

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST JOHN'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Brook Lane, Walsall Wood

Walsall

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104228

Headteacher: Robert Yeomans

Reporting inspector: Clare Lorenz  
9282

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> March 2002

Inspection number: 244520

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior  
School category: Voluntary controlled  
Age range of pupils: 3-11  
Gender of pupils: mixed

School address: Brook Lane  
Walsall Wood  
Walsall  
W Midlands

Postcode: WS9 9NA  
Telephone number: 01543 452197  
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body  
Name of chair of governors: Clive Spence

Date of previous inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
9282	Clare Lorenz	Registered inspector		Characteristics of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements The quality of teaching Leadership and management What the school should do to improve further
19567	Mary Malin	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development The care and welfare of pupils Partnership with parents Staffing accommodation and resources
22058	Christine Richardson	Team inspector	Equal Opportunities English as an additional language Mathematics Art and design Design technology	
22778	Anne Shannon	Team inspector	Special educational needs Science Geography History	
21171	Sally Handford	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Information communication technology Religious education	
2200	Jim Stirrup	Team inspector	English Music Physical education	The curriculum

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St John's Church of England Primary school is a voluntary controlled school in Walsall Wood with a mixed socio- economic intake. It is bigger than other similar schools with 358 pupils on roll. It includes 52 children who attend the nursery part time. Very few pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school roll is stable; eleven pupils (three percent) joined the school in the last year and two pupils transferred elsewhere. Two pupils have English as an additional language, both of whom are as fluent in English as their classmates. Forty five pupils (thirteen percent) are on the register for special educational needs, which is well below the national average. No pupils have statements. Sixteen pupils (5 percent), which is below the national average, take free school meals. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is below the norm but is average by the time pupils enter the reception class.

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

St John's is a good school with some very good features. Staff support and care for pupils very well. pupils like coming to school and are very keen to learn. they behave very well. Pupils aged seven achieved above average in the 2001 national tests for reading, writing and mathematics. in 2001, unlike the previous year when results were well above the national average, pupils aged eleven were below average in English, mathematics and science. when standards are compared with similar schools they drop to well below average for the group. This is caused by a combination of low take up of free school meals and a year which contained many less able pupils. most pupils did, however, make satisfactory progress between years 2 and 6. Standards for pupils in all years throughout the school are good and pupils of all abilities achieve well as a result of good teaching. by the time they leave reception pupils have made very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. the school has prioritised raising standards in mathematics. Teaching and learning in mathematics is very good and in English and science it is good. Two pupils passed GCSE mathematics last year. leadership and management by the headteacher and staff with key responsibilities are very good. The school is good value for money.

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

- Four fifths of teaching and learning is good. One third is very good. Standards are good and pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Gifted and talented pupils in Key Stage 2 make very good progress
- Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Leadership and management is very good.
- The relationship between pupils and staff is very good. As a result, pupils behave very well and are very keen to learn.
- The school gives very good educational and personal support to its pupils. The welfare and care of pupils is very good as is pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.
- Pupils are offered very good extra curricular activities
- Parents think the school is very good and it has very effective links with them which assist children's learning.

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

- Accommodation. Noise travels between classrooms causing distraction to pupils and some classrooms are overcrowded. This inhibits pupils' learning.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in October 1997. There has been good improvement since then due to the high quality of leadership and team effort. There is excellent commitment to further improvement and, through a close knowledge of individual pupils' academic profiles and a challenging education, the capacity to succeed. The school has tackled the key issues from the last inspection well. Standards in information and communication technology have risen from well below expectations to meet national expectations. The outdoor play area for children in the nursery and reception classes has been developed and is now good. The quality of teaching has improved throughout the school as has pupils' learning. Standards in creative development are now good and children make good progress in their speaking, listening and communication skills in both the nursery and reception. There has been good improvement in the standards in art and mental mathematics and speaking and listening has improved. Teachers' expectations and the pace of lessons has improved. The pace of work is now good in most lessons and teachers have high expectations.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

Over a five year period the school's results are broadly in line with national results. Pupils aged seven achieved above average results in the 2001 national tests for reading, writing and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, mathematics was average and reading and writing dropped to below average. Most pupils, nonetheless, made good progress. In 2001, unlike the previous year when results were well above the national average, pupils aged eleven were below average in English, mathematics and science. When standards are compared with similar schools they dropped to well below average. This was caused by more pupils with special educational needs and a year which contained many less able pupils. Most pupils made satisfactory progress between years 2 and 6. The school's targets were not reached in English and in mathematics in 2001. Targets for 2002 are higher and on target to be met. They closely reflect pupils' prior attainment and the ability spread of Year 6 pupils.

Standards are, as a result of good teaching and learning, good throughout the school. Children, who enter nursery below the expected level, make very good progress in the Foundation Stage. Children's attainment in reception is satisfactory in communication, language and literacy and good in the other five areas of learning. Children in the nursery and reception achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development and well in all other areas of learning. Children make good progress by the age of seven and most make satisfactory progress by the age of eleven. In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils' attainment and achievement are good in English, mathematics and science. They are also good in art



and design, design technology, music and physical education and satisfactory in geography. In information communication technology attainment is satisfactory but pupils achieve well. Pupils' attainment and achievement in history and religious education are good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and higher ability pupils, including those identified as gifted and talented make very good progress by the age of eleven. The standards and progress of pupils with English as an additional language is not masked by language difficulties. No difference in the attainment of boys and girls was seen during inspection.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and learning. They have enquiring minds and are highly responsive to challenging teaching.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils live up to them very well.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils and staff get on very well together. They show kindness and compassion to others and have a very good respect for other people's beliefs, feelings and values.
Attendance	The level of attendance is broadly in line with similar schools. Unauthorised absence is below the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is very good in nursery and reception classes. Four fifths of teaching is good and one third of it is very good. This has a direct impact on the good learning throughout the school. Both teaching and learning are very good in personal, social and emotional education in the nursery and reception and in knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development in reception. Numeracy is taught very effectively. Teaching and learning are very good in mathematics in both key stages. Literacy skills are good and English is taught well. Pupils throughout the school are taught to listen to others and how to express their ideas. This they do very well. Teachers manage their pupils well and have very high expectations of what they will achieve. As a result, pupils are very interested in what is being taught, work hard and concentrate very well. There are effective withdrawal groups for those with difficulties in literacy and extra classes to boost attainment for Year 6 pupils prior to national tests. Two teachers take a weekly homework club to enable pupils to consolidate and extend their learning. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the good teaching. Teachers have high expectations of mathematically and scientifically able pupils. There is a regular group of pupils in Years 2 and 6 which is entered for, and succeed, in higher level national tests. In crowded and noisy areas pupils' learning is reduced as they are distracted.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The quality and range of opportunities is good. There is a strong emphasis on numeracy which has resulted in very good learning in mathematics. The choice of extra curricular activities is very good and links with the church and local community make a very valuable contribution to children's learning. Personal, social and health education is very good. Good contacts with other education establishments have enabled pupils, such as those who have passed GCSE mathematics, to succeed well beyond the usual primary levels.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good. Appropriate support in and out of lessons makes a significant contribution to the good progress made by most pupils. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and receive extra challenging work.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is no special provision for the two pupils with English as an additional language as they have no difficulties using English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development is very good. Their cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Children are cared for very well and their welfare is of paramount importance. The procedures for promoting good behaviour are very effective and the personal support and educational guidance offered to pupils is very good. The use of data to monitor and support academic progress and set targets is good. The school works very well with parents and encourages them to participate in school life. Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning at home and in school. The quality of end of year reports varies; some do not report sufficiently on the progress that pupils make.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good The headteacher and senior management team have very clear leadership roles which focus on ensuring that every pupil achieves well. Co-ordinators and team leaders are given the time and training to fulfil their roles very well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is excellent. It understands the school's strengths and weaknesses very well and takes a very active role in shaping the direction the school takes. It fulfils its statutory duties very effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a strong culture of self evaluation. There is very good monitoring of the school's performance and use of this information to raise teachers' expectations and pupils' standards.
The strategic use of resources	Some classrooms are small and too noisy and this limits pupils' learning. Staffing levels are good. Resources for teaching are good and they are used well. Financial planning is very good and focuses well on development priorities. The school usually consults widely about important matters, obtains resources at the most competitive prices and uses them in the best way to achieve its aims. The school does much in the way of comparing the school's performance with that of other schools.

## 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>• The achievement children make</li><li>• Leadership and management is good</li><li>• Teaching is good</li><li>• The school's high expectations</li><li>• Feeling comfortable about talking to staff.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Information about the progress made by their child</li><li>• Extra curricular provision</li><li>• The regular setting of homework</li></ul>

Inspectors agree with all the positive comments parents make and some of the areas they would like to see improved. Annual written reports sometimes state the progress made by pupils and sometimes they do not. There are, however, open evenings at which parents can ask about progress. Homework is usually set, as is shown in pupils' books, however, little was set during inspection week. There is a very wide range of extra curricular activities, many of which are sports based. More activities are available to older pupils than for younger ones.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The standard of work in the school is good and pupils achieve well due to high expectations of them and good teaching. Since the last inspection standards have risen overall although there was a dip in the national results for pupils aged eleven in 2001.

2. In the nursery and reception classes standards are good overall. Most pupils enter the nursery below national expectations achieve well and make good progress there. They enter reception at the nationally expected level and by the time they enter Year 1 they have made further good progress. Thus they make very good progress from starting in the nursery to finishing the Foundation Stage. Pupils' attainment at the end of reception in personal, social and emotional development, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development is expected to go beyond the expected outcomes. For example, children who were unable to count when they entered nursery can count and use numbers to ten, and some well beyond that, by the time they leave reception. Attainment is satisfactory in communication language and literacy and expected to meet the early learning goals. The development of writing is, however, inconsistent. Teachers use a variety of print styles which leads to confusion.

3. Pupils' social development in both nursery and reception is marked. They show increasing confidence and maturity which enables them to achieve well. Young children in a free choice session played together imaginatively and showed considerable maturity and co-operation when forming a chain of five tricycles to go "shopping". Two others spent a considerable time looking together under the bark of a tree with studious fascination to discover what might live there after finding a dinosaur bone (twig) in the playground.

4. Pupils aged seven achieved above average results in the 2001 national tests for reading, writing and mathematics. However, when their results are compared with those of similar schools they are below average. Data shows that these pupils made good progress overall from a low start while in Key Stage 1 and some did very well. In reading and mathematics more pupils passed the tests at the higher level than occurred on average nationally.

5. Teachers want pupils to do well, help them to succeed and as a result and the majority do so. Pupils' own desire to learn, when matched with the school's good teaching and high expectations are powerful forces for the good standards and good achievement at the school. Two thirds of pupils in Key Stage 1 were working above the national expectation. Standards for pupils in Key Stage 1 are good in English, mathematics, science, art, design technology, history, music, physical education and religious education and pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented, are achieving well. In information communication technology and geography pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Teaching quality is satisfactory rather than good in geography and older pupils have not acquired the correct technical vocabulary to explain their geographical work. For example, "sixteen or seventeen year olds are not as popular in Llangollen" is not the correct interpretation of a graph showing population size by age.

6. In 2001, the results of the group of pupils aged eleven taking Key Stage 2 tests were below average in English, mathematics and science. When compared to similar schools they dropped to well below average. This cohort included a wide range of abilities from a very few achieving the top levels to many achieving below national averages. The school

just failed to meet its targets for English and mathematics. Nonetheless, when the progress made throughout Key Stage 2 by individual pupils is tracked, the majority of pupils made progress that was never less than satisfactory and often good between the ages of seven and eleven. Forty percent of pupils currently in Key Stage 2 attain above nationally expected levels. Virtually all others reach the expected level.

7. Pupils' standards and achievements are good in English, mathematics, science, information communication technology, art, design technology, music and physical education. Pupils are expected and challenged to do well in these subjects. In English they are constantly questioned well; and made to express and expand their thoughts using a wide vocabulary. In mathematics, which pupils greatly enjoy, Year 6 dealt with a real life problem and estimated the cost of re-surfacing the playground. Great care was taken to ensure that Year 5 pupils undertook a fair test and checked predictions when they measured the shadow cast by a light source. Standards and pupils' achievements are sound in geography, history and religious education. These are subjects where, although teaching was satisfactory, it was not consistently good. Pupils with English as an additional language need no special help and are achieving as well as their classmates. Pupils with special educational needs are making good and sometimes very good, progress and achieve in line with standards commensurate with their ability. Individual education plans are well constructed and include clear information about what to target and how to achieve it. New targets are regularly set when the old ones have been achieved. As a result pupils' learning moves forward and they are involved and interested in their work. Those identified as gifted and talented are achieving very well. Two pupils, currently in Year 6, were helped to achieve GCSE mathematics last year. A larger group of pupils will take the national test in mathematics at a level more usually taken by fourteen year olds this year.

8. The school is on course to meet its targets in English and mathematics which are considerably more challenging than last year. They are based on both a thorough analyses of the levels pupils are expected to reach and targeted teaching and booster classes to plug gaps in learning and move pupils forward fast.

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

9. The personal development and behaviour of pupils is very good. They have very positive attitudes towards their learning and the relationships between pupils and with staff are very good. These are all strengths of the school. These factors contribute to effective learning and overall this is an improvement on the previous inspection.

10. Pupils say how much they enjoy coming to school and the majority of parents who returned the inspection questionnaire confirm this. The school is successful in encouraging pupils to have positive attitudes to learning, to value and respect each other and to behave well at all times. There is a supportive warmth in the way pupils and staff talk to each other. Pupils are keen to show their work and many take pride in the attractive presentation of their work and writing. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the school and members of staff. One pupil said "this is a great school, if I had kids I would want them to come here."

11. Pupils' behaviour is very good in class, during lunchtimes and also when out at play. Because of the layout of the school many pupils walk through another class to reach their own, or to make their way to the hall for physical education or lunch. This is distracting and not desirable, although it is managed as well as it can be. One Year 6 class has a walkway through part of the classroom and due to the lack of space some pupils are separated from the rest of the class. Pupils walk through quietly and those who could be seriously disrupted are rarely distracted and continue to work industriously. Of greater distraction is the noise which travels between classrooms due to the open plan layout. At one time three literacy

hour lessons could be heard simultaneously. Pupils complain of the noise and sometimes find it difficult to hear the teacher or other classmates.

12. Pupils' personal development is very good. All Year 6 pupils are either a prefect or a monitor and they are assigned duties which they enjoy undertaking. There is a school council with elected representatives from years 3 to 6 which takes an increasing interest in aspects of school life. It recently chose which flag to purchase for the new flagpole. When pupils join the school parents are offered a record of achievement book to record pupils' development. Pupils choose the items they wish to put in this book and are encouraged to include their activities outside school. For example, they include participation in swimming, judo, Five a side football and music. Many pupils ask permission to raise money for charities, such as the local baby unit, and are encouraged to do so.

13. Pupils understand the school rules and have a clear sense of right and wrong. They are confident and show care and concern for others' feelings. Pupils handle resources with care, for example, when using books and computers. They are proud of their school and take care to keep it tidy and free of litter. However, whilst pupils take responsibility in whole school matters, opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, organisation and mistakes in lessons vary. In the best lessons – and where there is space - pupils move freely between their desks, the book corner and the computer to further research a topic. At other times pupils are over directed and do not have the opportunity to research, find things they need or solve problems for themselves. For example, most teachers have resources ready and hand them out to pupils.

14. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Pupils approach staff with confidence, and staff respond warmly and thoughtfully. There are very good relationships between girls and boys and between pupils of different ages, abilities and ethnic groups, all of which contribute to the positive atmosphere in the school. Playtimes were observed to be happy with no tensions or evidence of bullying. Subjects such as religious education, and the schools emphasis on encouraging pupils to listen carefully, help them to consider the values and beliefs of others, which contributes well to their overall personal development.

15. The level of attendance, at 94 per cent overall, is satisfactory and compares with the national average. Authorised absence is higher than the national average and unauthorised absence is lower than the national average. This is the same standard as at the last inspection.

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

16. The strong emphasis over the last few years on improving the quality of teaching has paid dividends. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection throughout the school and, overall, one third of teaching is now very good. Teachers quite frequently teach each others classes for a particular subject because it is their strength or to allow others time to monitor the quality of teaching and planning. In Year 6 two teachers successfully “ team teach” the whole year. There are however, instances where the limitations of the accommodation cause difficulties for teachers in their teaching and pupils find it difficult to concentrate.

17. Teaching is very good overall. Half the teaching is very good in nursery and reception and the remainder is good. As a result pupils learn very well during there time there. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception) curriculum and teach it very well with a very good understanding of what it contains. They plan very well and use support staff and the very good internal and external resources to successfully encourage children's growing confidence and abilities. Children

are taught particularly well in the areas of learning concerned with personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development.

18. In Key Stage 1, teaching and learning are good. Eighty percent of teaching is good or better. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and manage them very well. They plan their lessons well and use short term assessments as well as longer term analysis of progress to ensure that pupils move forward at a suitably challenging pace. An excellent example of teaching was seen in science.

19. In Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching and learning drops slightly, nonetheless three quarters is good or better. Pupils' great interest in their work is because they are taught well and with sensitivity. For example, a class of lower ability pupils in Years 3 and 4 accurately and enthusiastically related sound to words in a poem about the weather, playing the sounds with instruments. However when they were asked to write about this they had considerable difficulty and needed much help.

20. Teaching in both key stages is very good in mathematics. As a result most pupils enjoy the subject. The school's emphasis on mathematics has resulted in a confident and able teaching staff. Pupils find their interest, ability and enthusiasm are infectious and drive learning forward. Teaching is good in English and science. The demanding nature of the way in which pupils are questioned, coupled with a good knowledge of the subject and high expectations results in good learning. Geography teaching is less confident, although satisfactory in both key stages, as is history and religious education teaching in Key Stage 2. All other subjects are taught well in both key stages.

21. Pupils with special educational needs learn well throughout the school as do gifted and talented pupils. Committed classroom assistants help pupils with special educational needs well. Teachers use the schemes of work to match their teaching to pupils' abilities and their planning for special needs pupils is good. When teaching is particularly good teachers show great skill in their questioning and very good use of support staff which ensures that pupils learn well. This was observed in a history lesson in Year 2.

22. Literacy is taught well. There is a good correspondence between the basic skills learnt through the literacy hour and their use throughout subjects other than English. Correct spelling, grammar and punctuation are virtually always insisted upon whether it be in English or, for example, history or geography. As a result pupils constantly consolidate their knowledge and practise expressing their ideas in the correct written form. Numeracy is taught very well in both daily mathematics lessons and also across the curriculum. It has close links with information technology. Year 5 pupils, working in pairs, worked fast and competitively to solve a series of mathematical spreadsheet problems, one of which had caused the teacher difficulties. Their fast pace of work was increased by the teacher promising to turn a somersault if anyone reached the correct answer first time. Despite the challenge, sadly, no one did.

23. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and key words are used by both teachers and pupils confidently. Ideas are presented in an interesting way and thus engage pupils' interest. Most tasks are well explained, are demanding and pupils concentrate well. Teachers draw out explanations from pupils well thus expanding their ability to express ideas. Instances of good, open questioning were seen where pupils had to explain how they had arrived at an answer. Teachers manage pupils very well and with a light touch. This, combined with pupils' self discipline results in very good behaviour. Most teaching is at a suitably fast speed, although there were a few instances when the pace dropped off and pupils began to fidget. Most teaching assistants are deployed well to support learning and

this ensures that those pupils who need extra support get it. Classrooms are well organised and displays of pupils' work were lively and colourful. In the best lessons the concluding plenary session is used well to recap on what has been learnt. Occasionally this is forgotten. The use of homework to reinforce learning is sometimes good but overall it is inconsistent. Sometimes corrections are done other times they are not. Some pupils are penalised for not doing homework or corrections, others are not.

## **THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS**

24. The curriculum provided for pupils throughout the school has improved since the last inspection. All the issues concerning the Foundation Stage, the imbalance between time allocation in subjects in Years 3 to 6 and the school's strategy for promoting literacy and numeracy have now been addressed and improved. The current curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils is good.

25. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which meets all statutory requirements and reflects the aims of the school. The curriculum provided for pupils covers all areas of the National Curriculum and the agreed syllabus for religious education used by the school. The school week is an appropriate length with a good balance of time devoted to all subjects. The curriculum provided for pupils in the nursery and reception classes is good and enables pupils to work successfully towards their early learning goals, as well as preparing them for entry into the national curriculum by Year 1.

26. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very actively promoted throughout the school, with pupils having discrete PSHE periods, as well as specific issues, such as sex education, being addressed in subject areas of the curriculum. The school governors have suitable policies for sex education and drugs awareness. These two issues are covered in Years 5 and 6 with the help of the school nurse. Personal, social and health education, as well as citizenship, is well promoted in both class and whole school assemblies.

27. There are effective strategies to ensure that all pupils have equality of access to the curriculum and extra-curricular activities which include study support – the homework club. The school fully implements the Code of Practice for pupils with special education needs. Individual education plans are good and pupils are provided with an appropriate curriculum that enables them to work towards identified, challenging targets for improvement. The school has also identified a small number of gifted and talented pupils and provides them with a curriculum which enables them to make accelerated progress. All this ensures full inclusion for all pupils.

28. There are thorough policies, guidelines and schemes of work for all subjects. The good training and planning for the National Literacy Strategy has ensured good implementation in these important areas of the curriculum. The implementation of the numeracy strategy is very good. The school makes good use of national literacy and numeracy strategy documentation as the basis of its schemes of works as well as the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority documents as schemes of work for all other subjects.

29. Planning for all subjects is good, with teacher's long, medium and short-term plans providing sound guidance for the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Where necessary, the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of the school. For example, subjects are delivered in a two year rolling programme in the mixed Year 3 and 4 classes.



30. Good cross-curricular links exist between subjects with regular “themed” days giving pupils the opportunity to explore a theme or issue across the curriculum subjects.

31. The curriculum is regularly monitored by all subject co-ordinators and the headteacher and assistant headteacher. There is a whole school curriculum policy and a governors’ curriculum sub-committee which regularly reviews and monitors the curriculum. There are governors for all subjects and special educational needs linked to the co-ordinators. Those with special needs are included and supported in all areas of the curriculum. There is no register of gifted and talented pupils but twenty four pupils with a flair for mathematics have been identified and provision has been made to extend their learning. This has been done through links with industrial mathematical projects and through withdrawing them from the normal timetable for mathematics days. Two pupils in Year 6 received external assistance with their GCSE level mathematics course last year.

32. The school has good links with the two main high schools to which pupils transfer. Pupils sometimes start topics or projects of high quality in the primary school and complete them in their high school. This cross curricular link enables secondary school staff to gain a greater understanding of St John’s pupils’ attainment levels. Staff from all three schools meet on a regular basis. All of this ensures pupils’ smooth transition between the two stages of education.

33. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities of a sporting and artistic nature. The curriculum is also enriched by a number of visits from local clergy, the police and local organisations. Pupils take part in a good number of visits to local museums and places of historical interest and all Year 6 pupils are given the opportunity to take part in a residential holiday. The school has hosted visiting theatre companies and musicians whose contributions add to the breadth of the curriculum. There are some very good links with local industry where curriculum based projects have been run which extend pupils knowledge of the world of work as well as their learning within the subject and the host company’s knowledge of the high standards primary pupils can achieve. All of these visits, projects and visitors make a valuable contribution to the extended curriculum provided by the school.

34. The provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be good. It is now very good overall. The school has a very good ethos in which all pupils are seen as individuals and are positively valued.

35. Provision for spiritual development is very good and is linked to the Christian nature of the school. The school fulfils all requirements for a daily act of collective worship. All pupils are given the chance to lead assemblies with regular year group performances linked to spiritual and religious themes. A good example of this was observed when Year 2 pupils performed their Easter assembly to Year 1 pupils. This assembly contained a real spiritual dimension as young pupils came to a simple understanding of the Easter message. Very good relationships exist between the school and its named church with the local vicar regularly contributing to school assemblies. All pupils regularly attend the church with the vicar delivering a religious lesson during regular Year 6 visits to the church. Pupils also perform a number of musical productions and performances in church. Whilst not always planned, a sense of awe and wonder was observed in individual lessons. Very good display, such as the three crosses surrounded by Easter flowers in the foyer of the school, is an area for quiet reflection. The new millennium garden offers peace and calm for pupils away from the hustle and bustle of the normal playgrounds.

36. The provision for extending pupils moral development is very good. A strong sense of morality underpins the aims and ethos of the school, with pupils having a clear sense of right and wrong. Pupils are well aware of the responsibility that they have for their own actions, and show a very good concern for the well being of others. This is re-enforced by the school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies and the codes of conduct drawn up by individual classes. Good and more usually very good behaviour was observed in all lessons. This is re-enforced by the school's rewards and sanctions systems with its emphasis on the rewarding of positive behaviour, rather than penalising the bad.

37. The provision for pupils' social development is also very good. All members of school, including teaching and non-teaching staff, provide good role models. Pupils recognise the high expectations of them and respond in a positive manner. They move around the school in an orderly manner, respect their environment and are very courteous to visitors. They are kind and helpful to each other. Pupils value the opportunity to contribute the life of the school through the school council and feel that their opinions are listened to, respected and acted upon. They were asked what flag they would like for the new flagpole and chose the English flag of St George. Pupils contribute to the local community through, for example, singing in local senior citizens' homes and the local church. Pupils also put their citizenship skills in to practice through their fund raising for both local and national charities.

38. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The large majority share a common cultural background. With this in mind, the school tries to ensure that pupils come to appreciate other cultures and traditions. In geography, pupils explore their local environment as well as looking at various countries and cultures around the world. In history pupils come to an understanding of the changing nature of English society as well as considering other societies and cultures in the past. Pupils also extend their knowledge of their literary heritage, and learn to appreciate the works of great composers and painters. Assemblies are used to celebrate the diverse nature of people. Despite this good provision, opportunities to come to an understanding of Great Britain as a multi-cultural society remains an area for development.

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

39. The good standards of care identified in the last inspection have improved to very good. This is a very caring school in which the pupils' well being is of equal priority to their academic success. Pupils feel valued and protected. Arrangements and the procedures for child protection are very good. Staff are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of any concerns. Procedures for promoting the health, safety and well being of pupils are very good. Good procedures are in place for recording accidents and untoward incidents and several staff, including dinner supervisors are trained in first aid. Pupils are helped to develop a good understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle through science, physical education and personal, social and health education.

40. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. There is a behaviour policy, which is consistently applied, and this emphasises positive reinforcement as the preferred means of improving behaviour, rather than punishment. Pupils are rewarded for improvement in behaviour. They are aware of what is expected of them and know that sanctions will be applied if necessary. There are effective procedures for dealing with harassment and bullying although instances of these are infrequent. Parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that behaviour is very good.

41. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good and this maintains the standards from the previous inspection. There are strong links with the educational welfare officer

who liaises closely with the school nurse. The school nurse does home visits when necessary and parents are contacted whenever a pupil is not at school. A number of parents take their children on holiday during term time, which reduces the overall attendance rate. Parents are advised in the annual report, prospectus and newsletters how important attendance is.

42. Procedures for supporting pupils' personal development are very good. Monitoring is almost entirely informal but effective because of the school's emphasis on pastoral care which results in very well rounded and caring pupils. Those who have special education needs are very well looked after. Pupils who need extra help are identified early. Despite past difficulties in getting pupils assessed by local authority specialists, pupils with special educational needs have always received very good care and support within the school. Involvement from the education psychology service is improving as is the help received from the learning support services. The school has not only identified those gifted pupils with academic gifts but also provided very well for their needs. Staff are very aware that the few pupils identified as having English as an additional language have no difficulties in using all aspects of English as well as their contemporaries of their own abilities.

43. Current assessment procedures are very good and are used in a most effective manner to track pupils' progress throughout the school. Assessment procedures upon entry are very good, and provide secure information, which help teachers to plan an appropriate curriculum for pupils, and put into place strategies which enable pupils to work towards their early learning goals.

44. Pupils take optional national tests in Years 3 to 5 as well as statutory ones in Years 2 and 6. Information gathered from this activity is used to set targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science (the core subjects) and to track progress from year to year. The progress pupils make and what they achieve is regularly monitored by the assessment co-ordinator and the senior management team. The school's computer management systems flag up those who fail to meet their predicted targets. Targets for improvement in the core subjects are placed on the inside cover of pupils' books to focus their attention. They have specific information on what a child has to do to meet them.

45. All pupils have an assessment book in which they enter one piece of literacy and numeracy work per term. These pieces of work are marked and accurately set against the levels of the national curriculum. The school also uses a number of other assessment procedures, including local education authority and national reading tests. Their usefulness varies as not every testing system agrees on which national curriculum level has been reached in full.

46. All other subjects are monitored at the end of modules of work. Pupils who exceed targets for the module of work and those who achieve or fail to achieve them are listed on a checklist sheet. Whilst these sheets provide a visual picture of success, they do not necessarily identify the progress made by individual pupils.

47. Work is regularly marked by teachers, with useful and encouraging comments being placed at the end of work to indicate how work can be improved. Pupils also evaluate their own work. Although teachers regularly correct work, pupils do not always correct their own errors thus losing the chance to improve their work by learning through their mistakes.

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

48. As at the last inspection, the school's partnership with parents, and the contribution it makes to rising standards is a significant strength of the school. Comments from parents during the pre-inspection consultation meeting and in answering the questionnaire show that they think very highly of the school and are very supportive of it.

49. The quality of information provided to parents is good. Written communications are good and include a clear and concise prospectus, a detailed governors annual report to parents, a regular and informative diary newsletter, a 'working alongside parents' newsletter, a worksheet on subjects as well as the parent teacher association's regular newsletter. The school sent a questionnaire to all parents inviting them to tell it what they liked and disliked and where they thought improvements were needed. It is working through the suggestions and publishes answers in the 'working alongside parents' newsletter. There is inconsistency in the annual academic reports. Some are very good, however many, although detailed, report more on what pupils have done than the progress they have made.

50. The impact parents make on the work of the school is very good. A good number of parents help in school with reading, art or other activities within class. Parents help with homework and many help on educational visits and school outings. Almost all are very supportive of school functions and fund raising events which support their children's education.

51. There are three open evenings per year and most parents take advantage of this opportunity to see their children's work and to talk with their class teacher. Parents of pupils with special needs sometimes make use of the drop in sessions offered by the school to discuss their children's progress. They are fully involved in annual reviews.

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

52. The leadership of the school is very effective as is its management. The headteacher, deputy and assistant head lead a well motivated staff which constantly strives to improve. They enjoy a challenge. There is a real sense of team work and an openness to new ideas. In the last year monitoring of pupils' attainment has led to a more focused approach on class teaching. This in turn is being developed to consider how pupils learn and what they need to progress more quickly. These points are within the context of a clear school improvement plan which takes the raising of standards in mathematics as its main focus.

53. The head has ensured excellent, clear educational direction for the school. This includes the nurturing of children to become confident and mature as well as achieve their full academic potential. He leads by example in challenging staff to raise their expectations and consider how they can enable pupils to learn better. Standards are good and tracking systems show that most pupils achieve at least what they are capable of. Many go beyond this and achieve beyond what is sometimes initially expected of them. The school has introduced pupil tracking systems, some quite recently, that have resulted in reappraisals of pupils' progress and helped to identify gaps in knowledge. The use of this information, which is openly discussed with staff, is increasingly good. There is an excellent commitment to improvement from all staff and the capacity to succeed.

54. There are a number of systems and structures in place to promote the raising of standards in addition to tracking individual pupils' progress. High expectations by staff have resulted in very good behaviour. This enables pupils to work hard and develop both a love of learning and the will to succeed. The school has developed good and effective links with

staff at other local schools in both the primary and secondary sectors which have helped staff to know that what they do is good. They compare their practice and its effectiveness with others. Performance management has been fully in place for a number of years and team leaders have taken part in the setting of targets some of which are improvement plan priorities. The placement of teaching assistants focuses clearly on where the need for support is greatest. Setting is used to focus teaching more closely on the needs of ability groups but there is little cross year setting except in the mixed Year 3 and 4 classes. Pupils who need extra support are offered additional literacy teaching and the after school homework sessions are available to everyone, although the take up mainly comes from Year 6 pupils. The identification and provision for gifted mathematicians has taken place but the school has yet to identify or make provision for those with other high academic abilities. It recognises and values high attainment in sport, art, drama and music but the development of these talents takes place mainly outside the school.

55. The governing body is very effective. It fulfils its statutory responsibilities in exemplary manner. Governors understand the school very well and take a very active part in ensuring that it raises standards and moves forward. It has, in close co-operation with the headteacher, overseen funding and sponsorship for year-on-year improvements to the buildings and exterior landscape. The nursery and reception outdoor play area is delightful, as is the millennium garden which provides a quiet place for pupils. Governors are linked to subject areas and receive briefings from subject leaders which increase their understanding of the curriculum and how it is taught. They are asked to join in service training sessions alongside staff and a good number attend. Their professional relationship with the headteacher is very good and can occasionally be appropriately challenging. For example, the cost of staffing in relation to the desire to keep single year classes has caused lengthy discussion before agreement. The school's agreed targets fluctuate but are challenging for each year group. The curriculum and finance committees do a good job. They have clear remits and feed their deliberations into main governing body meetings in a timely and efficient manner.

56. The school improvement plan is good but lengthy. It is broken down into great detail and as such is a useful document which charts how and when improvements will be made. However the extent of the detail is such that there is the danger that the overall message might get lost. The school's current priority on raising standards in mathematics is nonetheless clear to staff. The budget is well planned. The planned carry forward of eleven percent is prudent given the desire for new classrooms and the need to fund staff at levels to support single year classes. Sponsorship and self build projects by the headteacher have greatly improved the quality of external spaces for children. Bursar's services are bought in and everyday financial and office administration is very good. The recommendations of the last audit report have been carried out. Specific grants are used well for their purpose and new technology, some of which was having teething problems, is used satisfactorily.

57. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is very good. It fully meets legislative requirements and enables all teachers to improve their skills and thus contribute more effectively to raising pupils' standards. Performance management is very closely linked to the needs of the school and is seen as an integral part of its development.

58. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is very good. The school is not complacent. It is a dynamic and reflective place which continuously looks at ways to improve. It values self evaluation and good classroom practice. There has been a very good programme of monitoring teaching to help teachers identify their strengths and to improve in areas capable of development. This contributes significantly to the quality of teaching and consequently learning.

59. It has effectively concentrated on developing good teaching with a staff that wishes to improve and pulls together. The senior management team and team leaders monitor classroom teaching termly and use this to determine teachers' targets and offer feedback on how effectively they are reaching them. At least one of each teacher's targets will be the school improvement priority. By having one shared target the school is able to ensure that all staff develop a common understanding of high quality in this area and share good practice.

60. Co-ordinators lead their subjects well. They have time to scrutinise teachers' planning and to observe teaching. They share their ideas with similarly positioned teachers at local schools and find this an effective form of training. The special needs co-ordinator is experienced, committed and very effective. She has time to monitor and to manage special needs. There is a commitment to the training of non-teaching staff. For example, a nursery nurse is being encouraged and supported to become a teacher. All members of the support staff have the opportunity to pursue relevant training. This has a beneficial impact on pupils' social development, and on the progress made by pupils with special needs.

61. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Some of the classrooms are too small for the numbers of pupils and in many of these pupils have to walk through another class to reach their own. In Year 6 there is a walkway through the classroom that has one table on one side of the walkway and the rest of the class on the other. It is to the credit of the teachers and the pupils that they do not allow this continual disruption to distract them too much. However pupils say that they wish there were walls to reduce the noise from other classes. On one occasion inspectors heard three simultaneous literacy lessons being taught. There are no changing facilities for pupils and it is undesirable for older pupils that they should have to change for physical education in view of so many others. The school is limited for specialist rooms and this places limits on the implementation of the national curriculum. The hall is not big enough to allow all pupils in for assembly and it can limit some indoor games. However, a fresh look at the timetabling for use of the music room might, for example, allow the whole school to meet together.

62. Outdoor facilities are very good. There are hard surface playgrounds, although these are unmarked at present, a well developed wild life garden and a tranquil millennium garden with bubbling fountain. There is also a football grassed field. Nursery and reception classes have a fenced off area with climbing frames, toys and a planted garden. In addition there is a small, pleasant play area for the reception class in the main building.

63. Resources are good overall. There is a new information computer technology suite with eighteen computers. There are also two or more computers available either in, or close to, each classroom. However, classroom computers were seldom seen operating. New interactive whiteboards were up and mainly working. They are an asset to staff who have completed training on them.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

64. To enable pupils to concentrate on their learning and thereby raise standards, the governors and headteacher should:

- (1) improve the size of classrooms, particularly in Year 6, and endeavour to increase soundproofing between classes thus reducing the noise levels that cause distraction for pupils.

Paragraphs: 11, 13, 59, 170

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

79

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

40

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	17	48	13			-
Percentage	1	22	60	17	-	-	-

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 percentage point

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Yr-6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	332
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	Yr-6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	-
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	45

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	23	20	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	21	21
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	38	39	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88(91)	91(95)	91(93)
	National	84(83)	86(84)	91(90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	21	20
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	38	39	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88(93)	91(93)	88(93)
	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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	25	23	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	16	23
	Girls	18	17	22
	Total	35	33	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73(95)	69(82)	94(98)
	National	75(75)	71(72)	87(85)

Teachers' Assessments				
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	21
	Girls	16	17	20
	Total	33	34	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69(80)	71(80)	85(89)
	National	72(70)	74(72)	82(79)

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



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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	-
Black – African heritage	-
Black – other	2
Indian	8
Pakistani	-
Bangladeshi	-
Chinese	-
White	322
Any other minority ethnic group	-

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

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

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YN-6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	27

#### **Education support staff: YN-6**

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	217

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	212

Number of pupils per FTE adult	17
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

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

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	639,421
Total expenditure	602,207
Expenditure per pupil	1691
Balance brought forward from previous year	33,436
Balance carried forward to next year	70,650

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	358
Number of questionnaires returned	85

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	34	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	45	0	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	44	5	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	47	13	2	2
The teaching is good.	52	44	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	45	15	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	31	4	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	44	4	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	39	44	9	5	2
The school is well led and managed.	61	34	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	49	4	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	39	14	4	16

## **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**

65. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. Children enter the nursery with a wide spread of abilities, but overall attainment in all areas is below those found nationally. This is especially so in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. They make good and at times very good progress, so that on entry to Key Stage 1 attainment for the majority of children in language and literacy and mathematics is in line with the standards expected for children of this age. In personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development the majority of children will achieve the early learning goals for these areas, and many will exceed them. The good and sometimes very good progress children make is because of the good teaching to be found in the nursery and reception classes. Children with special educational needs are given good support. There are no children with English as a second language.

66. This is a good improvement over the standards of teaching and learning found in the previous inspection. The overall standard on entry is lower than found in the previous inspection, but children make better progress. The key issue to improve the provision of language and literacy, outdoor play and creative development has been successfully covered. The curriculum has been reviewed and follows national guidance for the Foundation Stage. Children need to be given the chance to further develop their independent writing skills, especially more able children in the reception classes. Provision for creative development is now good, with good provision for children to express their ideas and feelings in creative ways. Children now have good opportunities to play in the outdoor areas that have been designed to provide an attractive and stimulating environment for young children.

67. Entry to the nursery and reception is at the start of the school year in September. Two nursery nurses, each of whom takes responsibility for a group of children, lead the nursery unit. This enables children to work in a secure environment with “their” adult, while at the same time having good opportunities to mix with other children in freely chosen activities. When children transfer to the reception year, the younger children are taught in one class, adjacent to the nursery unit, and the older children in a classroom in the main building. There are some limitations on space in the class for the younger children, and limited access to a wider range of activities, such as sand and water. The role-play area has to be timetabled for a time when the nursery children are not in school and this limits the spontaneous movement between activities. There are some restrictions on what can be provided in the school-based reception classroom, because one side of it is a thoroughfare to other parts of the school.

68. Parents are actively encouraged to become involved in their children’s learning. There are good procedures for introducing new children and their parents or carers to the nursery and for when children transfer to the reception. Workshop sessions provide advice on how to help children to learn. Children regularly take home their reading books and in the reception, targets for improvement are shared with parents so that they can support their child’s development.

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

69. By the time children leave the reception class most will reach the expected outcomes for early learning goals in this area, and many will exceed them. This is because this aspect

is very well provided for. Adults provide very good role models and have high and consistent expectations of children's good conduct. Children behave very well and are kind and considerate to each other.

70. Adults promote children's personal development very effectively and this results in pupils having a very positive attitude towards learning. Nursery children have the opportunity to make independent choices about what activities they want to use and are encouraged to say how and what they will do. They are very confident in moving around the classroom and the majority of children choose to join another child or group of children so that they can share toys and equipment. Older children show that they build on these skills, for example, during a reception dance session, when children worked together to build up a sequence of movements.

71. Adults have very good relationships with the children. This helps children to feel secure, to express their feelings and develop a sense of empathy with others. This is noticeable in their kindly response to children who are less able than they are. There is good provision for children to learn about the culture and beliefs of others, and to enjoy sharing in celebrations, such as Chinese New Year and Diwali.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

72. The majority of children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area by the time they transfer to Key Stage 1. Teaching is good in the nursery and reception, and overall children develop their skills well. There is an attempt to teach letter formation correctly, however, pupils are sometimes confused when this is not adhered to consistently.

73. Children in the nursery and reception are increasingly confident and can communicate their needs. They explain what they are doing and even the youngest children initiate conversation – "Come and see what I'm doing". Nursery children enjoy explaining their drawings from the story of 'The Hungry Caterpillar' and explaining the life cycle of the butterfly. All children enjoy listening to stories and adults use questioning well, so that children are good and active listeners as well as speakers. Children in the reception classes are confident to interject and express their ideas, for example, when sharing storybooks or being introduced to new learning.

74. Nursery children are encouraged to record what they have learnt, which they do with drawings. Many children are beginning to make marks to accompany their drawings and a few are beginning to use some recognisable letters. Most children can recognise their names and some are able to write them. They are beginning to learn the sounds of some letters and this is built on well in the reception classes. Children contribute to spellings in shared writing activities; many have a good knowledge of initial sounds and blends. Children of lower ability and with special educational needs are given good support by the teaching assistants. There is less evidence of children, especially those of higher ability, being helped to develop their writing into more sustained pieces of writing or book making activities. Adults are not consistent or clear in the style of print they use and this does not help children learn to form their letters correctly. It is especially unhelpful for children still learning to control their pencil in order to copy letters.

75. Many children in the reception classes are already reading simple repetitive captions. All children enjoy books and like to read or tell stories. They are encouraged to use books for finding out information. Children use their developing knowledge of letter sounds to help them, and those of higher ability look for clues in the pictures and what they know of the characters. Higher ability children are reading a year or more ahead of their chronological age.

## **Mathematical development**

76. By the time children transfer to Key Stage 1, the majority are likely to attain the early learning goals in the area of mathematical knowledge, and many will exceed the goals. Adults provide children with good mathematical experiences, however, because children enter the nursery with below average skills in number recognition, most will not exceed the goals in this area. Most children in the reception class can count to ten and some well beyond. Higher attainers are able to count well beyond this.

77. Adults in the nursery provide a rich environment for the children in which mathematics is all around them. Children gather to look at the story of The Hungry Caterpillar and begin to count the different amounts of fruit he eats. They weigh goods in the farm shop, carefully adding items until the scales balance. They practice forming numbers when they make price lists for the shop. Children learn mathematical language; in the nursery they go on a bear hunt moving over, under and across the different obstacles; in reception they learn to programme the robot so that it goes forwards and backwards a set number of spaces and changes direction. Good modelling of key mathematical language means that children effortlessly incorporate it into their speech.

78. A very good initiative in reception is the weekly shared session in which parents spend time playing mathematical games with their and other children. They communicate very well, so that children successfully develop their ability to talk about what they are doing, as well as learning the social skills of taking turns and persevering to complete a game.

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

79. Children enter the nursery with a basic understanding of the world. Throughout the Foundation Stage they build on this very well so that the majority of them will achieve the early learning goals in this area and many will exceed them. Nursery children are given very good opportunities to explore their environment and learn about nature. They observe the changes in the seasons. They hunt for mini-beasts in the school grounds. They use magnifying glasses to observe the collection of model minibeasts. They identify and taste different fruit. Children learn about other cultures through listening to music and experimenting with the sounds of different musical instruments. They try using chopsticks to eat a Chinese meal to celebrate the New Year.

80. The knowledge they gain in the nursery is built on very well in the reception through good teaching. Adults support children to explore and experiment. The children begin to make connections between cause and effect; such as when they are looking at the effect of wind on their balloons – “it only blew a little way because there’s a little wind.” They consider how weight will affect the height the wind will move objects – “the wind won’t pick me up because I’m heavy; it might pick J and S up because they’re smaller.” Visits help children expand their world: they learn about Victorian life at Sudbury Hall, they explore the interactive installations at Walsall Art Gallery and learn about safety from the fire service.

81. Reception children take part in assemblies where they learn about Christian worship and stories. Their drawing shows their understanding of Bible stories, such as the feeding of the five thousand and they think about issues, such as what makes them happy.

82. Children use the computer with confidence. Reception children have regular sessions in the computer suite and the class computers are in constant use. Children operate the mouse to click on icons in order to play computer games. They use the

keyboard to type out their names and addresses using the spacebar and capital lock appropriately.

### **Physical development**

83. Most children are likely to meet the early learning goals in this area and many will exceed them. The nursery play area provides a very good opportunity for children to run about and learn to use space safely. Children enthusiastically ride bicycles and tricycles around the hard area. They take turns sensibly and share equipment well. They enjoy using all the equipment: throwing balls at targets; climbing, balancing and sliding on the climbing frame and playing games in the tunnels and more enclosed structures.

84. Adults ensure the children in the reception class have an opportunity to use this outdoor space for regular periods. During a dance lesson in the hall, children showed that they can move well to rhythmic music in a very lively warm-up session. They worked imaginatively and creatively to interpret different kinds of weather. Because of the good modelling of descriptive language, children were able to evaluate the work of others using correct terminology. "I liked the way she was spinning and twirling". Children move imaginatively across and through and over equipment. Adults are careful to plan for good development of skills and children have learnt very well that they need to warm-up and cool down and how to move safely and be aware of others. Good support enabled a child with a physical disability to gain confidence and achieve as well as his peers. Adults ensure that children develop control of finer movements, such as holding pencils and paint brushes, and learn to use other tools safely.

### **Creative development**

85. Most children are likely to meet the early learning goals in this area and many are likely to exceed them. Adults provide children with a good range of experiences. Children experiment with different paint effects, such as printing, rubbings, finger painting to make prints, as well as having the chance to mix colours and create shades. Reception children have good skills with the computer mouse and click, drag and drop icons to produce drawings of flowers on the computer. While playing they design and plan beds for the three bears and a bag to hold a ball.

86. Nursery children carry suitcase style tape recorders around with them, and regularly set them down to gather friends to listen to music, stories, songs and rhymes which they often join in. They know how to use the tape recorder to record their own voices and how to play them back. Reception children sing tunefully, and enjoy using their bodies to interpret music. In the nursery children play imaginatively in the "Farm Shop" and use the glove puppets to re-enact the story of The Hungry Caterpillar. They use construction kits and play people to act out imaginative games. Space limitations in the reception classes mean it is not always so easy for teachers to set out a wide range of items to allow for child initiated activities.

## **ENGLISH**

87. Pupil's attainment upon entry into Year 1 is average overall. Pupils then go on to make good progress in relation to their prior learning and achieve above average standards in reading by the time they are seven. This is reflected in the 2001 national tests where pupil's attainment in reading was above average though below average in comparison to schools with a similar intake. Pupils similarly make good progress in their writing, with the end of key stage tests once more confirming that pupils' attainment is above average, though below average in comparison to schools with a similar intake despite good progress

being made by most pupils. Standards in reading and writing have improved since the last inspection and are consistently above the national average.

88. By the time pupils are eleven their attainment in English is good. The large majority of pupils achieve national expectations, though a below average number of pupils in the 2001 classes went on to achieve the higher levels in the end of Key Stage 2 tests. Standards in English by the time pupils are eleven have fluctuated since the last inspection, but have broadly stayed the same.

89. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their previous learning and the targets identified in their educational education plans. The scrutiny of pupils' written work indicates that the current group of pupils in Years 2 and 6 are on line to achieve above average grades in their standard assessment tasks. Pupil's oral skills upon entry into Year 1 are average. Pupils go on to make good progress in their speaking and listening as they reach the end of Year 2. As a result of this pupils oral skills by the time they are seven are good. As well as being good listeners, pupils are keen to respond to teachers' questions at the beginning and end of lessons. Specific time is set aside both within English and other subjects for pupils to engage in oral activities, including taking turns in role play activities. A good example of this was observed in Year 1 class with pupils improvising the Easter story.

90. Pupils likewise make good progress in their reading. Reading is well taught with teachers placing appropriate emphasis on the development of phonic skills. The school uses a number of structured reading schemes in an effective manner, with good guided reading activities which help pupils to develop their reading comprehension skills. By the time they are seven the majority of pupils read well. They read in a fluent manner and with expression, and are able to talk in a confident manner about the books they have read. Pupils have a good knowledge about the different parts of factual books and can retrieve information from them. The school operates a good home/school reading scheme with many parents making a positive contribution to their child's reading.

91. Pupils' writing at seven is good. Teachers devote an appropriate amount of time on the development of basic English skills, with pupils using these skills well in a good range of writing activities. Pupils write about events in their daily lives and re-tell in a written manner the stories and poems read to them in class. Pupils also use these activities as a stimulus for some imaginative original writing. Pupils regularly practice their handwriting skills with presentation improving over time.

92. Pupils continue to make good progress in their oral skills as they move from year three to six. Teachers are demanding in their questioning of pupils. They challenge pupils' initial responses and encourage them to speak in more detail and at length. A significant factor in pupils' achievement in their speaking is the fact that the school sets aside extra time for the development of speaking and listening outside the literacy hour. As a result of this good provision, pupils' oral skills by the time they are seven are good.

93. Regular reading is a priority. Pupils' reading improves well as they move through Key Stage 2 with the result that the large majority of pupils are good readers by the time they are eleven, and a number of pupils have high order reading skills. Pupils' improvement in reading is much influenced by the good range of reading opportunities provided for pupils. They read a good range of stories and factual materials, including literature from other cultures and traditions, and poems, stories and plays from other times, including the plays of Shakespeare. Pupils regularly engage in silent reading while others continue to read to their teachers individually.

94. As in Key Stage 1 teachers implement the literacy hour in an effective manner and use the good reading activities which pupils engage in as an imaginative stimulus for pupils' writing. As a result of this pupils' attainment in writing by the time they are eleven is good. Pupils produce a good range of written work and can write for different purposes, in different styles and with a specific audience in mind. Writing is always planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils produce a good range of factual descriptive, instructional and creative essays. They write diary entries, book reviews, as well writing their own poems and play-scripts. Pupils write good newspaper articles and respond to such issues as the argument for and against school uniform and the impact of mobile phones on young people's lives. Pupils produce a range of writing in response to a single stimulus. For example, in Year 6 pupils write character studies, newspaper reports and diary entries linked to their work on Macbeth.

95. Pupils' learning in their written work is very much influenced by the positive attitudes that pupils have towards their work. Whilst pupils regularly plan their work there are too few opportunities to re-draft a piece of work other than for display purposes, and opportunities are lost for pupils to improve the quality of their writing by using more descriptive words, extending content and altering structure and writing in more detail and at length. This strategy would be particularly beneficial to the lower attaining pupils. Many higher attaining pupils are capable of producing good extended pieces of written work with few or no mistakes. The final part of the literacy hour is used in an effective manner by teachers to share and celebrate what pupils have achieved and to assess their understanding of the activity they have been involved in.

96. Pupils regularly word-process their work. Handwriting and presentation are generally good, though there is some inconsistency as to when pupils begin to write in a cursive manner and in ink. Literacy is well promoted across all areas, with for example pupils writing in character in their history work, or describing a Christian pilgrimage in religious education.

97. There is a good policy for the subject, with the school using National Literacy Strategy documentation as its scheme of work. Accommodation for the subject is unsatisfactory, with for example, pupils being somewhat cramped in their classrooms. This particularly applies to some of the Year 6 pupils. Noise levels can also be a little loud at times, with three or more classes being in close proximity to each other. This impacts on learning with pupils finding it difficult to concentrate on the work in hand.

98. Resources for the subject are good, though some teachers place too much reliance on the use of photocopied materials. Some of these worksheets only require or allow for brief responses and fail to challenge some of the higher attaining pupils.

99. Teachers use a good range of assessment and recording procedures for English. Work is regularly marked and corrected, though pupils rarely correct their own errors and opportunities are lost for pupils to learn by their own mistakes.

100. The subject is led well by two co-ordinators. When the school addresses the areas for development in this report it will be in a stronger position to move forward.

## **MATHEMATICS**

101. Pupils', including those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented, achieve well because of the very good teaching. There are particular strengths in the teaching and learning in mathematics. These include the very good use of assessment in lessons and tests to identify weaknesses in pupils' learning and the tracking of pupils'



progress year by year as they move through the school. Carefully planned 'booster' groups help particular pupils raise their level of attainment and there is very early identification of pupils with special talents in mathematics to ensure that teaching meets their needs effectively. An area for development is to extend the consistent use of targets, which is now working effectively for pupils up to the age of seven, into Years 3 and 4 to ensure that there is a clear focus on meeting the needs of pupils with lower attainment more precisely through additional practical mathematical activities.

102. The variation in the size of groups and the number of pupils with special needs in some classes leads to a variation in standards. In the national curriculum tests in 2001 the performance of pupils at the age of seven was above the national average. At the age of eleven standards were below the national average and well below those in similar schools. However, this was a group with a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Previously, standards had risen year –on-year since the last inspection. Currently, pupils in Year 2 achieve above average standards and pupils in Year 6 are achieving above the national average in all areas of the subject. There is a small group of pupils in Year 6 who are attaining at a very high level. There are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls.

103. Challenging targets have been set for this year and inspection evidence suggests that these targets are likely to be met and possibly exceeded.

104. Pupils' achievement is good, and they make good and sometimes very good progress. Boys and girls achieve equally well. From Year 1 to Year 6 pupils are taught each day in specific ability groups according to their skills in mathematical tasks. This gives greater consistency to the groupings and is an improvement since the last inspection when pupils were taught some days in sets and some days in class groups. Teachers have clear expectations of each group and this enables pupils to achieve in line with their capabilities.

105. Pupils in Year 1 recognise coins to the value of £1.00. Higher attaining pupils complete simple shopping sums up to 20p, 30p or 40p before naming the coins that could be used in change. Lower attaining pupils order three, or five, cards with amounts up to 50p on them correctly. They develop a growing awareness of what constitutes 'a sensible estimate' and higher attaining pupils order three numbers between 200, 400 and 600 correctly because the teacher's presentation on the interactive white board is so clear to them. Year 2 counted confidently in twos, fives and tens. Higher attaining pupils added in fives backwards and forwards as they went round the clock to tell the time to five minutes. They used their knowledge of money to work out costs of groups of items either by repeated addition or by multiplication. Lower attaining pupils found it a challenge to work out how many feet five monsters have but the majority showed understanding of the different ways of working out the sum by the end of the lesson. A small number of pupils worked thoughtfully and practically with a parent to reinforce their understanding of counting in groups of two and five.

106. Higher attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 are learning how to calculate fractions of numbers correctly. They recalled the terms 'numerator' and 'denominator' and this helped them in their calculations. A second group enjoyed the challenge of predicting what is the most common number rolled on a dice. They carried out several investigations in the lesson and quickly realised why results differ from pupil to pupil. They made good use of a tally sheet to record their findings. Lower attaining pupils made a survey of favourite sandwiches in a very responsible manner. They asked each other very politely about their preferences and understood how their was to be completed after they added up the figures from their tallies. Higher attaining pupils in Year 5 learned different methods of finding the difference between two numbers and improved their speed in seeing which strategy was useful in a

range of calculations. Some pupils did this in a series of interesting written problems and others worked solely with figures. All found it challenging but learned to think more flexibly. Lower attaining pupils learned easy ways of adding tens and units and most consolidate previous learning well. A small number still find this difficult and need additional support and explanations to understand the method fully.

107. Pupils in Year 6 are clear about addition and subtraction using large numbers. They solve problems correctly and work confidently with decimals and fractions. Higher attaining pupils work on specific, challenging calculations in which they have to select the appropriate number operations. Pupils who attain at an average and above average level work with less complex figures and work quickly to prove the rules they work out about each set of numbers. Lower attaining pupils improve their understanding of perimeter through the very practical activity of running around the edge of the playground and measuring it with a metric wheel. They were given a real life problem to solve and carry out addition, subtraction, multiplication and division as they worked out the cost of resurfacing the playground.

108. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are very good and their response to the very good teaching means that they feel that they are successful. Their positive attitude makes them keen to participate and learn. Their behaviour is very good and they settle to written and mental tasks well. Pupils work at a good rate because they want to succeed and think hard about the targets they should set for themselves.

109. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and enjoyment of mathematical learning is created by teachers' interest and enthusiasm. This is evident in the ways they devise to make learning fun. There are theme days with an emphasis on mathematics and displays around the school involve pupils through the questions posed and the quality of the display. Teachers make excellent use of the newly installed interactive board and pupils are amazed and stimulated by the way in which the screen can be transformed by a touch of the finger.

110. A particular strength of the teaching is the way in which all teachers refer back to the previous lesson in the introduction. They are aware of what pupils did not learn in the previous lesson and adapt their current lesson to go over an area of difficulty. At the end of the lesson, they tell pupils what they will do next and remind them about learning multiplication tables that they will need. Teachers are very good at not giving away the right answer so that pupils have to think and justify their reasoning. Teachers pick up pupils' responses very quickly and persevere when pupils find it hard to explain their ideas clearly. Questioning is used well to challenge pupils' thinking. Planning is good so pupils are clear about what they are learning in lessons. The marking of work is helpful so pupils know how they can improve their work. Assessment and tracking of progress is used well so that teachers plan more advanced activities for higher attaining pupils and use appropriate work to help lower attaining pupils consolidate their learning. There are very good relationships with pupils that ensure that lessons proceed at a lively pace. Classroom assistants and parents give invaluable support to teachers in these lessons because they are prepared well for what they should do and included well in all activities.

111. The structure of the daily mathematics lessons is used effectively. The initial mental mathematics sessions are used well to sharpen pupils' thinking and to set up the following group activities. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers are skilled at using different mathematical terms and work hard to get pupils to use them in their explanations. For example, the teacher uses 'enumerator' and 'denominator' frequently and at the end of the lesson pupils begin to use these words in their answers. 'Booster' classes to help some pupils raise their level of attainment are very well prepared and the additional

classes for pupils with very high attainment are stimulating and broaden pupils' general knowledge and thinking as well as their mathematical skills.

112. The subject is managed very effectively and the national numeracy strategy has been implemented very well. Resources for the subject are good. The co-ordinator is well aware of the strengths and areas for development. Numeracy is used effectively in subjects such as art and information and communication technology. For example, pupils work very competently on spreadsheets to solve mathematical problems. Mathematics makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development because of the many opportunities for working together in harmony, making discoveries about patterns and having fun in working with numbers.

## **SCIENCE**

113. The results of the national tests in 2001 in science for eleven year olds show that the pupils were attaining at below the national average. This was a drop from the previous year when pupils achieved at a higher rate. It was a less able cohort in 2001. Standards have risen with the present cohort in Year 6.

114. Achievement by pupils aged seven and eleven is good. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were judged to be the same as national expectations at the ages of both seven and eleven. Standards are now above the national average. This is partly due to improved planning through the introduction and adaptation of the national recommendations of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority for the Key Stage 1 national guidance. More importantly there has been a school focus on teaching investigative and experimental skills. As a result, pupils throughout the school are understanding scientific principles. They understand fair testing and are learning to observe carefully.

115. By the end of Year 6 pupils are attaining at higher levels than the national test results show. These tests indicate that standards have risen in line with national improvements, so that in 2001 25 per cent gained the higher levels 5 and 6. This year 92 per cent of the pupils are expected to achieve at least the expected level and many more pupils the higher levels. At seven years old no national tests are available, but based on statutory teachers' assessments, pupils' attainment in 2001 was above the national average. This is due to the good quality teaching in both key stages and to teachers' improved subject knowledge. Pupils make good progress in acquiring knowledge about plants, materials, forces and friction and electricity through being given the opportunity to investigate and to observe and experiment during well-planned lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and attain at levels appropriate to their abilities.

116. Pupils are taught to ask questions about what they are going to do and to think about what might happen before deciding what to do. They then explain their actions and use words like 'because' to explain the outcome. Pupils make good progress from the Foundation Stage to Year 6. Pupils at seven years of age worked on electrical circuits. They explained that the lamp will not light if the circuit is broken. Higher achieving pupils complete a working circuit including a foil switch. They explain clearly how electricity flows through the circuit discussing open and closed circuits. They learn about their senses and how they help them to be aware of the world around them; for example that the sense of hearing helps to detect hazards and dangers as well as allowing animals and humans to communicate and to enjoy pleasant sounds

117. One of the strengths in science is the amount of time and the focus that the school has planned for the pupils to observe, investigate and experiment for themselves. Year 1

pupils look at a range of topics including learning about plants and light sources. During one lesson in Year 1 pupils found out about light sources and light reflectors. They were conducted a simple experiment putting objects into a closed box and predicting whether they would be able to see it through their tube view finder. Not all the predictions were scientifically based. One child was adamant that she would be able to see the tinsel because, as she stated, 'I eat carrots'. By the end of the lesson all the pupils had a sound understanding of what objects are light sources and which only reflect light. Higher attaining pupils are able to identify a fair test and record accurately and they are beginning to write conclusions giving reasons for their answers.

118. Pupils make confident progress as they move through Key Stage 2. Year 5 pupils successfully investigated how changing the position of a figure altered the size of the shadow. Having had a lively discussion deciding how best to carry out the investigation they decided that the only change would be in the distance the shadow maker was from the screen. Everything else would remain constant. They worked well in their groups listening to each other and co-operating. They soon realised that a pattern was forming with their results and were able to correctly predict results of bigger distances. They were then able to plot these on a graph. By Year 6 pupils have a thorough understanding of a fair test and write up the investigation in a scientific manner using the technical terms of prediction, method, result and conclusion. Across the key stage there are samples of previous work, which show a sound use of graphs and charts using numeracy skills to record data. Using information and communications technology particularly the use of computer programs for producing graphs, charts and diagrams is an area that is still developing.

119. As a result of good teaching pupils' attitudes to science are good. Pupils in Year 5, for example, were very absorbed by their investigation into shadows and are delighted when their predictions are proved to be correct. By Year 6 pupils are able to work in pairs and groups. This was very well demonstrated in a Year 6 lesson, where the pupils were engaged on finding out which substances will dissolve and which won't and why they won't. Work in science encourages pupils to be independent thinkers and workers.

120. Teaching is good with some excellent teaching seen in Key Stage 1. Lessons involving pupils of all ages were observed. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed, although no good teaching was observed at the beginning of Key Stage 2. In well taught lessons the tasks were well chosen, which inspired pupils' interest and response. The teachers skilfully encouraged the pupils to think by using probing questions, which extended their understanding of the investigations. "Why do we think we need a control?" "What has to be the same to make it a fair test?" Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs participate fully in the discussion part of lessons by asking them specific questions, which enables them to contribute successfully to the lesson. In all lessons, planning was at least sound

121. The co-ordination of science is satisfactory. The co-ordinator monitored teachers' planning. Science work is monitored on a regular basis and the monitoring folder shows clear progression from the reception class through the key stages. The co-ordinator monitors the results of the national tests for seven and eleven year olds. Assessment of pupils' progress and the use of this assessment to set targets is an improvement since the previous inspection. The scheme of work for Key Stage 2 is due to be revised to bring it in line with the recommendations of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The use of information technology is an area the co-ordinator has identified for further use in lessons. More use could be made of external visits, for example trips to a science museum. Resources in school are adequate to teach the subject.

## ART AND DESIGN

122. By the time they are seven and eleven years old, pupils produce work that is above national expectations because of the good teaching they receive. Pupils use a wide range of media and techniques and develop their skills systematically as they move through the school. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection because there is now a wider range of tasks for pupils. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well because the activities are planned thoughtfully and pupils are encouraged to develop their own ideas. Only two lessons in Years 3 and 4 and Year 6 were observed during the inspection, but discussions with staff and pupils, an extensive analysis of sketchbooks, portfolios and displays, confirm pupils' high standards of work.

123. By the time they are seven pupils use paint, collage, pens and pencils to create an interesting range of imaginative and illustrative work of high quality. For example, pupils in Year 1 create very effective portrait collages with tissue, paper and wool. They add an interesting three-dimensional effect when they layer the tissue paper to produce bulging cheeks and chins. This high quality exploration of shape and texture is extended into Year 2 where pupils consolidate their drawing and observational skills. They sketch features of buildings that they find interesting to make block prints with string, printing original designs that were inspired by these patterns. Where pupils rotate these designs, they become particularly interesting and the subtlety of the colours used is very pleasing.

124. Seven to eleven-year-olds are taught skills well and learn effectively. They continue to make good use of their sketchbooks. These contain interesting planning ideas and preparation for using certain techniques. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 refer to their interesting plans for chairs as they paint and decorate the chairs that they have brought into school for the project. They have very imaginative and ambitious plans that they adapt as the painting proceeds and they find what will work and what is not practical. Pupils in Year 5 design an imaginative and amusing range of Groovy Monster Desk Tidies that they decorate using fringes, curls and twists of paper very effectively. Pupils design their own clay 'wish pots' and many of the finished items closely resemble the original design. Year 6 pupils are very involved in the production of scenes from 'Wizard of Oz'. They add texture, for example, the weaving of straw on a hat, to their very skilful sketches of headwear for the 'Munchkins'. Designs for individual hats are inventive and show genuine enjoyment of the project. Pupils learn about vanishing and focal points before they sketch landscape drawings for the scenery. Final paintings show they have mastered the lesson. Their landscape paintings, which include good movement of trees and water, are of a high quality and they demonstrate this ability to show movement well when they make sketches of how the body moves. They understand that Degas used many sketches to make his figures come alive and they capture the essence of Degas' work very effectively.

125. Pupils look forward to art and design lessons. They develop a very good perception of how artists use colour, line and shape effectively. This gives them confidence to attempt their own designs in a similar manner. Pupils' confidence grows in the lesson, especially for those pupils with special educational needs or a low opinion of their own drawing ability, because of the warm relationships between adults and pupils. All are absorbed in their tasks, improving their work as the teacher skilfully questions them, encouraging them to extend their answers further when they have difficulty in expressing their opinions or response to the activities.

126. Teaching and learning in art and design are good so pupils enjoy their lessons. Teachers promote the use of sketchbooks well and the comments made help pupils to rehearse their ideas and skills and improve. Art is used extensively in other subjects, such as history and religious education. For example, pupils in Year 3 and 4 use skills learned in art well when they make scenery for their production about Ancient Egypt in the art club.

They decorate the story of Noah's Ark with Islamic designs because they learn that this story is in the Qur'an. There is well-planned use of a range of programs in information and communication technology. For example, pupils in Year 2 build well on skills learnt in one program when they use a more complex one to create landscape effects for their Caribbean counting rhyme.

127. The subject is effectively co-ordinated and there is an enthusiasm for raising standards and developing understanding of the art and design process through a wide range of activities. Each class works with clay during the year. The lack of a specialist area for art activities means that pupils and staff have to be very careful when using classroom areas and the conscientious approach of all who work hard to ensure that work is completed without accidents is to be commended. A specialist area, however, would enable pupils to work in greater comfort and with fewer distractions. Classroom assistants and parents, who use their own skills very effectively to help pupils gain confidence and improve their skills, provide invaluable support in lessons. Artistic experiences, including visits and theme days provide valuable opportunities for learning new techniques and working together. Pupils' work is displayed very effectively around the school and classes have interesting displays of two and three dimensional work that enhance the environment. Art and design make a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

128. By the time they are seven and eleven years old, pupils produce work that is above national expectations because of the good teaching they receive. Pupils develop the full range of skills and understanding of design and technology. Standards have improved since the last inspection and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.

129. It is clear that pupils in Year 2 have a clear understanding of the design and making process and that high standards are the result of good teaching, which encourages pupils to plan and design. They use a good range of materials and tools. Year 1 pupils investigate different types of levers and make pictures slide up from a card very effectively. They label their good observational drawings of houses and rooms well and work in groups to make cardboard rooms into a house. In the evaluation of their work most groups seem to feel they all contributed well to the project. Pupils in Year 2 work with enthusiasm on their puppets. Boys are just as keen to sew as girls and both thread their needles before using a neat running stitch very competently. Some pupils need adult help at all stages of the process but they always ask any adult most politely for any assistance. Pupils have to complete a written evaluation when their puppets are completed and do this well.

130. Evaluating products is a prominent part of pupils' work in Key Stage 2 and teaching continues to be of a high quality. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 produce some very good written instructions for making a photograph frame and evaluate the making of these, and their sandwich snacks, very thoughtfully. Pupils have very definite likes and dislikes about food so they make very honest responses about the fillings and spreads that they try. Pupils use their drawing and sketching skills very effectively when they make exploded diagrams of their sandwiches.

131. There is a very strong awareness of the need to build on skills in Years 5 and 6 and the support given by a visiting teacher in these lessons enables pupils to reach high standards of work and understanding. Pupils in Year 5 produce well-written instructions for making and designing a toy with moving parts. They produce imaginative ideas for toys so that their final display is a fascinating array of their ideas and hard work. Pupils evaluate their work effectively and work well with different materials and methods of joining items with

precision. They enjoy the range of interesting and challenging activities such as making shelters and controllable vehicles. Every activity is accompanied by good diagrams and evaluations. Pupils in Year 6 make a musical instrument and design a slipper. Their drawings for their designs of the instruments are imaginative and pupils show a good understanding of how sounds are produced. Pupils work very hard on their designs for slippers, some using flow charts to show the stages of making the slipper effectively. They sew their slippers well so that they produce a high quality product. Honest and analytical evaluations of the process of designing and making the slippers show how competently pupils have learned to work with materials and how well pupils think their skills have developed in the process. A highlight in Years 5 and 6 is the day spent at a local factory on a design and technology project. This is a valuable and valued experience.

132. Pupils enjoy the subject and work sensibly together. This reflects the inclusive atmosphere of the lessons and the expectations of the teachers well. Pupils get the help they need to improve because the teachers plan thoughtfully and are well prepared for their lessons. For example, teachers identify areas of difficulty in the previous lesson and devote time at the beginning of each lesson to deal with any problems that arose. There is always an emphasis on learning skills and understanding the process. Parent helpers give very valuable support in these lessons and this enables pupils to learn skills more quickly when they do not have to depend on only the teacher for help.

133. The co-ordinator works hard to encourage and support other teachers and all staff are developing greater confidence in the teaching of design and technology. The new guidelines for teaching, and the very useful portfolio of pupils' work, which assists in the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress, all add to teachers' growing confidence and experience. Theme weeks provide additional opportunities for the development of ideas and enrichment of pupils' learning. Work produced through design and technology makes a good contribution to the variety of the displays around the school and the subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

134. At the end of both key stages achievement and attainment are satisfactory. This means that standards have remained the same since the last inspection.

135. At the time of the last inspection standards achieved by pupils at the age of seven and eleven were judged to be in line with those found nationally though with an improvement in the development of the acquisition of geographical skills. Teachers are aware of the different attainment of their pupils and prepare the lessons to meet the needs of the lower attaining pupils and to challenge higher attaining pupils.

136. By the age of seven pupils are developing an awareness of what it is like to live in a different place. They compare their own way of life with the lives of children who live on an island. They understand that there are fewer cars on the Island of Skye and that the islanders need a ferry to get to the mainland and there is no airport because the island is too small. They are able to make simple maps, which identify features of their own area. They can make graphs to show the most popular holiday destinations of the children in the class. They have a good understanding of the natural features of the seaside and those that are man made. They are acquiring a good geographical vocabulary and learn to use words like 'near', 'far', 'town' and 'country'.

137. Older pupils achieve satisfactorily because of the high expectations of their teachers who provide good support and guidance as well as encouraging the pupils to use initiative in researching the topics they are studying. One group of Year 6 pupils has researched

volcanoes on the Internet and they intend to make a model of a volcano making it erupt by using bicarbonate of soda, red paint and vinegar. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 study India as their topic. There are good cross-curricular links with religious education and the topic enhances the pupils' cultural awareness as well as teaching them about the geographical features of the country. In the lessons observed during the inspection the pupils were enjoying these lessons and achieving well. By the age of eleven pupils have deepened their knowledge and understanding of the different life experiences of people who live in St Lucia through collecting and recording evidence from a variety of sources and comparing this with their own lives. They look at the advantages and disadvantages of tourism to the island and recognise that although it brings jobs it also can damage the environment. They explore geographical issues such as pollution and they are able to explain satisfactorily why and how places have changed and why they might change in the future. Older pupils compare their local environment to Llangollen. They can successfully place Walsall Wood in the context of the rest of the country and know its distance from London. They look at the population of Llangollen by sex and age but they don't always have the correct vocabulary for explaining what they mean, for example, 'sixteen or seventeen year olds are not as popular in Llangollen'.

138. In the few lessons observed during the inspection, which were all in Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching varied but all lessons were satisfactory. Provision for pupils with educational needs was well planned enabling all pupils to participate fully in the lesson. Classroom management was good and therefore behaviour was good, all of which helped to create a good atmosphere for learning. The pupils co-operate well in the group work, remaining on task and sharing ideas in a sensible manner. However, in one lesson observed with older pupils, they tended to be passive participants due to teaching which was satisfactory but failed to fully interest them or hold their attention.

139. The management of geography is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has held the post for many years and during that time she has put considerable time and energy into developing the new scheme of work which incorporates national guidance into the school's own scheme. She has ensured that there is progression in acquiring geographical skills as pupils move through the school and this is reflected in the achievement seen in both key stages. Assessment opportunities have been built into the scheme with an assessment at the end of each topic. Good resources contribute to the pupils' learning. Field trips are organised for different year groups to enhance learning but this and planning progression in the acquisition of mapping skills is an area the co-ordinator wishes to improve. It is currently satisfactory.

## **HISTORY**

140. Pupils' achievement and attainment by the age of seven is good. By the age of eleven, pupils are achieving satisfactorily and attaining at expected levels.

141. The previous inspection reported that standards in history were as expected nationally by the ages of seven and eleven. This has been improved at Key Stage 1 and maintained at Key Stage 2. There is now more emphasis on teaching historical skills than at the time of the last inspection. Teachers are aware of the varying attainments of their pupils and most make good provision to meet the needs of lower attaining pupils and to challenge higher attaining pupils.

142. By the age of seven, pupils have developed an awareness of the passing of time and demonstrate a developing understanding of the differences between the past and present in their own lives and the lives of their immediate family. They have developed an appropriate awareness of chronology through looking at key events in their own lives and of their



parents and grandparents. They learn that everyday life changes over time by looking at photographs of life at the time of World War Two, for example, comparing a kitchen at that time with a modern kitchen. They can use language, which shows their understanding of the passage of time such as, 'a long time ago', 'before' and 'past'. Year 1 pupils begin to find out about the past from a range of information, including photographs, artefacts and visits to museums and castles. By the age of seven pupils are able to ask questions about the past and use simple research to find the answers. This was the case, for example, when Year 2 pupils were absorbed with learning about what life was like when their grandmothers were children. They were particularly fascinated with the idea that lavatories in many houses were outside and that bath time was once a week in a tin bath in front of an open fire. They confidently talked about the differences and demonstrated how to use a dolly and washboard and a mangle, which formed part of their good display of artefacts. They were even able to explain that articles had to be put through the mangle twice, once to get the soap out and once to get the water out. They decided that it was much easier to wash clothes in the twenty-first century!

143. In Years 3 to 6 teachers provide good support and guidance and encourage the pupils to use initiative in researching the topics they are studying. Pupils build on the knowledge and skills they have developed in previous years and their achievement by the end of Year 6 is satisfactory. They learn about social, cultural and religious differences through studying topics such as Ancient Egyptians. Through learning about historical periods they are able to reflect on the diversity of beliefs and customs and make sensible comparisons with modern times. They are able to correctly use more complex historical language when discussing the past such as, 'ancient', 'modern', 'BC and AD' 'century' and 'decade'. By the age of eleven they have a reasonable knowledge of different periods of history, which have helped to shape the world, as we know it today. Primary and secondary resources bring the past to life for the pupils wherever possible and the school has collected a good range of artefacts to support history topics.

144. One lesson was observed during the inspection with the younger pupils. The teaching in this lesson was very good. It was very well planned and well structured enabling pupils to make very good progress. Provision for pupils with special educational needs was particularly well planned for in this lesson, which allowed for full active participation by the pupils. They were supported by a teacher, who gave them the challenging task of examining cleaning artefacts used over the last century, which they had to put in chronological order. Helped by skilful questioning by the teacher they were able to complete the task satisfactorily. Pupils co-operated well together, bouncing ideas around and listening well to each other's ideas. Their behaviour was very good, which helped to create a very good atmosphere for learning. Scrutiny of the work of the older pupils shows that teachers include challenge for the higher attainers when planning lessons as well as planning for the special needs pupils. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 study the Ancient Egypt period and displays around the school and work in their books shows that they have learned well and attained satisfactory standards. Theme days are arranged for the older pupils when for two or three days the normal timetable is abandoned and the pupils are able to focus entirely on their history topic. This enables the pupils to concentrate their learning without the drawback of having to work in short sessions with the need to revise previous work at the beginning of every lesson.

145. The management of history is satisfactory. The co-ordinator plans to revise the scheme of work and the policy in accordance with Curriculum 2000. The co-ordinator has built assessment opportunities into the scheme but the use of this assessment across the school is still in its early stages. Resources make a good contribution to pupils' learning. The school has made excellent use of the experiences of three generations of the same family. Both the grandmother and great grandmother have recorded some of their

memories of childhood. Year 2 pupils were fascinated listening to a tape recording of the grandmother talking about being a child during the Second World War. Artefacts on specific topics are collected by the school and stored in one place so that all the staff are aware of good quality resources to support teaching and learning.

146. Arrangements are made for visitors to the school and for the pupils to visit places of historic interest. The school is fortunate in that there is a wealth of such opportunities in the vicinity. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development through the carefully chosen topics that they study.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

147. There has been a very good improvement in standards of information and communication technology for pupils aged eleven, so that standards for 7 year olds and 11 year olds are now as expected nationally. Their achievement is good. The installation of a new computer suite, with Internet and email facilities, allows for good timetabled sessions in which all ages and abilities improve their knowledge and skills. The subject is organised so that pupils have two sessions per week in the suite, one in which they develop their computing skills and another in which they can apply these to a specific subject. The installation of additional computers to be used in classroom areas, as well as interactive white boards is too recent to have made a significant impact. However, the white boards were seen used well for demonstration purposes, and to teach skills associated with mathematics.

148. Year 2 pupils used the tools in a paint program to reproduce illustrations of the Caribbean which relate to their literacy topic on Caribbean counting rhymes. The teacher spends a good and appropriate amount of time reviewing with pupils what they have already learnt, so that when they embark on their work most are confident to use the tools. The questions help children anticipate problems, for example they show that they know what will happen if their lines don't meet the edge, when they come to fill in the colour. The good demonstration on their screens helps pupils understand the affects of the different options, and pupils are heard to gasp in awe as the teacher removes mistakes with the undo button, or uses the spray tool to make wispy clouds. Most pupils are quick to learn from the demonstration, and are confident to experiment. They try hard to follow the images in their illustrations and to match up the colours. There is good support for pupils who are less confident, or of lesser ability from the teaching assistant. Teaching is very good and pupils learn very well.

149. By the age of 7 pupils can log off and log on. They can enter data and produce a range of graphs from programs that present data in different ways. They use the keyboard and word-process work, changing the font size and style to suit their work. Pupils in Year 1 identify different fruit and use a word bank to type in labels. Pupils know that word-processed work is often easier to read than handwriting. They are adept at using the computer mouse to click, drag and drop and understand the use of different icons.

150. By the time pupils are eleven they have developed their computing skills well. Pupils in Year 6 worked in pairs to produce audio-visual programmes, with many showing very sophisticated skills. The teacher has given the pupils very good support to achieve very good results. Pupils have typed in text to create a story in which there are two optional tracks to go down. They import pictures and at least half the class adds sounds affects, dramatic music and animation to the programme. They are confident to retrieve and operate their programmes and can explain clearly how they evolved. They are very proud of the outcomes. Throughout Key Stage 2 pupils are provided with good opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills. Year 5 pupils use information and communication

technology in a meaningful way, to speed up calculations using a spreadsheet and to solve problems. Year 3 pupils enter data on the rainfall in Bombay and London, in order to create graphs to show the difference between the two places as part of their geography topic. They use the outcomes to make decisions about, for example, the best time to go on holiday to Bombay. One pupil decides that the high rainfall months in Bombay would be "good for trekking". Year 4 pupils use a control programme to create revolving shapes. They copy the demonstration and enter the correct formula, and more able pupils go on to experiment with different formulae. In discussion, pupils in Year 6 explain how they have used ICT to generate headlines and newsheets and used the Internet for research purposes. They have used the digital camera to print of photographs of themselves.

151. Pupils use the suite in groups or in whole class sessions. They work very well together and share the equipment well. They are generous in helping each other, and the more knowledgeable help their classmates. They are respectful of the equipment.

152. Teaching is good in both key stages and where teaching assistants give support this helps the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well. Teachers teach to their strengths, so that pupils receive instruction from those who are most confident and knowledgeable. There is a good emphasis on reviewing previous learning so that pupils are well prepared for the tasks set. Pupils who are more able and more knowledgeable are given good opportunities and encouraged to develop their work. There has been a very good effort to use the suite fully to make up for skills and knowledge not previously taught in Key Stage 2. However, at times it is underused, when no lessons are timetabled, and the computers in the classroom areas are rarely seen in use.

153. The new co-ordinator has worked hard to give staff the confidence and expertise to use the new equipment. The curriculum is appropriately based on national guidance. There are good assessment procedures and pupils are encouraged to be self evaluative. In discussion, pupils described how they used the skills learnt in school on their home computers. There has been good accelerated learning, and overall the newly installed equipment has been used well to develop pupils' knowledge and skills. There is a computer club that takes pupils from different year groups and relationships are developing with a local secondary school to introduce Year 6 pupils to their facilities.

## **MUSIC**

154. Pupils in both key stages make good progress in the subject and achieve standards above those expected of pupils of a similar age, by the time they are seven and eleven. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the subject and achieve well over time. Standards in the subject have improved since the last inspection when they were deemed to be satisfactory. They are now good. Much of this is due to the fact that many teachers now have specialist knowledge of the subject. The school has also introduced a well-structured scheme of work.

155. Pupils in Year 1 are able to sustain simple rhythmic patterns and select appropriate untuned percussion instruments to accompany themselves. The very good progress observed in this lesson was enhanced by the teacher's high expectations with pupils in Year 1 already being introduced to formal notation skills when 'reading' and interpreting music. Pupils sang in a tuneful manner as they rehearsed two songs for their Easter musical production. The teacher enabled pupils to make good progress in their singing skills as she focussed on correct breathing techniques, the projection of the voice and the articulation of lyrics.

156. Pupils in years 3 and 4 have a clear understanding of ostinato– the underlying rhythmic patterns in music - and were able to use this knowledge to good effect in the creation of their own music as they worked on rhythmic patterns to use in their production of 'Pyramid' a musical activity linked to their work on the Egyptians in history. Good cross-curricular work takes place.

157. Teacher's specialist knowledge was seen to good effect in a Year 6 lesson as pupils listened to and appraised the song, 'John Brown's Body'. Pupils could identify the simplistic nature of the music and the repetitive nature of the lyrics. Through the teacher's clear exposition pupils were able to develop an understanding of the social and historic context of the lyrics in the American Civil War and how they had to be changed, for the sake of political correctness, when the song became the 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic'. All this knowledge was put to good uses when the pupils worked in a collaborative manner in creating their own, not so politically correct lyrics, to sing to the same tune. Challenging and demanding work, which provided for pupils to address both elements of the music curriculum within a single lesson, listening and appraising and composing and performing.

158. The quality of singing as observed in assemblies is good. Standards in the large and popular choir are very high, with pupils interpreting lyrics in a very sensitive manner. The quality of singing is much enhanced by the quality of support they receive from staff with teachers accompanying the pupils on piano, drums and trumpet. The school utilises the services of the local music service with pupils learning violin and brass, including trumpets and horns.

159. The school has a policy for music and a good scheme of work to guide teaching. Music is led well by two well-informed and talented musicians. Resources for the subject are good with the school having a discrete music room. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' cultural development and provides an added dimension to the schools' good assemblies.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

160. No judgement was able to be made on the pupils' attainment by the age of seven although in dance they reach very high standards. By the age of 11 pupils reach above average standards in gymnastics and swimming. Staff have participated in training since the last inspection and are more confident in the subject and the school benefits from a well-structured scheme of work. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior learning and achieve well over time. Standards in the subject have improved since the last inspection. The improvement in standards is due to an increase in training for the subject with the result that teachers are now more confident and the school now has a well-structured scheme of work.

161. Whilst it was not possible to observe all elements of the physical education curriculum during the period of the inspection, teachers' good planning for the subject indicates that pupils are given the given the chance to make good progress and achieve good standards in all elements of the physical education curriculum.

162. Pupils in Year 2 demonstrate very good dance skills relative to their age. The very good progress made in the lesson owed much to the imaginative and challenging activities provided by the teacher, as the pupils used a number of Victorian washhouse artefacts as a stimulus for their dance activities. They explored twists and turns, low and high shapes which might be associated with mangles and rubbing boards. Pupils really enjoyed the activities they were involved in and worked with sustained concentration. As with a number of other physical education lessons the good learning-taking place in lessons was influenced

by the very good working relationship between the teacher and pupils, with pupils actively wishing to please their teachers through their good work

163. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have, for example, good gymnastic skills as they worked on sequencing a number of activities whilst travelling across the floor and medium level equipment. Pupils were able to combine symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes with jumps twists and turn, with moments of balance and stillness. The good learning was enhanced by the opportunities given by the teacher to share good practice and to refine skills over time through repetition.

164. Pupils in Year 5 were seen to make good progress in their swimming skills during a trip to the local swimming baths. Pupils were split into groups according to ability, with leisure assistants and teachers displaying good teaching skills as they worked with pupils working together to develop front crawl and backstrokes. The good learning and progress in this lesson helped by the pupils' positive attitudes towards their work and their willingness to listen to and respond to the good coaching points made by teaching staff.

165. Good team-teaching was observed in Year 6 with pupils developing those skills associated with tennis and the invasion skills used in netball and basketball. The lesson got off to a good start with one of the teachers leading nearly fifty pupils through an imaginative warm-up activity; almost a piece of mime, as they made their supposed way to school, jumping over fences, climbing imaginary ropes and side-stepping their way through a maze of trees. In this as in all other lessons, the teachers emphasised the importance of health and safety issues and the need to work as a pair or a team. The large group were split up at this point as they moved on to explore tennis and invasive skills. Pupils focussed really hard on their ball control skills and footwork and worked in a selfless manner as they recognised the need to pass the ball to the person in the best space, rather than simply to a friend. The good learning and progress in this lesson was helped by the pupils' good self-discipline and the teacher's effective management.

166. There is a policy for the subject and an effective scheme of work. There is hall with the school having access to hard surface areas and a playing field. Resources are adequate for the subjects. The school has recently introduced assessment procedures for the subject, though they do not indicate how individual pupils are progressing over time. All pupils in Year 6 go on a residential holiday where they engage in a number of sporting activities. The school provides pupils with a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities, including football, cricket, netball, gymnastics and dance. With its emphasis on team-building skills the subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' social development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

167. At the age of seven pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education is good and above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This is above the standards seen in the previous inspection, and reflects the good teaching for the subject. By the time pupils are eleven their attainment meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

168. There is a satisfactory balance at both key stages of teaching pupils about stories from the Bible and the Christian faith, as well as teaching about world faiths, such as Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. Teachers ensure that at all ages, pupils learn about the meaning of religion and to make connections between what they hear and their everyday life. Children in Year 1 know that "Jesus is everywhere" ... "he's in another country, but he's still here." They can recount the events leading up to the crucifixion and can reflect on the events: Judas "was pretending to love him"; Peter was sorry because "he told a lie". Their understanding is helped by having good opportunities for discussion, and in this case,

to act out the events in the story. This helps young children to understand the emotions because they are encouraged to portray these in their acting. Although no teaching was seen in Year 2, the evidence from work seen is that children have a real interest and involvement in the subject. Children deepen their knowledge by acting out a class wedding, and a baptism, so that they can understand the meaning of religious symbolism.

169. Older pupils continue to deepen their understanding, so that Year 6 pupils are writing that “nobody knows what God is, but he is what you think he is” and “if God wanted to communicate now, it would be by email.” Information about religion is systematically matched with giving pupils the opportunity to discuss and reflect on ideas. This is followed through in Year 6, where pupils regularly attend the local church for a morning service, followed by religious education lessons, which are conducted by the vicar. A scrutiny of work shows that pupils of all abilities are given tasks which involve them in analysing and reflecting on religious ideas and practices, such as writing their own words to the Lord’s Prayer; thinking about the talents in their family; looking at what pilgrimage means to different religious groups. All abilities produce good work.

170. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is mainly good. One excellent lesson was seen in which the teacher’s very good questioning skills and very good relationships with the pupils helped them to understand and reflect on the Easter story. The outstanding element was the respect that the teacher had for the pupil’s views, and the confidence this gave them to not only re-tell the story, but to burst into spontaneous prayer and song. There are high expectations in Year 2 of the standard of presentation of work, which is always neat, with ideas well developed by children of all abilities. However, on occasion pupils of lower ability have not been helped to understand the task and miss the point being made by the teacher. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is mainly satisfactory, with good teaching in Year 3/4. Teachers provide ample time for discussion, but are not always so successful in stimulating pupils to develop and debate their ideas, so that this element of the lesson becomes rather flat. However, pupils generally respond well to the challenge of the written work and produce well thought through work, for example, in Year 6, writing their own version of the Eucharist prayer. Because of the open plan nature of the classrooms it is not always easy for teacher’s to lead children in discussion. In the Year 6 lesson, the use of a candle to provide a spiritual moment to the lesson was lost because the noise from the group discussion in the adjacent area. There is evidence of an adequate amount of information and communication technology use. For example, Year 6 pupils have researched , downloaded and word-processed information from the Internet on Fairtrade.

171. The subject provides good opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy skills, however, in Key Stage 2, work is mainly marked for content with literacy not being so well scrutinised, so that completed “best” work often contains spelling and grammar errors.

172. The subject is managed well by an enthusiastic and committed co-ordinator. The curriculum has recently been reviewed and a new policy produced which is good. Topics contained in the locally agreed syllabus have been extended to include elements of the diocesan curriculum that gives a wider coverage of world faiths. Resources and artefacts have been audited and added to, to cover the demands of the new curriculum. There are satisfactory assessment procedures.