> Pupils aged 7	<b>National tests 2001</b> Pupils aged 11	<b>Inspection judgements</b> Pupils aged 11
<b>English</b>	<b>Reading</b> Average	<b>Reading</b> Above average	Average	Above average
	<b>Writing</b> Above average	<b>Writing</b> Above average		
<b>Mathematic</b>	Average	Above average	Average	Average
<b>Science</b>	<b>Teacher assessment</b> Average	Average	Average	Average

3. In comparison with attainment in similar schools, on the basis of the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2001 was below average in reading, average in writing, and well below average in mathematics. Attainment by Year 6 pupils was well below average in English and science, and below average in English. However, these comparisons should be viewed with considerable caution, because the local education authority (LEA) does not have a school meals service. Most pupils bring sandwiches to school, and parents do not claim a free meal.

4. The trend in results for Year 6 pupils has been below the national average in the years since the unusually high results that were attained in 1999. This is because the proportion of more able pupils was particularly high in 1999, and because there was a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in each of the year groups in 2000 and 2001. Consequently, whilst the school usually achieves at least the average proportion of pupils reaching the higher than expected Level 5 in English and mathematics, a higher than average proportion attain less than the expected Level 4. Nevertheless, in science in 2001, the proportion attaining Level 5 was below average. The school has rightly

focused on raising attainment levels in science. As a result, inspection evidence suggests that a higher proportion of the current Year 6 pupils achieve Level 5 than in 2001 in this subject. Additionally, attainment in English for current Year 6 pupils is better than in 2001, and pupils make good progress over their time in the school.

5. Overall, standards in the core subjects at the end of the juniors, in terms of the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 and above, compare favourably with the judgements of the previous inspection.

6. Progress in English and mathematics is good across the infants. Teaching is good overall, and all teachers in this age range have high expectations of pupils to achieve well. Inspection evidence shows that current Year 2 pupils attain well in both subjects.

7. Progress in mathematics and science continues at a good rate through Years 3 and 4, but becomes erratic in Years 5 and 6. This is because the quality of teaching, though satisfactory overall, is not as consistently high in quality as it is lower down the age range. The rate of progress in English from Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall, so that pupils reach above average standards at the end of Year 6. Nevertheless, as in the other two subjects, progress could be better overall in Years 5 and 6.

8. The following table shows standards in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

	<b>By the age of seven</b>	<b>Progress in learning</b>	<b>By the age of 11</b>	<b>Progress in learning</b>
<b>Art and design</b>	Above the expected level	Good	Above the expected level	Good
<b>Design and technology</b>	At the expected level	Satisfactory	At the expected level	Satisfactory
<b>Geography</b>	At the expected level	Satisfactory	At the expected level	Satisfactory
<b>History</b>	At the expected level	Satisfactory	At the expected level	Satisfactory
<b>Information and communication technology</b>	At the expected level	Satisfactory	At the expected level	Satisfactory
<b>Music</b>	At the expected level	Satisfactory	No judgement possible	No judgement possible
<b>Physical education</b>	Above the expected level	Good	No judgement possible	No judgement possible
<b>Religious education</b>	At the expected level	Satisfactory	At the expected level	Satisfactory

Pupils with SEN are identified as soon as possible after entry to the school. This is a good feature of provision and it enables additional help to be quickly targeted on the needs of these pupils. They make good progress in the infant classes, where the teaching style is particularly well focused upon their needs. They make satisfactory progress through the school as the level of difficulty of the work increases in all subjects. Those with statements of SEN make very good progress because of the close and caring support they are given by the teaching assistants. Careful monitoring of progress, and regular adjustment of targets of all pupils on the special needs register, means that they sustain a sound quality of learning. The level of need of some is reduced as they progress through the school. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) are making good progress. None is at an early stage of English acquisition and all are fully included in class activities.

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

9. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Behaviour is also very good, in and around the school. The high standards found at the time of the last inspection have been maintained, which most parents recognise and appreciate. Pupils are keen to learn, interested in their lessons and willing to persevere, even when lessons occasionally lack vigour. For example, in a mathematics lesson for Year 6 pupils, when they used a calendar for planning, they got on with their tasks conscientiously. Reception children, though tired at the end of the day, were attentive and confident in offering ideas during a story about dinosaurs. Years 1 and 2 pupils in religious education were keen to show how many Old Testament stories they knew, and worked industriously on the story of Jonah and the whale. Pupils work well co-operatively, for example when making fabric collages in a Year 2 art lesson. Despite their obvious excitement, pupils in Year 4 worked well together in outdoor games. Pupils' interest in school extends to their enjoyment of extra-curricular activities, which include a choir, football and country dancing. Many juniors take part, whether at lunchtimes or after school.

10. On the very few occasions where behaviour is not as good as it might be, it is a response to less effective teaching. Even then, most pupils are merely restless, not disruptive. Pupils move sensibly around the school, holding doors open for others. They are adept at moving quickly and efficiently to other rooms, for example for lessons in mathematics ability sets or information and communication technology (ICT), or for assembly, and they quickly settle down to work. Boys and girls play together happily in the playground and behave sensibly when using computers or when eating their sandwiches in classrooms at lunchtime.

11. Pupils with SEN are well integrated into all aspects of school life. During the inspection, other pupils were seen to treat them with affection and to take the initiative in helping them in the playground and around the school. Similarly, in class work other pupils work happily with them and help them to succeed.

12. Pupils show respect for other peoples' feelings and beliefs, and this tolerance and warmth permeates the life of the school. For example, the few pupils from ethnic minorities are fully integrated into the life of the school, as are those with SEN or disabilities, a quality of which the staff, governors and parents are justly proud. Even children in the Early Years unit watch one another's performance in physical education attentively, and make supportive comments or give praise openly. Relationships at all levels are very good and are a strength of the school. The strong focus the school gives to work for charity, which this year is a children's leukaemia organisation, means that pupils also consider those who are less fortunate than themselves.

13. Pupils treat the school buildings with respect. There is no damage, and no graffiti or litter, and personal property is safe. There is no evidence of oppressive behaviour or harassment other than some occasional minor squabbles, with which staff deal effectively.

14. Pupils willingly take on a variety of responsibilities such as taking registers to the office, helping at lunchtimes with younger children or acting as classroom monitors. Year 6 pupils also staff the office over lunchtime, answering the telephone, a responsibility that they greatly enjoy and perform at a mature level. Children in the Early Years unit take delight in being responsible for tidying and clearing away playground equipment at the end of playtimes. There is a school council, which meets regularly and has made some sensible decisions. Pupils clearly value the opportunities the school gives to them to develop maturity and independence, though pupils themselves feel they are not always chosen fairly for some specific jobs.

15. Opportunities for independent research and personal study are good. For example, a recent history project was challenging both in time and in content, and contributed significantly to learning in the subject.

16. Attendance is good at 94.8 per cent, with no unauthorised absence and authorised absence at 5.2 per cent. These figures are better than the national average. Pupils are generally punctual to school and to lessons. There was one fixed-term exclusion of half a day in the last school year.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

17. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage of their learning is very good. The teachers, well supported by a Nursery nurse, teaching assistants and volunteers, have a clear understanding of the needs of young children, and of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The Nursery and Reception Classes are situated close together within an Early Years unit, and teachers meet regularly to plan and to evaluate the work of the unit. The teachers plan their lessons carefully, and use their assistants very well to work with them and the children for specific learning activities, for example to work on basic reading or language skills. Classroom organisation is of high quality, with the result that all children receive close attention and effective support for their needs. Of particular note is the very good assessment system, to which all teachers in the unit adhere, and which gives a day-by-day, clear picture of each child's progress and the steps he or she needs to take learning further. Consequently, children make at least good progress in all the areas of learning.

18. Teaching is good across Years 1 and 2 in the infants, with a significant proportion of very good and occasional excellent teaching. This results in pupils achieving well in most subjects, but particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who speak English as an additional language (EAL), also make good progress, in line with that of their peers. Teaching in the infants is good in nearly 70 per cent of lessons and very good or excellent in 23 per cent. There are three classes in the infants, and the quality of teaching is of similar standard across the classes, reflecting the good teamwork that exists between the teachers.

19. Teaching in the juniors is satisfactory overall, but there are significant strengths, as shown in the proportion of lessons that are good or better. In this part of the school, 42 per cent of teaching is satisfactory, 38 per cent good, and 17 per cent very good. Three per cent of teaching is unsatisfactory. Whilst a significant proportion of teaching in Years 5 and 6 is of good quality, or better, it is not as high as in Years 3 and 4, where most of the teaching is of good or better quality. The significance of these statistics is that although pupils make good progress in the infants, and in Years 3 and 4, their progress in Years 5 and 6 is more erratic.

20. There are three good qualities of teaching that are common to lessons across the infants and juniors, and which have a positive impact on pupils' learning.

- \* The management of pupils in lessons is very good. This means that there is little time wasted and that pupils meet teachers' expectations for them to behave well, and usually focus on the tasks the teachers ask them to do;
- \* The teachers and pupils relate very well to each other. This engenders a good working atmosphere and means that pupils trust their teachers and feel comfortable about asking them questions, particularly when they have problems with their work.

- \* Teachers make good use of support staff, who themselves are skilled and experienced. This means that pupils have sufficiently close attention when it is needed, and feel confident to try new challenges. Teaching assistants give very good help to pupils with statements of special need, encouraging them to answer questions and giving fuller explanations when needed. They also help other pupils with special needs wherever possible as they work on tasks with groups at a similar level. Teachers are generally successful in planning tasks that meet the targets set out in pupils' individual education plans.

21. Teachers in most lessons use questioning effectively to identify with pupils their previous learning, and to make them think hard. The questions generally match pupils' levels of understanding because the teachers know their pupils well, including pupils with SEN. Occasionally, however, teachers talk too much and do not involve all pupils enough in discussion. This has the effect of slowing some pupils' rate of learning, because they lose the thread of the lesson and therefore their concentration. This happened, for example, in an otherwise satisfactory lesson in the computer room, when the teacher too often interrupted the pupils' tasks to explain certain points, when most already understood what they had to do. In the best lessons, as in an excellent Year 2 English lesson, the teacher takes a lively approach to questioning, and ensures that all pupils are involved in discussion, thus making them feel valued and essential to the progress of the lesson.

22. Lesson planning is variable in quality, but it is good in the infants and satisfactory overall in the juniors. Most teachers are clear about what they want the pupils to learn, usually plan a range of tasks for them to complete, and set aside time for them to evaluate their learning. However, the tasks in the juniors are sometimes too general in content, and do not sufficiently challenge the higher attaining pupils. This is partly because teachers do not always use to best advantage the results of assessments to plan work that is appropriately challenging to each pupil. Sometimes in Years 5 and 6, when pupils have mathematics lessons in 'sets' defined by levels of attainment, the tasks in each set are the same for all pupils. Additionally, much work consists of pupils having to complete worksheets. These tend to be directed in level of difficulty to average attaining pupils. The worksheet tasks often require pupils to do a drawing. They waste too much time on this, at the expense of learning more about the subject, which they could do through more writing or research. This is particularly noticeable in some of the foundation subjects.

23. The best planning to be found is for the literacy and numeracy lessons. The school has successfully adopted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Teachers are well versed and experienced in their application, and some apply effectively the same lesson structure to lessons in other subjects.

24. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils to work hard and to complete the tasks set for them. Pupils invariably respond well. This was particularly apparent in a very good science lesson about water resistance, for pupils in Years 3 and 4. The lively introduction from the teacher and her careful planning of tasks, which were suited to each pupil's level of attainment, led to high expectations of the pupils to work together efficiently. Similarly, in a Years 3 and 4 mathematics lesson, the teacher insisted on pupils' best efforts and affirmed, 'We are concentrating on presentation'. As a result of high expectations such as these, based on carefully planned and lively introductions, the pupils make the best progress.

25. Most teachers use available time well, and apportion appropriate amounts to different parts of lessons. However, few teachers set time targets for pupils to complete their work. Some pupils in the juniors take advantage of this and do not complete their lesson tasks. Teachers often notice this when they mark pupils' work, and make notes in pupils' books



accordingly. However, rarely do teachers follow up their comments and ensure that pupils revisit the work. Some teachers are rigorous in their marking of pupils' work, and often give good guidance and set targets for pupils to achieve in the future. This is not an approach that is consistently followed across the school, however, and it is not used by many teachers as one means to promote and measure pupils' progress.

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

26. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage, in the Nursery and the two Reception Classes, is good and is ideally suited to the children's needs. The staff make very good use of available resources and plan a wide range of activities that contribute well to children's progress in all the areas of learning. There is a good balance between activities directed by the teachers and those chosen by the children.

27. The school provides a broad and well balanced curriculum, with a good range of worthwhile learning opportunities that successfully meet the interests, aptitudes and special needs of all its pupils. The curriculum meets statutory requirements to teach all subjects in the National Curriculum and religious education. The school has dealt well with the issues relating to the curriculum which were raised in the previous inspection report, especially the adoption of an appropriate scheme of work for religious education. In all curriculum subjects, there are schemes of work in place, largely those recommended by the government. These help to secure steady and continuous progress in pupils' learning and give good guidance to teachers. There is a well considered and well planned two-year 'rolling programme' of activities for the foundation subjects, necessary due to the two-year age range in each class. Some subjects, such as history and geography, are taught in 'blocks' of time, and teachers generally manage this arrangement to good effect, so that pupils do not have too great a gap between lessons in the designated subjects. On the other hand, the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are taught throughout the year and, in the case of literacy and numeracy, on a daily basis. This is a recent and necessary change for science, particularly as the school acknowledged at the beginning of the current academic year that too few pupils were reaching the higher than normally expected level of attainment by the time they left the school at age 11.

28. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) have full access to the curriculum. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) works with class teachers and external consultants to design individual education programmes to meet the needs of each pupil. These plans set out specific targets to guide their development, particularly in the areas of language, mathematics and behaviour. For the most part, the targets represent small, well-focused steps, with an outline of how each target is to be met. They give teachers and teaching assistants good guidance in planning suitable tasks within lessons, and pupils' progress is well managed over time.

29. The school has implemented well the National Literacy strategy and the National Numeracy strategy. In most cases, planning and teaching take good account of the recommendations both for lesson format and for lesson content. The curriculum is well enhanced by a good range of well-supported extra-curricular activities. These take place during lunchtimes and after school throughout the year, and include a very good range of sporting activities. Teachers arrange a good programme of educational visits to enhance learning, including visits to local galleries and places of historic interest.

30. The school actively ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs are effectively supported by support assistants who often paraphrase the teachers' words or act as an audience for diffident pupils. The school

is completely accessible to disabled pupils. When pupils receive additional support outside the classrooms, teachers are careful to help pupils catch up. The actual withdrawal comes from various lessons, so that pupils are not denied access to any one subject on a regular basis.

31. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) through class and whole school assemblies and the science and religious education curriculum. Sex education and drugs misuse education are provided at the end of Year 6. The school has developed good links with the local community and businesses, for example a computer firm and an insurance company, who sponsor a range of school activities. A good range of visitors, including a local Christian leader, bring their expertise to the school and work with the pupils. The school has good relationships with the local secondary school, to which most pupils move at the end of Year 6.

32. At the time of the last inspection, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was inconsistent. The provision for spiritual development was unsatisfactory, and the need to help pupils understand the multi-cultural nature of today's society was the subject of a key issue for action. Since then, the school has made significant improvements. Provision for moral and social development remains a strength, as in the previous inspection, and for spiritual and cultural development it is now good.

33. At the time of the last inspection, the provision for religious education was judged unsatisfactory, and this adversely affected the school's provision for pupils' spiritual development. Under the leadership of the headteacher, religious education now meets requirements and makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. For example, work in the books of older pupils, and discussions heard in religious education lessons, show that the pupils have mature discussions and reflect upon such abstract concepts as faith, courage and understanding of others. The inclusion in schemes of work of planned opportunities for a spiritual response is an ongoing project, due for completion following the inspection. Although such opportunities are not at present planned in all schemes of work, teachers do make use of opportunities as they arise. For example, in a Years 5 and 6 science lesson discussion about food chains, the teacher led pupils to reflect on the wonders of nature. Pupils ultimately realised that all life depends on the sun. At the other end of the school, Nursery pupils gasped when they saw seeds they had planted beginning to sprout, and this led to much excited chatter. In a past drama session about the experiences of black people, pupils responded spiritually through poignant and moving poetry: 'The white people say That I cannot play, All because I am black'.

34. Daily assemblies conform to requirements as acts of collective worship. They include well told stories on which pupils can reflect, with moments set aside for that purpose.

35. The school is an orderly community, which is a testament to the schools' very good provision for pupils' moral development. Right from the beginning of their schooling, in the Nursery, children are taught to understand the difference between right and wrong. The teachers and other adults provide good role models for pupils to follow. The behaviour policy is clear and its rewards and sanctions well understood by pupils, who prize the certificates and cups they can achieve for effort. Teachers apply the policy consistently, and their management of classes is very good. This reinforces the high expectations of behaviour in the school, to which pupils' readily respond. Again, assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' moral development. During the inspection week, the assembly theme was 'Rules', and the stories told reinforced the worth of following rules, starting with the Ten Commandments.

36. The school's provision for social development was strong at the time of the last inspection and remains a very good feature of the school. In all classes, pupils are expected to work in a variety of groupings and do so with the minimum of fuss. Teachers give responsibility for groups to organise themselves, for example in allocating tasks in a science experiment, and they do so sensibly. As pupils get older, they begin to take on more responsibility within the school. In all classes there are monitors who take charge of tasks. Older pupils, in Year 6, take turns at being a 'buddy' to youngsters in the infants, eating their lunch with them, and playing with them outside. They also take charge of the office at lunchtimes, confidently fielding telephone calls and taking messages. Junior children elect members to the school council. This body makes real decisions, as when it produced a pupils' policy for equal opportunities. A meeting observed during the inspection reinforced how seriously pupils take this body and its discussions.

37. The school responded very well to the key issue regarding multi-cultural education. This is now good, as is the provision for pupils to understand western culture. Topics in history and geography enable pupils to understand how life used to be and how it is for people living in other places, for example in an Indian village or in South America. Through drama, they have explored how black people have been treated in the western world. The Literacy Strategy includes a study of books from many different genres. Pupils' book reviews show a mature response to literature set in all cultures, including our own and those farther afield. Pupils, particularly in the juniors, listen to music from across the world. They learn about the customs and celebrations associated with Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism. The school has a good policy on racial harmony, and this is effective in the school. Pupils are exposed to a variety of cultural experiences, through visits to local museums and through visits to the school by theatre, music and dance companies.

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

38. The school is a warm and caring institution, which pays good attention to the personal support and guidance of its pupils. Teachers all know their pupils well and work with them as individuals. The school has maintained the high standards found at the last inspection.

39. The school has good assessment procedures in all subjects. It carries out the required assessments and tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In addition, national tests are given at the end of each year in the juniors, and this helps the school to closely track the progress of individuals and year groups. For example, it showed that the pupils who took their Year 6 tests in 2001 made less than expected progress in Years 3 and 4 because of significant disruption that took place there, but that they made better than expected progress in Years 5 and 6. These tests provide a wealth of information on pupils' progress in English and mathematics. However, the information has not been analysed closely for strengths and weaknesses. Plans are in hand to analyse pupils' answers to this year's National Curriculum tests, but in the past the school has relied upon national analyses to guide its teaching. Nevertheless, the potential exists for meaningful analyses to guide planning. It is already used to place pupils in groups for mathematics, based on their prior attainment, in order to match their needs more closely.

40. Procedures in science and the Foundation subjects are good. The school uses nationally published exemplar schemes of work that include expected outcomes for pupils of average, above average and below average attainment. Teachers note which pupils fall into the above and below average categories at the end of a unit of work. This simple

procedure is quick and effective whilst providing useful information about pupils' progress. However, the information does not consistently find its way into teachers' planning, with the effect that often all pupils receive the same work, regardless of ability. Nevertheless, teachers do have a good understanding of their pupils' knowledge and understanding as a result of these good procedures.

41. Behaviour management is good, and a strength of the school. Close attention is paid to personal development, and expectations are consistent across the school. There are rules for each classroom, the Meadow 'Green Bes', and a code of conduct for use of the playground. A clearly understood system of rewards, such as star and achievement charts, is celebrated in regular 'praise assemblies'. The rewards are sent home to parents. An escalating series of sanctions is applied consistently so that all pupils know the rules and feel safe. The pupils are adamant that there is no bullying or harassment. Those few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, those with disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are very well integrated through kind and tolerant treatment.

42. The school provides a very good standard of care for pupils who have statements of special educational need (SEN), and provision has been maintained at a high level since the previous inspection. Teachers and teaching assistants give these pupils strong encouragement to promote their self-esteem, and the pupils play a full part in all aspects of school life. For example, one child with a physical disability is encouraged to be as independent as possible, and was asked in a lesson to come out to stick shapes on the board, just like his peers. Parents especially value this level of care and support. Other pupils on the register of special needs do not have such close adult support, but they are well cared for. It is a limitation that the format for individual education plans does not have space for comments to be made on the progress of the pupil concerned. This reduces the usefulness of the plan as a working document, since the success of current targets is not continually measured through direct comparison with progress. Evaluations of progress are recorded elsewhere, and the quality of this information is satisfactory. Nevertheless, the gap between the plan and the progress record risks a failure to amend targets as pupils' needs change.

43. The programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) supports pupils' very good personal development, for example through the use of circle times and the school council, which has produced some mature and articulate young people. A good range of responsibilities helps pupils to develop maturity and the ability to work in teams.

44. The monitoring and promotion of good attendance is good. Registration is taken very promptly and efficiently, and registers returned straight to the office. Latecomers are tracked and recorded by the secretary, and patterns of absence followed up through the headteacher's personal intervention, involving the educational welfare officer if necessary.

45. Arrangements for pupils' health, safety and welfare are very good. The deputy headteacher is the co-ordinator for child protection and has undergone regular training. All staff have been given recent training, including auxiliary staff and lunchtime supervisors and, as part of this, they are required to read a helpful and well-written policy. Everyday routines are smoothly but unobtrusively managed and pupils are practised in sensible movement around the school. There is an adequate number of trained first aiders, and a dedicated medical room. A register is kept of those pupils with any such conditions as asthma or peanut allergy, and steps taken to ensure close monitoring and support should any emergency arise. The accident book is fully maintained and up to date. There have been recent extensions and improvements made to the building, which is attractively decorated, bright and welcoming.

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

46. The school has maintained the high quality partnership with parents which was found at the previous inspection. The views of parents and carers are mainly positive about the school. Almost all believe that their children like school and that teaching is good. They feel the school has high expectations and is helping their children to become more mature. Most said they believed behaviour in the school to be good, though some at the meeting disagreed with this. The inspection found no evidence of poor behaviour. Ninety-eight per cent of parents felt comfortable to approach the staff when they had concerns or queries, and believed the school worked closely with them. However, about 20 per cent did not feel well informed about how their child was progressing. About the same proportion felt that the homework given was unsatisfactory, either not enough or too erratically organised. The inspection team found some evidence to support these views, in that there was a general lack of consistency of approach within the Years 5 and 6 classes. In general, pupils up to and including Years 3 and 4 have homework of the right amount and on a regular basis. This is not so for many pupils in Years 5 and 6, where the setting and follow up of homework is not consistent, nor in line with school policy.

47. A number of parents, about 20 per cent, also disagree with the view that there is an interesting range of extra-curricular activities. The inspection team found the opposite to be true. The school offers a wide selection of activities to which many pupils subscribe, ranging from sports clubs to music and theatre. However, these are largely targeted at junior-aged pupils. Those in Years 1 and 2 are not as well served, though the school plans to address this.

48. The school makes great and successful efforts to involve parents in the life of the school and in their children's education. These links are a strength of the school, which offers a very good range of information. The headteacher sends out newsletters weekly, as well as advice on behaviour, bullying and the learning topics covered in each year group. The prospectus is welcoming and detailed, and there is a good, separate brochure for the Nursery. However, the prospectus lacks some statutory material, such as attendance figures and information on religious affiliation. Neither does the prospectus include the school's expectations for homework, though of course to do so is not a statutory requirement. Both publications emphasise the value of parents' contributions, for example in giving help in classrooms.

49. The governors' annual report to parents is also missing some statutory information, such as provision for pupils with disabilities, and targets for National Curriculum assessments at the end of the juniors. Links with parents are particularly good at the lower end of the school. They get a special induction when their children join the Foundation Stage in the Early Years unit. Of particular help to parents is the way the Nursery teacher writes a list each day of what the children have been doing in each area of learning. She posts it up for parents to see when they collect their children.

50. Parents are given clear information about the school's special educational needs (SEN) policy and practice. They are kept fully informed of their children's progress and are invited to annual reviews. Whenever they have concerns, they are able to contact the class teacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO).

51. The school offers two formal parents' consultation evenings and an informal consultation after annual reports. These meetings are very well attended, and many parents expressed their appreciation that teachers are easy to approach informally. Those parents whose children have SEN are generally involved well in their children's education, and most parents are very satisfied with the arrangements. A good number of parents and grandparents help regularly in school, for example with cutting and sticking, outdoor games

in reception, or sharing books with children in the Nursery. Some parents come into school regularly for a computer course, which leads to a qualification, and the deputy headteacher runs a twelve-week course for parents to introduce them to the methods of teaching used in the Numeracy Strategy. There is an active parent/teacher association, which makes a valuable contribution to school life in the form of social and fund-raising events, such as quiz nights. The association paid recently for playground equipment, which had been requested by the pupils through the offices of the school council and now plays a valuable part in playtime and lunchtime activities.

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

52. The headteacher's leadership of the school is good. She is a purposeful leader, who has set clear educational aims for the school, and has achieved a calm and very orderly working establishment. She has good oversight of the school on a day-to-day basis because she works regularly alongside her staff. The school is also well managed. The headteacher has established an effective management structure, and knows all the pupils. There are clear priorities for school improvement, as set out in the well-constructed and easily understood school improvement plan. The priorities are based on the school's aims to achieve high standards in all aspects of pupils' development, within a challenging and stimulating environment. In several respects the school achieves its aims. Of particular note is the way the school includes all pupils in what it provides, so that all have equal opportunity to learn and to make progress. The school has made a satisfactory level of improvement since its previous inspection in 1997. The headteacher has been appointed since then, but has rigorously pursued the action plan drawn up at that time to deal successfully with the key issues raised.

53. The deputy headteacher, who has a part-time teaching commitment, is very supportive of the headteacher and the school. She is ideally placed with her range of duties, and suitably experienced, to focus on specific curriculum and teaching matters, and acts as a 'second hand' to the headteacher. They meet regularly, share all school concerns, and often attend together meetings and further training. They have established a good system for monitoring the work of the school, including the quality of teaching and learning. However, the system is not sufficiently rigorous to identify precisely those strengths in teaching that are particularly effective in taking pupils' learning forward; neither is there a means to share such strengths amongst all teachers. Nevertheless, this is a developing aspect of the school, and there are clear plans to improve.

54. Some members of the management team are relatively new to their responsibilities, but the team as a whole is rapidly developing the expertise to carry out its duties more effectively. An example is the arrangement whereby team leaders for each section of the school, namely the Early Years unit, the infants and the juniors, meet to discuss section matters and whole-school matters. This ensures an effective forum for the sharing of information and devising of new strategies. Teachers in each year group plan their lessons together, but this is not done in Years 5 and 6 as effectively as it is in the rest of the school. As a result, there are a number of inconsistencies across the year groups, for example in the content and frequency of homework, in coverage of subjects, and in the approaches adopted in lesson planning and teaching.

55. Other staff with management responsibilities generally carry out their duties well, and some have gained confidence from training to enable them to do so. Some are new to the school but are quickly coming to terms with what needs to be done to effect improvements, for example in science. Subject co-ordinators have good oversight of teachers' planning and regularly inspect samples of pupils' work. However, they do not yet have regular access to other lessons in their subjects, and are not always best placed in their class

responsibility to advise their colleagues at first hand. For example, the co-ordinator for literacy is a teacher in a Reception Class, and does not have frequent access to lessons in the juniors. The senior managers are mindful of these factors and intend to use the advantageous teacher: pupil ratio to enable more systematic monitoring of lessons by co-ordinators.

56. The school is well staffed with conscientious, committed and well-qualified teachers, some of whom work on a part-time basis. In several cases, teachers' additional responsibilities are well matched to their initial qualifications. The management of support staff, teaching assistants and volunteers is very good, and pupils benefit greatly from the work of these individuals, some of whom have qualifications relevant to their responsibilities. Teaching assistants have been given appropriate training in leading literacy support programmes. The caring and committed help they give to pupils with special needs (SEN) makes a very good contribution to the quality of the pupils' education.

57. The governing body plays an essential and valued part in shaping the direction of the school, and pursues its responsibilities with enthusiasm and considerable expertise. For example, the chair of governors is a long-standing member who has seen the school develop over a long period of time. The governor with responsibility for finances is a practising accountant, who supports very well the governing body and the headteacher in both day-to-day and long-term financial matters. The governing body has made some important decisions, based on good advice. For example, recent building improvements have significantly enhanced the school's resources. The governors are fully aware of the school's strengths, of which they are proud, and rigorously pursue those aspects of the school that still need improving, such as achieving consistently high academic standards.

58. Most statutory responsibilities are fulfilled, although there are some omissions from the school's prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents. The school fulfils its responsibilities for SEN and complies with the newly revised Code of Practice. Provision is well managed. The designated governor is very well informed and gives good support.

59. The school makes good use of its finances. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and key governors work skillfully to make good use of all available personnel, learning resources and finance. The use of funding is considered very carefully, and the budget is managed prudently. For example, the carry forward budget from last year is already accounted for purposefully. The headteacher and the finance governor, with the good assistance of the school secretary, administer the budget well. A recent audit of the school's finances listed a small number of procedural improvements. These have been implemented. Good use made of specific grants, for example to support pupils with SEN, and to implement local and national initiatives. Very good use is made of funds for pupils with statements of SEN to ensure that they receive high quality support.

60. The headteacher and governors are developing well their ability to evaluate closely the school's effectiveness, and now use the results of statutory assessments, and other data, to help decide on future action. The governors satisfactorily apply the principles of best value, including comparison of the school's results with those of others, and setting challenging targets for the school to achieve. There is a good capacity for the school to improve.

61. Following the recent extensive building programme the school is now modern and spacious, with large airy classrooms and wide corridors. There is a large hall and a dedicated computer room, although the library is not yet fully equipped. The building has been suitably adapted for disabled users. Management of the space is very good, for example by allowing classes to be split into smaller sets and using the computer equipment to the maximum. The outdoor play area is pleasant and has space for games and a

conservation area, as well as several mature trees for shade. Resources for learning are mostly satisfactory, with some strengths in the Early Years unit but weaknesses in reading materials. Resources for pupils with special needs are satisfactory, and they are used effectively within class teaching.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. The headteacher, staff and governors should now:

- Improve the rate of pupils' learning in the juniors to the level found in the infants. This should be achieved by:  
(Paragraphs: 7, 11, 20 – 23, 25, 26, 40, 55, 91)
  - \* teachers across the year groups regularly sharing their good ideas and using the same planning format;
  - \* including, in the existing system for lesson monitoring, the means to identify and evaluate those strengths in the teaching of specific skills and knowledge that have the greatest impact on pupils' learning;
  - \* sharing the strengths with all teachers, and monitoring their application in lessons;
  - \* setting homework tasks for pupils in Years 5 and 6 in accordance with school policy, and with the same regularity that teachers employ for pupils in other year groups.
- Use the results of assessments more effectively to plan work that matches all pupils' needs. This should include:  
(Paragraphs: 23, 40, 87, 90, 91, 100, 105, 108, 117, 120, 124, 127)
  - \* ensuring that lesson planning always takes account of the full range of pupils' attainment, and giving work that challenges all pupils to make progress;
  - \* making sure that the worksheets pupils are asked to complete are always suitably demanding, particularly with reference to those that are given to higher attaining pupils.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	12	23	25	1	0	0
Percentage	2	23	44	29	2	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one 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)	22	283
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	27

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	61

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

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	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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:	<b>Year</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
	2001	23	26	49

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	20	22	22
	Girls	25	25	25
	Total	45	47	47
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	92 (68)	96 (78)	96 (84)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	19	21	21
	Girls	22	24	25
	Total	41	45	46
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	84 (70)	92 (86)	94 (97)
	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:	<b>Year</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
	2001	21	21	42

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	16	12	18
	Girls	19	17	21
	Total	35	29	39
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	83 (91)	69 (86)	93 (94)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	15	13	15
	Girls	18	17	21
	Total	33	30	36
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	79 (74)	71 (86)	86 (94)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

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

	<b>No of pupils</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	4
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	0
White	273
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	<b>Fixed period</b>	<b>Permanent</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes:**

##### **YR–Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	26

#### **Education support staff:**

##### **YR–Y6**

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	229

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	<b>2000/2001</b>
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	<b>£</b>
Total income	605,509.00
Total expenditure	577,049.00
Expenditure per pupil	1,860.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	30,563.00
Balance carried forward to next year	59,023.00

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.5

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  
Number of questionnaires returned

353
105

### Percentage of responses in each category

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
My child likes school.	53	40	6	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	43	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	47	6	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	38	14	4	0
The teaching is good.	53	39	4	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	52	10	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	30	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	39	3	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	42	46	10	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	40	46	6	3	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	46	4	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	33	20	7	11

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

63. The school has fully implemented the new curriculum arrangements for children up to the end of their Reception year and is developing well the Foundation Stage within an Early Years unit, which comprises a Nursery and two Reception Classes. The unit is well staffed with three teachers, a nursery nurse and two classroom assistants. The unit also makes effective use of support assistants, and of parents who work voluntarily to assist teachers. For example, parents come to the Nursery each session to share books with children in very small groups.

64. There are 49 children in the Nursery, who attend on a part-time basis, and a total of 51 children in the two Reception Classes. Children enter the Nursery with generally average levels of attainment. Many have higher than expected levels of personal, social and emotional development, and a few have special needs in relation to speech and language difficulties. They make good progress in the Nursery in all areas of learning because the teacher and Nursery nurse work very well together, providing as they do a well-balanced range of learning experiences. The teaching staff work closely with parents to ensure that the children have a smooth start to their education. Many parents expressed their delight with the way the school provides for their children in the Early Years unit. They say that their children are confident, happy and keen to attend.

65. Whilst some children leave the school when they reach the age of four, to go to other schools in the locality, the great majority in the Reception Classes have benefited from the school's Nursery education. Children quickly settle well in the Reception Classes because teachers are given clear and up-to-date information about children's levels of attainment, and they plan an appropriate range of learning opportunities in a welcoming and secure environment. Consequently, all children make at least good progress and most reach the early learning goals in all the expected areas of learning; some exceed the goals.

66. Teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is very good for a number of reasons:

- \*teachers have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum, and are suitably experienced;
- \*there is a very good assessment system, which teachers use rigorously to identify individual children's stages of development in all the areas of learning, and then arrange activities to take their learning forward;
- \*teachers successfully encourage children to become fully involved in their work and to take increasing responsibility for their actions;
- \*classroom organisation and the use of available adults are of high quality, through the use of a 'focuser' and 'manager' system;
- \*staff value highly each child's contribution to daily activities, and show this by taking the time to listen to them, so raising the children's self-esteem.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

67. Children make good progress in this area of learning. Across the Foundation Stage, children gain confidence in choosing an activity because the staff provide a sensitive structure to develop this skill. Staff constantly encourage children to feel confident about what they can achieve, because they give each child close attention when they are doing

their work. Children play and work well together, and share the equipment. By the time they are in Reception, they value one another's achievements. For example, when one boy experimented with paper, scissors and a stapler to make a well fitting hat, others spontaneously praised him for his work, and asked him for help to make their own hats. From the Nursery upwards, children are expected to take responsibility for the equipment. It is a measure of how well this is achieved by the speed with which children clear away after they have finished their work. For example, children in the Nursery undressed, folded their clothes and helped each other when they prepared for a physical education activity in the school hall. In the lesson itself, they followed the rules of safety, and responsibly moved from one set of apparatus to another.

68. From an early stage in the Nursery, children show interest in their work, and listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. They concentrate for increasingly long periods, as they become older and take pride in their achievements. By the time they are at the end of the Reception Year, most children are confident to offer their own sensible opinions in class discussions. For example, children in Reception suggest how allocations to tasks should be made. Additionally, Reception children enjoy a sense of responsibility as they take turns to supervise and clear away playground play equipment.

### **Communication, language and literature**

69. Children make good progress in this area of learning because teachers place great emphasis on extending children's range of experiences, thus increasing their vocabulary and understanding. The staff take every opportunity to support children's development of speaking and listening skills, whether in whole class discussions, in 'focussed' learning activities, or incidentally throughout the day. Staff make a point of valuing each child's contributions, and use questioning very skilfully to support children to express their thoughts and feelings.

70. Children in the Nursery enjoy listening to stories, whether told to them by adults, or by listening to recordings, which they control themselves. They are keen to express their interest in books, and choose their favourites to talk about. For example, one boy said, 'I like the story of Jasper.' Past occasions when children dressed up as book 'characters' are examples of useful activities to raise children's interest in books and reading. When the children use words, teachers are quick to correct them to ensure accuracy. For instance, when a boy who speaks English as an additional language (EAL) was describing what he had seen, the teacher sensitively corrected him. The boy was confused about how to describe a bottle, and initially called it a jug. Whilst children in the Nursery begin to form letters in their writing, such as when role-playing in the class shop, it is in the Reception Classes that they acquire skills to make their writing legible. By the end of the Reception year, most children write reasonably clearly. Higher attaining children move quickly from copy writing to independent writing, for example when writing about their teacher's old teddy, 'He has got a wobbly eye'.

71. The very good arrangements for activities in the Early Years unit ensure that all children have plentiful opportunities to write, often about experiences they have had at other times at school. For example, children in Reception complete collages of the Three Little Pigs' houses, and then write short pieces about them. Children at this age develop expected reading skills because there are many occasions when they look at and share books, and because the staff are good at developing children's phonic skills. For example, in one session in Reception, the teacher was engaged with a small group of children



working on the days of the week, relating them to the story of the Very Hungry Caterpillar'. The teaching assistant, meanwhile, was working with another group engaged on reading and spelling of simple three-letter words. On another occasion, children used the library to find books about butterflies, and learned that a library can be a source of information.

### **Mathematical development**

72. Children in the Nursery make good progress in their mathematical learning. They count and recognise numbers to five, understand the relationship between 'bigger than' and 'smaller than', and recognise simple shapes and repeating patterns. By the time they reach the end of the Reception Year, average and higher attaining children correctly add two more to a number, and gain a sense of the two-times multiplication table. They recognise and name correctly a square, rectangle and triangle. Through class topics, for example on butterflies, they learn about mathematical ideas such as symmetry. Indeed, in the lessons seen most children showed that they had a clear understanding of this idea because the teacher gave them art activities that reinforced their understanding. Additionally, children learn to read the time to the nearest hour, from an analogue clock face. They use 'practice' money in their role-play activities, and extend this to specific tasks that focus on mathematics. A few higher attaining children understand how to give change for items costing amounts up to ten pence.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

73. Children build on their general knowledge to help them understand more about the place where they live and how things grow and develop. Children in the Nursery delight in planting seeds, and watch them grow over time. During one session, the teacher spent considerable time with each child, discussing the sowing of cress seeds on cotton wool, and children were fascinated at the smallness of the seeds. They were surprised, only the next day, to find that their seeds were already sprouting. The children use magnifying glasses and periscopes and wonder how they work. Over time, they use all of their senses to investigate a good range of scientific characteristics. For example, they look closely at rabbits and discuss their features. They name parts of the body, such as their stomach, thigh and elbow, and are inquisitive about how things work.

74. Children in the Reception Classes refine their scientific knowledge. For example, they know about, and name correctly, the various stages of development of a butterfly and a frog. They use computers to support learning in other areas, such as art, and build and construct a range of models, although children in the Nursery also do this well, for example when they make moving models of fire engines. Role-play activities provide well for this area of learning. For example, during the inspection, children in Reception used an imaginative 'animal hospital,' and took on the roles of a 'vet' and a pet owner. Additionally, an imaginary 'car wash' conducted outside not only gave children in the Nursery an insight into adult life, but was also a great source of enjoyment.

### **Physical development**

75. Children make good progress in developing their physical skills. Many activities in the Nursery challenge children to be accurate in their work, for example as they paint, construct models, and use pens and pencils to draw, and to begin to form early writing marks on paper. They have good opportunities to take part in outdoor play activities when they use a

range of tricycles, bikes, and other wheeled toys, which they control well. The staff have good oversight of the children during these times, but the play area needs attention to make it more suited to its purpose. The school is hoping to get permission to proceed in the near future with this improvement.

76. In more formal physical education activities in the hall, the children display their good sense of balance, lightness of movement and awareness of space. They control themselves well on fixed and movable apparatus, and accept challenge, for example when they tackle new heights in climbing over and through wall bars. They can do this because they are aware of their own capabilities and trust the staff, who are always on hand at such times.

77. No physical education sessions were seen for children in Reception, but on the evidence of pupils moving around the classroom, and using equipment, they make equally good progress in this area of learning. They handle equipment carefully, for example when dropping food dyes on to filter paper to make symmetrical butterflies, and when cutting and sticking paper to make hats.

### **Creative development**

78. There is good provision in the Early Years unit for children's creative development. Children in the Nursery use paint to good effect when they experiment with mixing colours. They paint on paper their imaginative designs, or blow bubbles into coloured water, 'fix' the bubbles on paper, and talk about the effects. Some high quality work, done in the past, showed how some children can carefully paint people, with correctly placed limbs and facial features. They hone their fine motor skills when they thread wool through holes in card, and see the effects of the patterns they make.

79. Learning in this area is taken to greater heights as children in the Reception Classes look at paintings by famous artists` such as Paul Klee and Jackson Pollock. They then use wax crayons, painted string and colour 'splashing' to create interesting art works in styles similar to those of the artists.

80. Study topics are used well in the unit to promote children's creative skills and learning. The current topic in the Reception Class, about butterflies, gives children many opportunities to explore creativity yet at the same time to find out about aspects of other areas of learning, such as science and mathematics. As part of a previous topic, children painted pictures of an old teddy from close observation, and also learned about times past. Some particularly effective work was seen of children's painting of daffodils and Easter cacti. They displayed accuracy of observation, and delicacy in the use of paint to give a watercolour effect.

81. Children in the Early Years unit enjoy making music. They sing regularly and use untuned musical instruments, both for enjoyment and to prepare them for the more formal music curriculum they will encounter in the infant classes.

### **ENGLISH**

82. There has been wide variation in the school's results in national tests since 1997. The numbers reaching the expected levels or higher at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have generally been above the national average. However, the Year 2 results were well below average in 2000, and the Year 6 results were average in 2001, though well above average in 1999. Over time, girls have achieved better results than boys in the tests, but by a lower

margin than found nationally. To secure more consistent standards, the school is using assessment information effectively in identifying and supporting pupils who need extra help to reach the expected level. As a result, pupils as a whole are making good progress through the school, though it is still not consistent year on year. Lessons observed during the inspection indicate that some girls in Year 6 are more inattentive than girls generally in the school, and this is affecting their progress. However, current standards in Years 2 and 6 are above average overall, when account is taken of a broader range of work than is assessed in national tests. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) are making good progress. None is at an early stage and all are fully included in class activities.

83. Comparisons with similar schools, on the basis of the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, should be viewed with considerable caution, because the local education authority (LEA) does not have a school meals service.

84. Standards in speaking and listening are above average in listening and average in speaking at the end of Years 2 and 6. Teachers develop very good relationships, and most are skilful in involving all pupils in discussions. Pupils know what is expected of them and listen carefully to instructions. In answer to questions, they speak clearly and correctly, using a sound range of vocabulary and sentence structures. They listen politely to others and work very well together on shared tasks. By Year 6, most pupils attempt to read aloud with dramatic expression. A good feature is their confidence in talking informally to adults. They also have a sound grasp of the more formal language appropriate in class discussions. They use technical terms correctly, which helps their learning in other subjects when ideas are explored and developed through talk. School productions, assemblies and occasional sessions of improvised drama, in history for instance, extend their experience of speaking in different roles to a wider audience. Nevertheless, even the more able pupils interviewed during the inspection were not fluent in explaining complex ideas, such as comparing the style of different books. Key elements of the National Literacy Strategy, such as guided reading groups and the plenary (final review), are not used to full advantage in all classes to develop formal speaking skills. The school has no scheme of work to draw together different strands of its existing provision, so pupils' progress is not closely managed.

85. Standards in reading are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. The skill of sounding out new words to find their meaning is well taught, and this gives a good foundation to progress through the school. Pupils having difficulty or those with special needs are given additional support so that they develop confidence through success. Books drawn from different commercial reading schemes have been carefully combined and graded so that pupils make secure progress until they are able to make a free choice of reading books with confidence. As a result, pupils in Year 2 generally have a good understanding of what they read. However, 'free readers' have not been graded for difficulty and so such books are not always well chosen. For instance, a younger pupil interviewed had selected a book that was too difficult, while an older and more able pupil is an avid reader of books by a popular but unchallenging author. Nevertheless, interest in books of all kinds is strong throughout the school. By Year 6, those with higher attainment have read a wide range, including poetry and non-fiction. They have a good understanding of how to find specific information in non-fiction books, and teachers develop these skills effectively by setting practical research tasks in other subjects. Many parents make a very good contribution by giving their children frequent help at home and taking them to local libraries. One higher attaining pupil in Year 6 has recently finished the 'Lord of the Rings' and, encouraged by his parents, plans next to read the work of a challenging award-winning author.

86. Standards in writing are above average overall. The school is particularly successful in teaching joined handwriting from an early age, so that by the end of Year 2 almost all pupils write legibly and neatly at a good pace. Thereafter, standards of presentation progress at a satisfactory rate, with some good examples of word processing. Teachers' high expectations for accuracy of spelling, punctuation and sentence structure are very effective, and good standards are sustained through the school. Pupils use dictionaries confidently to check spellings, pronunciation and word meanings for themselves, and good work habits are a strong feature of their personal development in the subject. They work hard and produce a lot of writing as a result. Formal exercises from textbooks and worksheets form a large part of the writing programme through the school, but particularly in Years 1 and 2. This approach assures good knowledge of grammar, but the exercises are not always linked directly enough to extended writing tasks for older pupils, and the volume of exercises reduces the time available for skills to be put into practice. Pupils in the middle range of attainment are most affected, with lack of practice evident in their brief stories and factual accounts when they write independently under pressure. The effects of limited practice in extended writing continue through to Year 6, affecting the numbers who achieve the higher level in national tests. By contrast, the most able pupils quickly absorb the key principles of different kinds of writing from study of good examples in class. As a result, such pupils write well in a range of styles. For example, they have a good understanding of how to create atmosphere and character in their stories. They structure longer pieces in paragraphs, and express complex ideas clearly, using a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures. They describe technical processes accurately in other subjects, using the correct terminology. Pupils with low attainment are given extra help or simpler versions of the task so that they can succeed. They achieve well in brief forms of writing, such as poetry, and there are many good examples by all pupils in well-produced class poetry anthologies. Nevertheless, most pupils need more specific teaching of key principles of different forms of writing, and more sustained practice to master such forms in English lessons and in other subjects.

87. The quality of teaching is good in Years 1 and 2, where all lessons were satisfactory or better, and one was excellent. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6. Teaching was good or better in half the lessons seen but one lesson was unsatisfactory. The framework of the National Literacy Strategy is used to guide teachers' planning, and this is generally effective. In the best lessons, pupils are told very clearly at the outset what they are to learn and what is expected of them. These targets are then taught with determination through all stages of the lesson, and pupils' success is thoroughly reviewed at the end. The resulting strong sense of pace and purpose was a key feature observed in many lessons, particularly the excellent lesson in Year 2. In this lesson, instruction was sharply focused, using a variety of activities to reinforce learning of basic skills. New information was repeated in varied and enjoyable ways to ensure that pupils built on success, with an obvious impact on their confidence and enthusiasm. All were fully included in the instruction because the teacher varied the difficulty of questions, and those who did not put up hands to answer were asked direct questions. The tasks that followed were finely adjusted to develop the skills of pupils at different stages of development, and so all worked hard with a high degree of success.

88. By contrast, what pupils were to learn was not identified clearly enough in the unsatisfactory lesson. The topic was well resourced but its potential was not realised because pupils were not actively involved in the instruction. Questions were not adjusted to involve pupils of all abilities, and many chose to take no part. In a lesson for older pupils that was otherwise satisfactory, expectations were not stated clearly enough or asserted firmly enough to lift the standard of work of some pupils, particularly the less well motivated. Inconsistent expectations for the quality and quantity of pupils' work are a significant factor

leading to variability in standards through the school. Additionally, the inspection noted considerable variation in the coverage and approach adopted in teaching different classes of the same age, particularly in Years 3 to 6. This suggests that team planning is not rigorous enough for best practice to be shared and weaknesses remedied.

89. In general, teachers read aloud well with dramatic expression, so helping pupils to understand and raising their interest in books. The extracts studied are then used well to teach features such as spelling, handwriting and punctuation, and practical work is well aimed to reinforce pupils' understanding at this level. Teaching assistants give very effective help to individuals and groups as they work, particularly those with special needs or low attainment, enabling them to keep up with the others. The use of commercial worksheets is effective in many instances in focusing learning of basic skills, particularly for pupils with difficulties at this level. However, it was notable in the lessons seen that teachers placed much less emphasis on using study texts to teach broader targets, such as the characteristics of imaginative, persuasive and instructional writing. By contrast, Year 4 pupils withdrawn for instruction in extended writing are making good progress because they are given time to plan, develop and improve their writing over a series of sessions. The final review session is used well in most lessons to evaluate progress and reinforce the lesson's targets. In general, though, more use could be made of this opportunity to develop pupils' speaking skills. Teachers show care and commitment in marking pupils' work, giving encouragement and identifying main weaknesses. However, much of this marking loses its impact because pupils do not routinely do corrections or further work on their identified weaknesses in the following lessons.

90. The subject is well led and managed. The new co-ordinator has made a very good start in monitoring teaching and standards of pupils' work. Nevertheless, further monitoring is needed to ensure that pupils make consistent progress through the school. In particular, monitoring needs to review: the quality of planning for different classes in each year group; the precision of lesson targets and teachers' expectations for resulting work; the approach to teaching extended writing in English and through other subjects; the use made of guided reading groups; a review of the use made of formal exercises from text books and worksheets, and the plenary to develop speaking skills. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but they need expanding to allow closer monitoring of speaking skills and the level of challenge in the voluntary reading of older pupils. Resources are satisfactory, with good use of dictionaries and satisfactory use of information and communication technology (ICT). The library stock has been rigorously audited recently, leaving a small but good quality stock, supplemented well by borrowing from the school library service. Work in class is extended to good effect through homework, although its regularity is not consistent in Year 6. The curriculum is extended imaginatively through an exciting range of events, visits and visitors, with a very good effect on pupils' attitudes to the subject. Teachers work hard and skilfully to display print of all kinds, stimulating pupils' interest and pride in their achievements.

## **MATHEMATICS**

91. In the 2001 national tests taken by pupils at the ages of seven and eleven, the proportion meeting the national expectation was close to the average. The proportion who exceeded the national expectation at age seven was below the national average, but above the average for pupils aged eleven. Comparison with similar schools, on the basis of the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is unreliable because the local education authority does not have school meal arrangements. There has been broadly satisfactory progress over the time since the previous inspection, particularly in the proportion of pupils at both ages attaining above expectations for their age, and despite a

dip in the overall score last year for pupils at the end of the juniors in Year 6. This has been due largely to the introduction of the daily numeracy lessons, improved confidence on the part of teachers, and the good use of assessments to group pupils into 'sets' that need additional support or extra challenge.

92. Overall attainment at the end of the infants is above that expected nationally, with a higher than usual proportion of pupils likely to attain the higher Level 3. The evidence for this conclusion derives from lesson observations during the inspection, a scrutiny of work undertaken during the current school year, and discussions with pupils during lessons. By the time pupils leave the school at 11, attainment is broadly comparable to national expectations, although the percentage of pupils likely to achieve the higher Level 5 is slightly below national averages. Pupils in the infants make good progress. Juniors make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy over the previous two years has been very effective in improving attainment in the two-year infant stage, but has yet to fully 'work through' to the end of the four-year junior stage.

93. The school has adopted and implemented the National Numeracy Strategy well, and all lessons observed during the inspection followed the recommended lesson format. Pupils undertake a wide range of work in all areas of mathematics. Samples of pupils' work during the year show that pupils experience a variety of work on shape, space and measures, and tackle a range of problems involving handling data and doing investigations. Lesson observations throughout the inspection confirm that pupils make appropriate use of their numeracy skills in other curriculum areas, such as in science and in design and technology. Pupils are 'set' into groups for their mathematics lessons, defined by their ages and levels of prior attainment. Whilst this is effective and pupils tend to make good progress, it has the effect of producing groups of pupils within each year with widely differing levels of attainment. For example, the lower-attaining sets contain all the pupils in that particular year with special educational needs.

94. Most pupils in Year 1 are able to provide 'doubles' for numbers to 10 quickly and accurately, and the majority of pupils for numbers such as 11, 20, 50 and 100. They explain clearly their reasoning, 'Because 1 and 1 is 2, so 100 and 100 must be 200', and double 12 is 24 'Because it's 2 more than 11 was'. A more able minority confidently put up their hands to answer the question, 'Double 123?' Pupils know what each digit in a three-digit number represents and are solving problems. They choose appropriate number operations and mental strategies to solve problems in a wide variety of contexts. Although a minority of pupils in this group demonstrate above average mental skills, a similarly sized minority of less able pupils, including some with special educational needs (SEN), are working below, or well below, national expectations.

95. Most pupils in Year 2 mentally halve and double numbers from 2 to 8192. A significant proportion in the higher attaining set work confidently at Level 3 when working with money problems, and mentally double £5.87 quickly and confidently, for example. The majority of pupils in the lower attaining set work appropriately at Year 2 key objectives: 'knowing and using halving as the inverse of doubling' and 'describing and extending simple number sequences including odd and even numbers', with a small minority unlikely to achieve these objectives.

96. In the juniors, higher attaining Year 3 and 4 pupils work with data handling tasks at Year 4 level. For example, they construct and interpret 'Carroll diagrams' to sort 2 dimensional shapes into categories of 'quadrilateral', 'not a quadrilateral', 'has a right angle' and 'doesn't have a right angle'. Lower attaining Year 3 and 4 pupils, a significant proportion of whom are pupils with SEN, work at or towards Level 2, which is below expectations for their age. Overall attainment of Year 3 and 4 pupils is, however,

satisfactory. Most Year 5 pupils can add or subtract accurately a pair of decimal numbers, for example 3.6 minus 1.7. When working with graphs, they develop their understanding of the idea of 'mode' as the most common item. Most recall the 'x' and 'y' axes correctly and can solve a problem by representing and interpreting data in charts and graphs, including bar and line graphs. Less able Year 6 pupils, solving problems by extracting data from a calendar to find dates, two weeks before, three weeks after, and so on, make numerous errors and require significant support in their work. Higher attaining pupils work out equivalent fractions, reduce fractions to their simplest terms, find fractions of an hour and, after some initial minor confusion, convert fractions into 100ths and percentages. In a problem solving activity concerning dominoes, many pupils considered patterns in their results, developed their logical thinking, and justified their reasoning at a level above that expected for their age.

97. The quality of learning in lessons observed in the infants ranged from very good to good, and was good overall. In the juniors, where learning ranged from very good to satisfactory, learning was similarly good overall. The quality of learning and the progress made is, in most cases, linked directly to the quality of teaching in individual lessons. In the infants, the quality of teaching ranged from very good to good, and was good overall. Teaching in the juniors ranged from very good to satisfactory, and was good overall. However, in some otherwise satisfactory lessons at the end of the juniors, the teachers relied too much in their planning of work on 'setting' pupils, and tended to provide the same task for all pupils within the set. However, as was evident in these lessons, despite the setting, a wide range of ability remains within each 'set'. Better provision needs to be made for pupils of higher attainment within each set and for pupils who may be trying their best and 'struggling'. In the best lessons, teachers' careful planning, enthusiasm for the subject and good classroom management skills ensure that pupils are very well motivated, and the overall pace of the lessons is very good. In most lessons, classroom management skills are very effective in ensuring that pupils concentrate on their work, and teachers use a good range of strategies to motivate and interest pupils. Teachers follow closely the recommended Numeracy Strategy format and programmes of study. They provide an appropriate range of resources, and use praise and questioning to good effect. They ensure that all pupils pay attention, use correct mathematical vocabulary, and terminology, and give pupils opportunities to explain their methods and to practise what they know.

98. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in mathematics lessons are good overall. Most pupils enjoy, and are enthusiastic about, their mathematics work, especially the 'quick-fire' mental and oral activities which introduce each numeracy lesson. They respond well to their teachers and work together without the need for constant teacher intervention.

99. The co-ordinator for the subject is well qualified and informed and has developed a good overview of the subject. Assessment has been used well to identify and group pupils according to ability. However, there has been limited use of the data gained from the good range of assessments undertaken to identify weaknesses in the curriculum or teaching. The co-ordinator plans to carry out a detailed analysis of pupils' answers to individual questions in the current years' national tests. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory, and considerable funding has been allocated to buy additional resources to support the Numeracy Strategy in all classes.

## SCIENCE

100. The previous inspection reported that standards in science were above national averages at the end of both the infants and the juniors. Test results, at that time, at the end of Year 6 showed high numbers of pupils gaining at least the expected Level 4. The latest National Curriculum tests for which a national comparison is possible are those taken in 2001, almost exactly a year ago. There was still a very healthy proportion of pupils gaining the expected Level 4, as previously reported, but the proportion gaining the higher Level 5 was well below the national average. Consequently, the school's overall performance at the end of Year 6 was below the national average overall. There are no national tests at the end of Year 2, but teachers' assessments placed the school within the average band nationally. Test and assessment results in most schools can usually be compared with schools that have a similar intake by looking at schools with a similar proportion of pupils claiming free school meals. However, this usually robust indicator is unreliable in this school because the local education authority (LEA) does not have a school meal service, and so all pupils eat sandwiches at lunchtime. Recent trends in test results at the end of Year 6 show a decline year-on-year since 1999 for both boys and girls.

101. Inspection evidence for the current school population shows that standards are broadly in line with those expected in the National Curriculum at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher than expected Level 5 is slightly greater this year than it was in 2001.

102. An analysis of the work completed by pupils in Year 6 shows that all work is aimed at the expected levels. It also shows that it is usual for all pupils to be given the same task. This does not consistently challenge all pupils in the class, and those with the potential for higher attainment are not always stretched by this approach. This is one factor behind the below average proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 in tests in the past. In other year groups, too, the completed work showed that all pupils typically attempt exactly the same task, with no extension for higher attainers. The school caters well for pupils with special needs and they make the same progress as their peers. This is because they receive focused support in lessons. In Years 1 to 4, pupils make good progress and achieve well in terms of their prior attainment; in Years 5 and 6, progress is satisfactory.

103. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a basic understanding of the structure of the human body and can name simple body parts. They understand that forces can push or pull, and have investigated the effect of different surfaces on the distance toy cars run on slopes. They can sort materials according to a variety of criteria, including magnetic/non-magnetic. Pupils in Year 6 have separated mixtures, using filtration and evaporation, and have learned about balanced and unbalanced forces, upthrust and air resistance. They have considered simple electrical circuits and the purposes of some of the body's organs, such as the heart. However, the recorded work in Year 6 is quite sparse, and some topics have been completed only superficially.

104. Five lessons were observed. The quality of teaching and learning in these lessons varied from very good to satisfactory. This evidence, combined with that from the analysis of completed work, indicates that teaching and learning are both satisfactory throughout the school. Whilst teachers are confident in the subject, supported by the knowledgeable co-ordinator, planning does not always reflect the needs of all pupils. This is partly because the results of the good assessment procedures do not always link clearly to future planning. A feature of the most successful teaching is the use of questioning. This was seen in a lesson for Years 5 and 6 pupils, about types of soil and the plants that grow in different conditions. The teacher used a very good questioning technique to 'recap' the previous



lesson about the drainage properties of different soils. Following the failure of an experiment, the teacher also seized this unlikely opportunity to help pupils, through a sequence of pointed questions, to deduce what the problem had been. This skilful introduction led to a real buzz of industry in the room as pupils worked with a will.

105. Pupils' willingness to work and good behaviour are features of most lessons. This was particularly noticeable in a lesson with Years 3 and 4 about water resistance. Pupils were enthralled by the lively teaching. Relationships were first class, and enabled the teacher to maintain a workmanlike atmosphere with no visible effort. The teacher had high expectations of pupils' collaborative skills, asking each group to allocate among themselves the different tasks in the experiment. This took place with the minimum of fuss, despite pupils' obvious excitement.

106. When teaching was more lacklustre, the pace was more steady. This happened in a lesson about the things that plants need to survive. Pupils spent too much time drawing a plant on which to record their thoughts and not enough on deciding what it was they thought that plants needed. Nevertheless, by the end of the lesson, they had decided what they thought plants might need and had begun to consider how they might formulate a test to see if they were right.

107. The co-ordinator is new to the school and offers knowledgeable leadership. He has decided on some appropriate priorities for action and is beginning to put them into practice. Formal assessment in science follows the system used in the foundation subjects and is good. This uses the learning objectives contained in the scheme of work, which is based on a nationally published model scheme. However, as noted, the results of the assessment do not always influence planning. In addition, some topics are misplaced in the school's scheme, so that progression in learning is not always assured. The school is aware of this and has effected plans to correct rectify this. There are very few opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) to reinforce their scientific learning. Pupils' numeracy skills are effectively reinforced, for example, through the drawing of graphs to record the outcomes of experiments. However, there is little extended writing expected of pupils. Much of the writing seen in completed work was of single sentences. Formal monitoring of teaching and planning is on course for next half term, although some scrutiny of pupils' work has taken place.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

108. Only one art lesson was observed during the inspection, and there is insufficient evidence to allow secure judgements on the quality of teaching or learning in the subject, or on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. However, it is clear that teachers give pupils a good range of interesting experiences in two and three-dimensional work, using a wide range of materials. This is evident from a detailed scrutiny of work in pupils' sketchbooks, and on display around the school, and in the very well organised portfolios and albums of work collected. As a result, pupils make good progress as they move through the school, and attainment in art is good at the ages of seven and eleven. This constitutes satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

109. In the one lesson observed, Year 2 pupils designed and made a fabric collage. They had looked previously at the work of artists who used 'Nature' to inspire their work, particularly the work of Henri Matisse in his painting, 'L'Escargot'. Pupils had made good quality line drawings of natural objects in their sketchbooks. They chose one of their sketches as a template, cutting the fabric and sewing their cut shapes on to backing fabric, to produce collages of above-average quality for the pupils' age.

110. Scrutiny of previous work indicates that, during the year, Years 1 and 2 pupils have designed and made prints and tiles of good quality. They were able to do this after visiting the Black Country Museum, where they photographed and sketched the buildings. The school makes good use of the work of famous artists, to inspire pupils in their work and to demonstrate a wide range of possibilities in style and the use of materials and techniques. For example, pupils have studied the work of Paul Klee and made 'Journeys of the Mind' based on his paintings, and made observational drawings of natural objects. They have looked at the work of Picasso, Van Gogh and Gainsborough as inspiration for their self-portraits and have, as a group, made a 'natural sculpture' in the playground, after studying the work of Andy Goldsworthy. Years 3 and Year 4 pupils have studied Aboriginal art, using viewfinders to compose their observational studies. They completed a project on 'Dreams', firstly taking photographs with disposable cameras as a basis for their work and then designing good quality tile prints. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils have produced 'movement' prints after studying the work of Kandinsky, Duchamp, Escher and Lichtenstein, using photocopies and information and communication technology (ICT) to produce good quality images. In a reference to work in other subjects, and as a social activity, pupils in a group project produced a very good quality 'Kandinsky-style' three-dimensional mural, using mathematical shapes.

111. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in the one lesson observed were very good, and pupils made good progress because the teacher had planned the lesson well and arranged a useful set of resources. Her infectious enthusiasm spread to the pupils, whom she managed well, so that their learning developed at a good rate.

112. The school has adopted enthusiastically and successfully the government-recommended scheme of work for the subject. The co-ordinator for the subject has introduced the use of sketchbooks throughout the school and has developed a good overview of standards. Through her enthusiasm for the subject and support given to teachers, she is largely responsible for the continued high profile of art in the school, despite some time constraints, particularly in the juniors.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

113. It was not possible to observe any lessons devoted to design and technology, owing to the school's timetabling of Foundation subjects. Judgements are made on the basis of a scrutiny of completed work and discussions in the school.

114. Standards in the subject at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum, and pupils make satisfactory progress, including those who have special educational needs (SEN).

115. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have designed and made models based on the story of 'Incey Wincey Spider', with pulleys to operate the spider's movement. As part of this project, they examined toys that included pulleys, and experimented with construction sets. They drew detailed, labelled plans of their designs before making their models. The quality of the finish and of pupils' associated writing shows that the three teachers who teach this group had consistently high expectations of pupils' work, and emphasised the correct technical vocabulary. The same high expectations are evident in the work in Years 3 and 4 on money containers. Pupils had examined a variety of purses and wallets before designing their own. They used paper and masking tape to test their designs before making them in cloth. Pupils used a variety of fastenings and the finish was of high quality. Some were decorated in appliqué. The pupils had carried out clear evaluations of their finished

products. Pupils' design books in Years 5 and 6 contain work that is disappointing. However, their work on model fairground rides is to a satisfactory standard. They have also made musical instruments, mostly drums and shakers, a few using stretched rubber bands as strings. Little evidence was seen of the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support work in the subject.

116. The school is using an amended version of the nationally published exemplar scheme of work, and the associated assessments, which are based on noting those pupils who have exceeded the expected standards or have not reached them. However, it is unclear for what purpose the teachers use this information. The co-ordinator is new to the post, but has already undertaken a rigorous training course which has increased her confidence. This is clear in the quality of work now seen in the school, especially in Years 1 to 4. The co-ordinator is now carrying out an audit of the work in the subject, preparatory to updating the current action plan.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

117. Pupils' work meets national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and standards have been maintained at this level since the previous inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress through a sound programme of study designed to develop understanding across a broad range of topics. Those with special educational needs (SEN) make progress in line with that of other pupils. They follow the same curriculum, and teachers help them take an active part by matching work to their needs.

118. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 successfully interpret maps, atlases and globes to find their own home in relation to the school and the world beyond. They study the effects of seasonal change and weather patterns on our lives, in terms of clothing, housing and outdoor activities. They compare their own experiences with those found on the Caribbean island of St Lucia and a fictitious Scottish island. Written work is generally brief but accurate. Their drawings show sound attention to detail, with correct labelling of key features. The study of overseas locations is extended well in Years 3 and 4 through a detailed case study of a village in India. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a sound understanding of major features of their own locality and compare their experiences with those found elsewhere. They develop a broad understanding of world geography by following items of world news and tracing their locations, using maps of different scales. They develop sound skills in carrying out surveys in the locality, finding information in Ordnance Survey maps and interpreting data such as that on weather patterns. Their progress in drawing maps of their own is satisfactory but not as well developed as noted in the previous report.

119. Commercial worksheets are widely used through the school to guide practical activities. The level of demand of such worksheets is generally best matched to the needs of pupils with average attainment or lower. However, the same worksheet is sometimes given to all pupils, even though the range of attainment is very wide because all classes contain pupils from two year groups. Instances were noted where the work was not demanding enough for more able pupils, particularly in terms of the complexity of maps, diagrams and data offered, and the length and detail of written accounts required. By contrast, the recent study of mountains by Years 5 and 6 has been well organised to develop geography skills in a more open-ended and challenging way. Groups of pupils have carried out independent research using reference books, information and communication technology, maps and photographs. All pupils have been fully included because groups have worked together, helping each other, and so making a very good

contribution to their social development. They recorded their findings in a good range of ways, including maps, diagrams, charts and extended commentaries. Their work is well presented in project folders, making a good contribution to their development of literacy and numeracy skills.

120. Only two lessons were seen, both of them to pupils in Years 3 and 4. Teaching was good in one and satisfactory in the other. The lessons were well planned and resourced. Questioning was used effectively to focus pupils' attention on significant detail in photographs and to probe their understanding. Pupils were pleased to show what they had learned, and used correct terminology in explaining their ideas. In each lesson, all pupils were given the same task, and this did not fully extend the skills of more able pupils. However, in the good lesson, the teacher lifted standards considerably towards the end with an energetic review of learning. She used the board well to list significant details so that pupils could check their own findings, and made clear what they would do in the next lesson to take their learning further.

121. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Planning is now soundly based on official recommendations, and assessments of pupils' progress are guided by the benchmarks attached to the scheme. There are supportive links with other subjects, particularly history. The forthcoming arts week has been very imaginatively planned to excite pupils' interest in other cultures. Good use is made of visits into the local community and further afield to give pupils practical experience in applying their knowledge and skills. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

## **HISTORY**

122. Standards meet national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and they have been maintained at this level since the previous inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the school. Those with special educational needs (SEN) follow the same curriculum, and teachers help them take an active part by giving them tasks that match their needs.

123. Pupils in Year 2 have a clear sense of what has changed over time in the context of their own families and aspects of home life. Using the evidence of objects, pictures and photographs, they identify the main differences between past and present, and note significant dates on a time-line. They understand the contributions made to society by famous people, such as Florence Nightingale. Their understanding of the cause and effects of the Great Fire of London is clearly expressed through art and writing, and attractively presented. This topic is well designed to challenge pupils across the range of attainment. Much other work is closely guided by commercial worksheets. In some instances, the response of more able pupils is limited because these worksheets have too narrow a focus, or their expectations for the quantity and quality of response are too low.

124. Pupils in Year 6 have a sound understanding of a range of historical periods, including the civilisation of ancient Greece, and aspects of British history, including the Romans, Tudors, Victorians, and the Second World War. They have sound skills in identifying and interpreting evidence from a range of sources, including documents and objects from the periods studied. The frequent use of worksheets continues through Years 3 to 6, with the result that pupils' factual writing is accurate but often very brief and limited in scope. There are instances of detailed commentaries of good quality, such as the biographies of Henry the Eighth, but they are infrequent, and there is little evidence of achievement at the higher level of the National Curriculum in each year group. By contrast, the recent holiday project on the Second World War by pupils in Years 5 and 6 stands out as very effective in stimulating high achievement. Teachers gave guidance on possible sources and

approaches to recording and presenting findings, but pupils had considerable freedom to develop their ideas. Many went to great lengths to find information from the Internet, reference books and other sources, and interviewing older people. The best studies show detailed interpretation of evidence and extended commentaries on significant events and personalities.

125. The quality of teaching was good in the one lesson seen. Pupils in a Year 5 and 6 class showed a good understanding of features of a Greek temple because the teacher's questions were very well focused, using a good quality picture as a prompt, and were sensitively adjusted to give everyone a chance to answer. Her high expectations for accuracy ensured that pupils tried hard to remember important details. She corrected misunderstandings and explained new information at a brisk pace that held pupils' attention very well. The task which followed put pupils' reading skills to good use in finding information in a wide range of reference books. The way in which they recorded their information was structured by guidelines, which helped pupils with average attainment or below, particularly those with weaker writing skills.

126. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Long-term planning is soundly based on official guidelines, and pupils' progress is monitored by means of the level descriptions associated with the scheme of work. Not enough use is made of this assessment information to plan work that matches the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment in each class, particularly to challenge the most able. There are useful links with other subjects, particularly geography. Good use is made of visits to local museums and sites of historic interest, and these visits are well planned to extend knowledge and enjoyment of the subject. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

127. Standards in ICT were high at the time of the last inspection. The provision of a dedicated room was proving effective in raising standards. National expectations in the subject have risen since that time and the school has done well to achieve standards in line with those now expected. It is still the case that the specialist computer room is aiding the teaching of skills, but the use of technology as a tool to support learning in other subjects is much less well developed. This is partly because there are no computers other than in the suite, which is heavily timetabled for use. However, more computers arrived at the school during the inspection, so that the pupils will soon have access to these in the classrooms for carrying out individual research or supporting their learning in other subjects.

128. There was little completed work available for scrutiny, but standards evident in lessons and in discussion with pupils in the suite were in line with expectations. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 competently use an art program to create pictures from stories. They know how to start the program, control it with the mouse and keyboard, and use the various tools available. Pupils' art skills are coincidentally reinforced as they place the elements on the screen and produce their pictures. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have set up a database and try to avoid the pitfalls they have seen in other demonstration databases. They have a good grasp of the principles, for example ensuring that the database can easily be searched. This work reinforces their topic work in history on the Ancient Greeks, as pupils wrestle with exactly which headings would be efficient to make retrieving information about Greek gods easy. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use word processors to mix text and pictures as they design a poster on the theme of the school's forthcoming Golden Jubilee party.

129. Six lessons were seen in total, all in the computer suite. Teaching was at least satisfactory, and sometimes good. The overall picture is one of satisfactory teaching and learning, leading to satisfactory achievement. Teachers are confident in the suite and in the

use of the software. This is partly due to the training they have received and partly because of the knowledge and expertise of the co-ordinator. Lessons are well planned and organised effectively in the suite. Sometimes, introductory sessions are less effective, owing to the need for pupils to gather around a small monitor for demonstrations. However, when pupils work independently there are good opportunities for them to work collaboratively, which is part of the reason that pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They share sensibly and take turns without argument. At the end of lessons, when pupils look at each other's work, they are happy to share the techniques they used for a particular effect. This sharing also serves to improve pupils' self-esteem. In one lesson, as pupils looked at the work of others, they were reminded that this was not a forum for negative comments. As a result, all pupils were able to compliment others and to be complimented on their work. As such, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development. However, typically all pupils have the same task, and this does not always stretch the most able. Weaker pupils, and those with a special educational need (SEN), benefit from targeted support to enable them to make the best progress they can.

130. The subject benefits from the new specialist suite, which has had a positive effect on standards in pupils' computer skills. This has been helped by the considerable expertise of the co-ordinator. He is enthusiastic and has increased his knowledge through further training. The school uses the national exemplar scheme of work as the basis for its work and assessment, and this is effective. The school is aware that more could be done to use ICT to support learning in other subjects. The co-ordinator is evaluating documentation from the local education authority (LEA) to put this into effect when there are computers in each classroom. Similarly, a new assessment system is under consideration. The co-ordinator has been able to monitor teaching throughout the school.

## **MUSIC**

131. There is not enough evidence to make secure judgements about pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6. Nevertheless, on the basis of information gathered from lesson planning, past activities, discussions with pupils and staff, and the one lesson seen in the juniors, it is evident that pupils make at least satisfactory progress as they move up the school. There is sufficient evidence to confirm that, by the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, most attain levels of knowledge and understanding that are expected of pupils their age.

132. Recent changes to the curriculum are beneficial to pupils' learning because they include good opportunities for them to improve their understanding by referring to other subjects. For example, pupils in the juniors have used music by Mussorgsky to inspire their writing, and to freely express their feelings. After hearing a piece called 'Pictures at an exhibition' one pupil wrote, 'I like it because it sounds free', and another, 'The mood of this song is heavenly and sweet.' Similarly, pupils in Years 3 and 4 look at paintings by famous artists, such as Renoir, and compose short pieces, using mainly percussion instruments, to convey the mood of the paintings.

133. Pupils by the age of seven, when playing instruments, select them according to their names and the sounds that they make. Some higher attaining pupils are particularly perceptive, for example when they confidently offer their opinion about the sound an instrument makes, such as, 'That sounds like a clock ticking.' Pupils have a feel for some of the musical elements, and name and describe them correctly. For example, they understand the terms 'duration', 'dynamics,' and 'pitch', and apply them to varying degrees when they chant, as a class, 'Mrs White, had a fright....'

134. Pupils' learning in the infant age range is well promoted through good teaching. Pupils feel comfortable in their lessons because the teachers ensure that they all have opportunities to contribute to discussions, through a style of questioning that promotes their confidence well. Thus, teachers are sensitive to the levels of attainment of each pupil, including those with special educational needs, and skilfully draw out their knowledge and understanding to share with the classes. Similarly, pupils' instrumental performances, from reading very simple notation, improve in quality because the teachers ensure that the tasks are appropriate yet challenging.

135. In the one lesson seen in the juniors, a good lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, the teacher carefully built on pupils' previous experience and knowledge, particularly about the elements of music. For example, the pupils showed how their understanding of them had improved since they were in Year 2. Some higher attaining pupils were particularly perceptive, for example explaining clearly how musical 'texture' defines 'layers of sounds', and that an 'ostinato' is a repeating pattern of music. Pupils at this age respond very well to the opportunities to compose and perform music in small groups, and to discuss the relative qualities and effects of their pieces. This is because the teacher makes clear to them her expectations of pupils to work co-operatively, and gives them tasks that are challenging yet achievable. As a result, some groups composed and performed short pieces, using a range of tuned and untuned instruments, that accurately conveyed the moods and 'colours' of paintings by a range of famous artists. In accordance with the teacher's instructions, most pieces included varying degrees of dynamics, duration and texturing.

136. The school extends well the music curriculum by providing facilities for all pupils to take part in instrumental instruction and performance, as well as opportunities to sing regularly. Specifically, besides learning and performing songs as part of learning in lessons, pupils in each part of the school sing at Christmas, Easter and summer concerts. There is instruction in keyboard, clarinet, violin and flute, and a choir meets each week. Pupils who learn to play instruments do so to a good standard, and some take part in a band led by a parent. Currently, few boys take part in the additional music opportunities. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator, who has drawn up an achievable action plan.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

137. Observations of lessons in the infants indicate that pupils make good progress overall in physical education and that their attainment by the age of seven is above what is normally expected for their age, particularly in gymnastics. Only two lessons were observed in the juniors, and it is not possible to make a secure judgement about overall attainment by the end of Year 6.

138. In the two gymnastics lessons observed, for Years 1 and 2, pupils devised and performed sequences of movements on the floor and on apparatus. In their sequences they thoughtfully used different body parts, levels, shapes, pathways, speeds and directions. They began and finished their sequences 'like beautiful gymnasts'. In discussion, they explained and evaluated their own actions and those of others at a level more typical of pupils in the lower juniors. They understand the safety aspects of, for example, setting out and returning apparatus, and know that 'We need to check the apparatus to check it's safe before we use it'. They work co-operatively and respond quickly and well to their teachers' cues and instructions, such as '...and...STOP'.

139. In an outdoor games lesson, for Years 3 and 4, pupils 'warmed-up' enthusiastically in preparation for exercise, and demonstrated an understanding of the short-term effects of exercise on their bodies. They understood, in simple terms, why activity is of value for

health and well-being. When playing a game of 'Keep the kettle boiling', most pupils kept up a continuous game. They used a range of throwing and catching skills and techniques, and simple tactics to send a ball in different ways. In a Years 5 and 6 lesson, pupils worked well in groups to design a simple assault course, including trails for younger pupils. They worked co-operatively to meet the challenge, used a range of problem-solving skills, and applied basic principles of safety in their work.

140. No first-hand evidence was gathered of pupils' gymnastic, dance or swimming skills in the juniors. However, the subject co-ordinator has data to show that almost all pupils in Year 6 can swim the expected 25 metres. They reach this standard mainly as a result of a programme of instruction they receive during Years 3 and 4 at the local swimming pool.

141. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in their physical education lessons ranged from very good to good, and were good overall across the school. Pupils take part enthusiastically and work together well when required, They relate well to their peers, appreciate others' performances and, in most cases, take part in activities confidently and with clear enjoyment.

142. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed ranged from very good to good, and was good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use praise appropriately and consistently. They have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, give very clear instructions and maintain a good pace throughout the lessons. In the best teaching, the teacher changes activities frequently to maintain pupils' interest and enthusiasm. The quality of pupils' learning during lessons, closely linked to the quality of teaching, ranged from very good to good, and was good overall.

143. The subject co-ordinator is well-qualified and very enthusiastic. Throughout the year there is a very good range of extra-curricular physical education, dance and games activities, at lunchtimes and after school, and they are well attended. The school also involves pupils in a good range of local festivals, tournaments and galas, and there is also a good range of visitors who work with the pupils. For example, an Olympic gymnast visited the school and gave a demonstration for the pupils, and programmes of athletics and rugby coaching all contribute to what is a broad and interesting physical education curriculum.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

144. The school has dealt well with the issue of religious education raised at the previous inspection. Consequently, most pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 reach the expected standards of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The school now devotes enough time to the subject on a regular basis and follows a carefully planned curriculum, making good use of nationally produced guidelines. Each class has one lesson a week, as well as other learning opportunities, for example in assemblies and occasionally in personal, social and health education (PSHE). Following the previous inspection, all teachers undertook in-service training and, with a change in much of the staffing since then, the co-ordinator is hoping for further staff training soon. As a result of all these developments, most pupils make at least satisfactory progress. By the time they are in Years 5 and 6, most pupils can discuss some quite challenging concepts.

145. Pupils respond well to their lessons because the teachers make them interesting and relevant to their stages of development. Half of the lessons seen in the inspection were good, and the other half were satisfactory. Nevertheless, all lessons had good qualities. One common feature of lessons was the good relationship the teachers and pupils shared. This meant that pupils had trust in their teachers and in their peers, and confidently answered questions, shared opinions and offered information. For example, in a Years 5



and 6 lesson about how people make difficult moral decisions, many pupils gave thoughtful comments and offered personal opinions about Moses' killing of the slave overseer. Similarly, in a good Year 2 lesson, pupils excitedly recalled what they knew about some Old Testament stories, such as Joseph and his special coat, and Adam and Eve. They worked well, and independently, on their writing tasks, and some wrote competent accounts of Bible stories, using their literacy skills appropriately.

146. Another quality common to all lessons is the teachers' high expectations of pupils to think. Giving pupils such opportunities to take an active part in lessons is encouraging them to listen and to learn more, and is a helpful device in managing the lessons. Indeed, behaviour in lessons is always good, and teachers are skilled at controlling the few pupils who show signs of misbehaviour. Thus, no time is wasted, and there is a clear focus on the task in hand.

147. Whilst all lessons seen contained work of a Christian nature, there is strong evidence, both from previously completed work and from talking to pupils, that they gain a satisfactory level of understanding about other religions and the part they play in our multicultural society. The school makes good efforts to raise pupils' awareness of other cultures. For example, higher attaining pupils in the infants relate how Jesus and His disciples were gathered for a Jewish celebration, the Passover, when they met for the Last Supper. They know that the Old Testament is relevant to the Jewish religion. One pupil wrote, perceptively, that the Bible is a special book, 'because it tells you about God, Jesus, and how you should lead your life.' Older pupils in the juniors learn about Islam and the Muslim way of life, and some write imaginatively about a visit to the Great Mosque at Mecca, and the life of the great prophet Muhammed. However, it is in Years 3 and 4 that pupils produce the writing of the best quality. For example, they write good narrative accounts about witnessing events in the life of Jesus, such as when he cured a blind man at the gates of Jerusalem. It is in specific tasks such as these that pupils have the time to reflect and to think carefully about special events. Teachers in this year group particularly emphasise the need for pupils to produce their best quality work. This is exemplified by their good standard of marking, which is both summative and gives pupils clues about how to improve their work.

148. Assemblies play their part satisfactorily in promoting pupils' learning of religious ideas. The assembly theme of 'rules', during the inspection week, ideally related the Ten Commandments to the expected conduct of life. From whole-school and key stage assemblies, led by staff and visiting speakers, pupils of all abilities learned that rules such as the Commandments are set from the premise of love for one another, and love of us by God.

149. The school has acquired a satisfactory range of religious artefacts. It also makes good use of religious centres to borrow more such artefacts, and occasional supporting literature for the pupils to use. Pupils have visited the local Baptist church, and visits to other religious places will follow over time. Such visits bring home to pupils the realities of worship and the importance of religions to many people's lives.