

INSPECTION REPORT

WYCHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 132075

Headteacher: Mrs Therese Allen

Reporting inspector: Colin Henderson
23742

Dates of inspection: 7th – 10th May 2002

Inspection number: 244723

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Middle Field Road Northfield Birmingham
Postcode:	B31 3EH
Telephone number:	0121 464 4255
Fax number:	0121 464 3987
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr. C. Leigh
Date of previous inspection:	Not inspected since amalgamation

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Colin Henderson 23742	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Religious education Art and design	How high are standards? Pupils' results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Len Shipman 14061	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
George Logan 11810	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Geography Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
Christine Richardson 22058	Team inspector	Science Foundation Stage Music Special educational needs	
Sanchia Pearse 4787	Team inspector	English History Physical education	

The inspection contractor was:

TWA Inspections Ltd
5 Lakeside
Werrington
Peterborough
PE4 6QZ

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Wychall Primary School is a newly amalgamated school serving the Wychall Farm and Masefield estates. It currently has 266 pupils on roll (131 boys and 135 girls) and is similar in size to the average primary school. Most children come from rented housing in an area of high unemployment and significant social and economic deprivation. The Wychall Farm estate is currently being renovated. This has led to very high levels of pupil mobility (39 per cent) since the school opened in September 2000. Sixty-eight per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above the national average. Pupils are mainly of white, United Kingdom ethnic background. There are 24 pupils from ethnic minority groups, five of whom have English as an additional language. Eighty-three pupils (31 per cent) are on the school's register of special educational needs, most of whom have moderate learning or emotional and behavioural needs. Nine pupils have specific Statements of Special Educational Need. This is above average. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below expected levels. The school benefits from additional funds as part of the Kings Norton Education Action Zone and the Excellence in Cities project.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Wychall Primary is a good and effective school with some very good features. It is a happy and harmonious school community in which the aims of 'safe, secure and successful' are clearly reflected in all aspects of school life. Pupils enjoy school and have very positive, enthusiastic attitudes to learning. They behave well and relationships are very good. Teaching is good. It is consistently very good, and often excellent, in Year 6. The excellent leadership of the headteacher, supported by her influential deputy, a strong staff team and an active and supportive governing body, has enabled the new school to make rapid progress since its recent amalgamation. The school makes very good use of its resources and gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. It provides a strong focus on raising standards and improving pupils' self-esteem.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They are enthusiastic and keen to improve their work.
- Pupils behave well. They are friendly, show respect and express delight at their success and that of others.
- Teaching is good. It is often very good in the Foundation Stage and, on occasions, excellent in the juniors.
- The provision for pupils' social development is excellent. It is very good for their spiritual and moral development.
- Staff know their pupils very well. They give good support to enable them to be safe and secure and to achieve well.
- The links with parents are very good.
- It provides very well for pupils with special educational needs, including the Acorn Room nurture groups.

What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and information and communication technology.
- Pupils' skills in art and design, geography and design and technology.
- The attendance of a small but significant number of pupils.

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 opened in September 2000, following an amalgamation of the infant and junior schools. It has not been inspected previously. The school has made remarkable progress in the short time it has been open.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	N/a	N/a	E*	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	N/a	N/a	E	C	
Science	N/a	N/a	D	B	

E* shows that the school's standards are in the lowest 5 per cent nationally.

Pupils attain standards at the end of Year 6 that are in line with the national average in science, below average in mathematics and well below average in English. Standards are improving and are higher than those attained in the 2001 national tests for 11-year-olds. The school almost achieved its realistic target of 45 per cent in 2001 for the proportion of pupils to achieve the nationally expected Level 4 or above in English. It exceeded its target of 60 per cent in mathematics. Girls attained higher than boys. Inspection evidence shows that the school is likely to be just below its 2002 targets of 50 per cent in English and 60 per cent in mathematics. The current Year 6 contains a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and many pupils who have joined the year group since September 2000. Inspectors judged that standards are improving, especially in the juniors, and are promoted by good teaching. Boys are achieving higher than in the previous year. The school has improved reading resources and provided a wider range of learning opportunities to increase boys' interest and involvement.

Inspection evidence shows that Year 2 pupils attain standards in mathematics and science that are in line with the national average. They are higher than those attained in the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds. Improvements have resulted from effective use of the school's numeracy strategy and more imaginative teaching in science. Year 2 pupils attain standards in reading that are below average. Their standards in writing are average. These reflect the standards attained in last year's tests. The school's focus on writing is increasing pupils' interest and improving their skills. Reception pupils make good progress in their learning. They are just below expected levels in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development by the time they are five. Pupils make sound progress in their learning in the infants. They make good progress in the juniors. It is very good in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Teachers extend pupils' literacy skills well in many subjects. They extend pupils' numeracy skills well in science but not consistently in other subjects. Pupils attain standards in information and communication technology that are below expected levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers make good use of the new computer suite to develop pupils' skills. They do not provide enough opportunities to extend these skills in other subjects. Pupils attain expected standards in history, music, religious education and physical education. Year 2 pupils attain expected standards in geography. Standards are below national expectations in geography at the end of Year 6 and in art and design and design and technology at Year 2 and Year 6. The school's strong focus on improving literacy and numeracy has limited time for improving pupils' skills and knowledge in these subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils know they are there to learn and are anxious to succeed. They clearly enjoy their school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are friendly, polite and get on well together.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils improve their self-esteem through responding well to the wide variety of opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory although improving. It is caused mainly by pupil mobility and the excessive absence of a small number of pupils.

Since the school opened, it has made considerable improvement in pupils' behaviour, in encouraging a positive approach to learning and promoting very good relationships. These are significant factors in enabling pupils to seek to raise the standard of their work.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Lessons observations and an analysis of pupils' work show that teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and in the juniors, and often very good. It is sound overall in the infants. Teaching is very good in Year 6. Teaching was good in 26 out of the 67 lessons observed. It was very good in a further 23 lessons and excellent in three lessons. Teaching was unsatisfactory in only one lesson observed. The teaching of English and mathematics is good and often very good in the juniors. It is sound overall for infant pupils. Teachers have implemented the school's strategies for literacy and numeracy well. This is helping pupils to improve their skills, particularly in the juniors. Teachers plan their lessons in detail to give a clear focus to pupils' learning. They manage their classes effectively to ensure pupils maintain their interest and attention. Occasionally, teachers, especially in the infants, do not maintain a brisk pace to the lesson and this restricts the amounts pupils achieve. The good and frequently very good teaching in the nursery and reception classes encourage children to have an enthusiastic approach to their learning and achieve well. Teaching is good in science, history and religious education. There was insufficient evidence to judge teaching in design and technology. A scrutiny of junior pupils' work in geography showed teaching was unsatisfactory with pupils' skills and knowledge not building effectively on prior learning. Teaching is sound overall in all other subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for the Foundation Stage and sound for infants and juniors. Strong focus on literacy and numeracy, although pupils' skills are not consistently developed in some subjects. The curriculum is enhanced by very good personal, social and health education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Teaching and support staff work very successfully together to ensure that pupils are fully included and make good progress towards their individual learning or behavioural targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Excellent social development promotes very good relationships, very good for spiritual and moral development and good for cultural development. Good use of visits, visitors and assemblies to promote cultural beliefs and traditions.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Child protection issues, including care, are excellent. Staff know the pupils very well and provide very high quality support. Good assessment procedures for English, mathematics and science.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very good. Parents recognise and value the vast improvements made since the amalgamation.

The school provides very well for pupils' personal development and this supports successfully the school's aim of 'safe, secure and successful'. The very good links with parents contributes considerably to pupils' achievements.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The excellent headteacher provides very strong leadership, supported by an influential deputy, to target school improvement. They have created an excellent team approach. Phase managers and subject co-ordinators contribute very well to raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. An enthusiastic and influential governing body works in close partnership with the school to focus on improvement. Governors were very supportive during the amalgamation.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Senior management carefully track pupils' performance and identify targets for improvement. Very good monitoring and evaluation procedures promote good teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes excellent use of funds to target improvement. It makes very good use of best value principles.

The school has a good number of teaching and support staff who work closely together to ensure that all pupils are fully included in all activities. The accommodation is good. Resources are good, particularly for English, mathematics and science. The school makes very good use of its resources and gives good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High expectations that pupils will learn • Pupils mature and take responsibility • Pupils make good progress, particularly those with special needs • Behaviour is good • School works closely with parents, who are kept well informed about progress • School is well led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and quantity of homework • More consistent use of sharing information to support learning at home • Detailed improvement targets in reports

Parental responses are from 105 questionnaires (39 per cent), the few written comments and views of the 12 who attended the pre-inspection meeting and a number of parents who were interviewed during the inspection. Inspectors found that homework is used soundly, in line with the school policy. The contribution of parents in working with the school to extend pupils' skills, especially in reading, is not fully developed.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the nursery with standards of attainment that are well below those expected of their age. Teaching and support staff work very well together to provide very good support and guidance. Children settle happily into the nursery routines. Good teaching enables most of them to make good progress towards their early learning goals in all areas of learning.¹ Reception teachers build very successfully on the skills, knowledge and understanding developed in the nursery. Staff use assessment information effectively to meet individual children's needs. By the time they are five, most children have made good progress. They attain standards, particularly in reading, writing and numeracy, that are below nationally expected levels. Most are likely to attain their early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development. Teachers encourage children to work together as well promoting good opportunities to show increasing independence. The good range of learning opportunities in creative and physical development enables children to achieve their learning goals in these areas by the time they start in Year 1.
2. Pupils attain standards in English at the end of Year 2 that are below the national average. The results of the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds showed that pupils attained average standards in writing. They attained below average standards in reading and mathematics. Compared with similar schools², they attained standards that were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Inspection evidence largely reflects these results. The school's priority on writing is improving pupils' interest and skills in writing. An increasing number are achieving the nationally expected level for their age. Most pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills, although weaknesses in their English language skills, especially speaking and listening, limit attainment. Year 2 pupils attain standards in mathematics that are improving and are in line with those expected nationally. The school's effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has led to more focused mathematics teaching. This is raising standards, for example, by increasing the proportion of pupils achieving higher than average levels. Pupils are attaining higher standards in science than those shown in the 2001 teacher assessments. Inspection evidence shows that they are attaining average standards by the end of Year 2 due mainly to more imaginative teaching encouraging an enthusiastic approach to learning.
3. Pupils attain standards at the end of Year 6 that are in line with the national average in science, below average in mathematics and well below average in English. These are higher than those attained in the 2001 national tests for 11-year-olds when standards were below average in science, well below in mathematics and in the bottom 5 per cent nationally in English. Compared with similar schools in 2001, pupils attained above average standards in science, average in mathematics and below average in English. The school almost achieved its realistic 2001 target of 45 per cent of pupils to achieve the nationally expected Level 4³ in English. It exceeded its target of 60 per cent in mathematics. Targets have to be regularly revised due to the high level of pupil changes in each year group. Current school predictions show that the school is likely to be just below its 2001 targets of 50 per cent in English and 60 per cent in mathematics, which were agreed with the local education authority in September. The current Year 6 contains a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs (over half of the year group)

¹ Early learning goals are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer to achievements children make in the following six areas of learning; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

² Similar schools are schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

³ The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils, at the end of Year 6, are expected to reach Level 4. If a pupil attains Level 5 then he or she is reaching standards above those expected for his or her age.

and pupils who have joined the group since the start of this school year. Inspection evidence shows that standards are improving throughout the school, and particularly in the juniors. The very high quality teaching at Year 6, focused on boosting pupils' skills and knowledge, is likely to enable the school to be very close to achieving its targets for this year. Pupils' improving skills have yet to significantly promote higher standards in English by the end of Year 6, although boys are achieving higher standards than in the previous year when their performance was well below that of girls. The school has improved reading resources and included a wider range of learning activities for boys. This is encouraging a more positive and enthusiastic approach that is promoting significant progress.

4. Year 6 pupils are attaining higher standards in mathematics than in the previous year. Inspection evidence shows that, although the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 in the current Year 6 is slightly lower than in 2001, the proportion achieving above expected levels has increased considerably. Teachers' high expectations, their very good class management skills and the use of effective learning support staff to provide additional support are contributing to raising standards. Similarly, pupils are attaining higher standards in science than those attained previously. The school has encouraged a more interested attitude to the subject through developing a strong emphasis on practical experiments. Teaching is good and teachers use assessment information well to ensure that activities match pupils' abilities.
5. Pupils make sound progress overall in their learning in Years 1 and 2, particularly in literacy and numeracy. They make good progress in the juniors. It is very good in Year 6, due mainly to pupils' responding very positively to teachers' high expectations and their consistent encouragement. Teachers extend pupils' literacy skills very successfully in many subjects, for example, science, history and religious education. They challenge pupils to extend their numeracy skills in some subjects, particularly science, although this is not consistently developed in other subjects such as design and technology.
6. Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards targets on their individual educational plans. Pupils, including those who spend some time each day in the Acorn Room⁴, make very good progress in the development of self-esteem and confidence. This is because they receive high quality teaching and support and the targets on individual education and behaviour plans are appropriate. They match pupils' abilities well. The school has very good systems for assessing the needs of pupils who move into the school during the school year. This ensures that pupils with special educational needs are identified very quickly. Assessment is used very well for the formation of groups and staff monitor the progress and attainment of these pupils meticulously. As a result, pupils with special educational needs frequently attain well for their abilities in national tests. The school provides well for the small number of junior pupils who have been assessed as gifted and talented. They are closely monitored to ensure that teachers provide work which is challenging enough to extend their skills and knowledge. They make good progress and frequently achieve above average levels.
7. Pupils attainment in information and communication technology is below nationally expected levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers are using the new computer suite effectively to promote pupils' basic skills soundly in all required aspects. Many pupils are achieving well in lessons. However, teachers are not providing pupils, especially older juniors, with enough opportunities to apply their skills in a broad range of other subjects to attain standards which are expected for their age. Pupils attain standards at the end of Year 2 and 6 that meet expected levels in history, music and physical education. In religious education, they meet the standards expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Year 2 pupils attain expected standards in geography. Pupils attain standards at the end of

⁴ The school opened the Acorn room (nurture centre) for pupils with educational and behavioural difficulties who are at risk from exclusion or under-achievement.

Year 2 and Year 6 that are below those expected nationally in art and design and design and technology. Year 6 pupils attain standards in geography that are below expected levels. The school's strong focus on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science has limited the time available for developing pupils' skills and knowledge in these subjects. Curriculum planning does not ensure that pupils' skills always build on prior learning to enable them to extend their knowledge.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Upon amalgamation, the school focused successfully on creating a new ethos and a behaviour policy as a priority. As a result, the attitudes, values and personal development of the pupils are now very good. Behaviour is good and improving. These improvements are recognised and appreciated by parents and carers. Levels of attendance remain unsatisfactory, although they are improving.
9. Pupils come into school in an orderly manner. They know that they are at school to learn and as a result their attitudes in lessons are very good. Children in the Foundation Stage are happy and quickly adapt to school life. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, sustain their enthusiasm and motivation to learn consistently well. Good quality teaching and an interesting range of teaching methods stimulate pupils. For example in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, there was a distinct buzz of excitement as a quick fire mental mathematical competition began. Pupils work equally well in paired or independent tasks without noise or disruption. They discuss and collaborate effectively to support each other to complete their work.
10. Behaviour in class is good. A significant number of pupils have behaviour problems or could be disruptive. Consistently good classroom management is effective and disruption seldom occurs. As a result, lessons flow and promote pupils' learning. For example, one unruly child was sent direct to the headteacher. As a result there was no loss of teaching time. Behaviour in and around the school is consistently good. Pupils themselves state that behaviour is improving. They walk calmly in corridors and demonstrate good manners. For example, holding doors open for each other or staff. Some pupils have an 'individual behaviour chart' which they have to show to senior management on a daily basis. Discussions reveal that they fully understand and accept the sanctions. As a result, both their self-esteem and behaviour have improved. During playtime, pupils are supervised effectively. No anti-social behaviour or bad language was observed. Pupils played and mixed quite happily, irrespective of their backgrounds or gender. Previous high levels of exclusion have been reduced substantially. There have been no permanent exclusions. Four pupils have been given fixed-term exclusions during this school year.
11. The personal development and relationships shown by the pupils are very good. Pupils show respect to adults in school as well as amongst themselves. Classrooms and corridors are kept neat and tidy. There is no litter, graffiti or damage in or outside the school building. Pupils speak with maturity and listen attentively to questions or directions from staff, for example, in the 'walking bus' when pupils and adults walk to school. They held hands, wore reflective jackets and cared for each other. All pupils are fully included in all aspects of the school.
12. The school promotes pupils' personal development successfully, including citizenship, through a variety of ways. Each class has a member in the School Council. Table leaders, monitors or a 'buddy system' help pupils take responsibility and develop friendships. Pupils now have the confidence to confide concerns with staff. For those who lack confidence, there is a 'worry box'. Staff know the pupils extremely well, including the strengths and weaknesses of each individual. To raise their self-esteem and to encourage endeavour, certificates are awarded in the 'celebration assembly'. Each class teacher nominates a 'star of the week'. This is popular and parents are beginning to attend these

events and help celebrate these achievements. They contribute very well to raising pupils' self-esteem and their personal development. Friendship and positive relationships are encouraged through 'Circle Time'⁵ and within other curriculum subjects. The 'Dream' of Martin Luther King was superbly presented in an assembly. Time for reflection was given and the pupils were asked to report any incidents of racism.

13. Attendance is unsatisfactory and below the national averages. However it is in line with the average of similar inner city schools. Pupil mobility is a factor but the main cause is a small but significant number of parents who fail to send their children to school regularly. The 'walking bus' has improved both levels of attendance and punctuality. Registration is taken quickly and without fuss. This creates a good start to the day and encourages pupils' positive attitudes to learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Teaching is good. It is good in the Foundation Stage and in the juniors. Teaching is sound overall in the infants. Teaching was good in 26 out of the 67 lessons observed during the inspection. It was very good in a further 23 lessons. Teaching was excellent in three junior lessons. Teaching was unsatisfactory in only one lesson. The good quality of teaching is raising standards, especially in Year 6. The teaching of English and mathematics reflects the overall range of teaching in the school. It is good and frequently very good in the juniors, especially for the older pupils. It is sound for infant pupils. The school has implemented well its strategies for literacy and numeracy. Good teaching enables pupils in Years 3 to 6 to make good and often very good progress in improving their skills. Teaching is good in science, history, and religious education. It is sound in art and design, information and communication technology and physical education. Teaching is sound in geography for infant pupils, although scrutiny of the small amount of pupils' work showed that it is unsatisfactory for junior pupils. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on design and technology. Teachers plan their lessons in detail. They identify clear lesson objectives and share them with their pupils to give a good focus to their learning. Teachers manage their classes effectively to ensure that pupils remain focused on their learning activity. This encourages pupils to adopt a positive and conscientious approach to their work. On occasions, teachers, especially in the infants, do not consistently maintain a brisk pace or have high enough expectations of what pupils should achieve in the lesson. This restricts the amount achieved.
15. Teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage is good and is frequently very good. Teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants transmit their enthusiasm for learning to the children, who are keen to work and take pride in their achievements. Adults make very good use of praise and encouragement and explain the reasons for a child's success clearly. Day-to-day assessment is good. Teachers use this to ensure that children have a range of suitable activities that challenge them, without causing any lack of confidence.
16. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils. They know and control their classes successfully. They use praise and encouragement well to recognise achievement and encourage pupils to continue to work hard. For example, in a very good Year 5 numeracy lesson the teacher's very good control and management and good range of activities enabled all pupils to be actively involved and focused on their learning. The teacher worked closely with learning support staff to ensure that all pupils were involved fully and to point out to the class how well particular groups of pupils were achieving. This encouraged these pupils to continue to work hard and also encouraged the other groups to try to achieve their learning objective. All pupils, including those with special educational

⁵ During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from interruption.

needs, made very good progress in the lesson and attained standards in line with those expected for their age.

17. Teachers plan their lessons in detail throughout the school. They make good use of the literacy and numeracy frameworks to identify clear learning objectives. They share these with the class, with some teachers requiring pupils to write down the objective at the start of the learning activity. This allows them to know what they are trying to achieve. Most teachers use the end of lesson feedback session to check on how successful pupils have been in meeting their objective. Teachers' good class management allows them to ask pupils to assess their own success. For example, in a good Year 4 information and communication technology lesson, the teacher used the 'thumbs up/down' method to gain a quick reaction of how pupils felt about the progress they had made. Teachers use this information to check their own assessments when evaluating the impact of their teaching. They use this information well, especially in the juniors, to inform and guide their future lesson plans and target areas of weakness. Teachers in the junior classes make good use of marking to identify ways in which pupils can improve the quality of their work. Many pupils confirmed that teachers inform them about what they need to improve and that their targets are helping them to improve the quality of their work, especially their writing.
18. Many teachers use lively teaching methods to capture pupils' interest and attention. They then use questions successfully to encourage their participation in class discussions and to extend their knowledge and understanding. For example, in a very good Year 3 lesson, the teacher's enthusiastic portrayal of a character from a story immediately gained pupils' interest. She used her voice and drama skills to convey the character's moods and feelings. This improved pupils' understanding of the character's role in the story. The teacher then used questions to extend pupils' knowledge of the purposes of dialogue in their stories and how key words could be used to illustrate characters. This enhanced pupils' knowledge and use of such words as 'smirked' and improved the quality of their writing.
19. Some teachers have good subject knowledge and use it very successfully to enable pupils to achieve very well. In a very good Year 6 mathematics lesson, the teacher's good knowledge of reflecting, rotating and translating shapes in all four quadrants enabled her to extend pupils' knowledge. Her use of key subject terminology, for example, 'vectors', enabled some more-able pupils to achieve above average standards. Most teachers maintain a good pace to lessons. They organise their lessons very successfully and use a good range of activities to ensure that pupils of different abilities are challenged well to apply their knowledge. For example, in a very good Year 3 history lesson on Ancient Egypt, the teacher ensured that she adapted the work closely to the needs of the different ability groups in the class. The teacher maintained a brisk pace and regularly reminded pupils what she expected them to have achieved by the end of the lesson. She used questions very competently to extend individual answers; for example, 'What about the bricks?' prompted a group of lower attainers to look at their initial written answers, then add another sentence to improve its quality. Most teachers use homework competently, in line with the school's policy. Year 6 teachers make good use of it, especially in English, mathematics and science, to prepare pupils for taking the national tests.
20. In the one literacy lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, the teacher did not match the learning activity to the range of different needs within the class. She did not maintain a good pace to the lesson. There was insufficient time at the end of the lesson to share ideas or review how much progress pupils had made in meeting the lesson's objective. Few pupils knew what she had expected them to achieve in the available time. They made unsatisfactory progress in their learning in the lesson.
21. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers and teaching assistants show good awareness of the targets for pupils with special educational needs in

their planning. Pupils are grouped according to their prior attainment in literacy, numeracy and science. Experienced and committed teachers and teaching assistants provide highly skilled support for pupils, both in specific groups and whilst working with the rest of their class. There is very good liaison between staff and they maintain very good records so that progress is carefully noted.

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

22. Since the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools, the development of an appropriate and relevant curriculum has been a key priority for the senior management team. This has required detailed written guidance to support staff in their planning and to ensure that pupils make consistent progress in their learning.
23. To a large extent, these goals have been achieved. Although there is further work to be done, the curriculum meets statutory requirements and is now satisfactory overall, with some strengths. Levels of attainment were very low in both literacy and numeracy. The school rightly prioritised improved standards in these subjects as crucially important if pupils were to be involved effectively in the rest of the curriculum. This has been a particular concern for older pupils who have had, within a short time, to acquire sufficient skills to allow them to cope with the demands of the curriculum at secondary level. A considerable proportion of the teaching time has been allocated to aspects of literacy and numeracy development. The school has implemented its strategies for literacy and numeracy successfully. This has led to standards in both areas rising significantly. The school is providing a curriculum that is highly relevant to the current needs of the pupils. However, both the breadth and balance of the curriculum are less secure, particularly for the 7 to 11-year-olds.
24. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception) is good. It is planned to make sure that every child has experience of the required areas of learning. There is a particular emphasis on developing children's use and understanding of language and social skills. In both nursery and reception classes, the range of opportunities for children to learn is wide and activities are prepared well and are challenging. For pupils aged five to seven, the curriculum is satisfactory overall. They are taught all the required subjects, although the depth of coverage is variable between subjects and year groups. For the older pupils, the curriculum is insufficiently balanced. All subjects are reviewed annually and statutory requirements are met. However, the priority given to language and mathematics means that pupils' skills are not developed sufficiently in some other subjects. As a result, standards in these subjects are too low. This is a particular issue for the current Year 6 for whom, over time, the progression of learning has been particularly uneven. Currently, standards in art and design, design and technology, geography and information and communication technology are below expected levels. The school does not focus enough on the steady development of the skills required. They are not planned to build consistently on prior learning. The use of information and communication technology in other subjects of the curriculum is unsatisfactory, because the majority of pupils do not have enough opportunities to extend their skills. Religious education is taught in accordance with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The school has worked very hard to produce subject policies and schemes of work which match both the school's needs and the national requirements. Teachers have developed detailed policies and comprehensive lesson plans are available for all subjects, including pupils' personal, social and health education. All curriculum areas are subject to regular detailed review by staff working parties.
25. The curriculum is planned to enable pupils to have a wide range of first-hand experiences. There is a comprehensive programme of visits both in the immediate area and further afield. This enhances the range of activities significantly. The older pupils have the

- opportunity to go on at least one residential visit. Visitors come into school to share their experiences with the pupils. The very good programme for personal, social and health education is a particular strength and is highly relevant to the circumstances and needs of the pupils. It includes drug awareness and sex education and has been regarded by the school as of equal priority to other elements of the curriculum. The provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. These are mostly sports activities, but the school has plans to develop musical opportunities further. Some pupils benefit from the chance to learn a musical instrument.
26. The school prepares pupils well to be good citizens both within the school and in the wider world. The relationships with the local secondary schools are good. This supports pupils well when they transfer to the next stage of their education. There are good links with other schools through the Small Education Action Zone, with local colleges for training placements and with the linked Beacon infant school. The school has good links with the local community. These include the housing association responsible for the local area redevelopment, access to the marketing expertise of the West Midlands Co-operative Society, links with local manufacturers and a strong and developing link with the local fire service. These links help to develop pupils' sense of belonging to a caring community, of their place within that community and their responsibilities towards it.
 27. Provision for special educational needs is very good because of its relevance for all pupils with special educational needs, especially those with emotional and behavioural needs. The nurture groups in the Acorn Room are taught very effectively so that pupils show higher levels of confidence when they are in their own classes. The level of inclusion within the school is excellent because all needs are met very well. There are challenging extension activities for more-able pupils and the school has identified a small group of gifted and talented pupils for whom additional provision is made.
 28. The provision for pupils' personal development is very good overall. It is very good for spiritual and moral development and good for cultural development. It is excellent for social development. The atmosphere in assemblies is calm and pupils are given opportunities to reflect upon the words of hymns and the message of the story they have heard. Pupils consider the beauty of the world. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to relate their learning to a wider range of issues. For example, teachers ask pupils 'Why do you think that happened?' and 'What do you think happened next?' as they encourage them to think about people's feelings or actions. Displays around the school make a good contribution to the positive school ethos in which pupils are encouraged to feel safe, secure and successful.
 29. There is a clear code of behaviour that is consistently promoted throughout the school. Moral and social development are promoted very successfully because pupils know how the rules are to be applied in the classroom and the playground. The school has worked hard to develop an open and safe learning environment in which pupils can express their views and practise moral decision-making. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. This is reinforced well by the immediate award of marbles or certificates for doing good things. The school's rules and use of rewards recognise and comment upon positive aspects of children's' work and behaviour. Pupils believe that rewards and certificates are worth earning. This belief is central to the very good systems created to encourage good behaviour. Relationships in the school are very good and staff provide pupils with very good examples on which to model their own behaviour.
 30. Pupils are engaged in co-operative work in most lessons. They share ideas, discuss points with their discussion partner and support each other in group work. The School Council gives pupils opportunities to contribute to the life of the school. For example, members of the Council interviewed representatives of companies so that they would select the best playground equipment. They enjoy feeling responsible for making the

school a better place and feel that their friends respect them because they listen to problems. Visits to museums and local places of interest provide positive links with the wider community. The residential visits for Years 5 and 6 foster a sense of community and provide an experience of living and working together in another setting. These experiences make a very positive contribution to their development and learning. All pupils are valued and fully included in the life of the school and they are proud of their school. 'It is a posh school because we take care of it', writes one pupil.

31. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Stories, music and literature from this country and diverse cultures are used thoughtfully throughout the school to extend pupils' knowledge and use of cultural imagery and language. Through visits to theatres, museums and concerts, pupils extend their cultural awareness. In assemblies, pupils reflect upon the contributions of famous people, for example, Martin Luther King. In religious education several cultures are valued. This helps pupils to broaden their knowledge and understanding effectively of the multi-cultural nature of society in both this and other countries.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. The school provides a very high quality of care and support for all of the pupils, recognising their individual needs. Staff know the pupils very well and work hard to raise their self-esteem. As a result, the pupils feel valued. Many parents and carers have expressed their wholehearted appreciation of what has been achieved.
33. Procedures for promoting and monitoring pupils' welfare are very good. All aspects of child protection are excellent. The headteacher is the designated person, who works very closely with the deputy headteacher and all members of staff. Locally agreed procedures are in place and excellent links exist between the agencies. Even the pupils themselves, who had a concern for a child, made a referral to the headteacher. All relevant first-aid procedures are in place and there is a designated member of staff. Health and safety are promoted competently within the school and amongst the pupils. All the relevant records of maintenance checks are in place although the school does not have a comprehensive system of filing to make monitoring or referrals easier.
34. The level of care and support for children with any additional needs is very high. Relationships are very good so that learning takes place in a warm, supportive and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils are aware of their targets and what they need to learn next or improve. The school complies fully with the Code of Practice⁶ and is well prepared for the introduction of the new Code of Practice in the autumn. The school works extremely well with other agencies who have provided very good levels of high quality support and advice since the two schools amalgamated. Their support and encouragement have enabled the school to make significant progress with all aspects of special educational needs provision.
35. Procedures to monitor and promote attendance are very good. Computerised forms are used for registration. As a result, monitoring of the data is simple and accurate. The school works extremely closely with the education welfare officer and the education welfare support officer. Attendance is monitored at least every 14 days by the agency. Should any pupil fall below 85 per cent attendance, then that is automatically 'flagged up' and the headteacher alerted. In instances where unauthorised absence becomes an issue, the education welfare officer invites the parents into school to discuss how this can be improved. The school is taking all reasonable steps to encourage punctuality and regular attendance. It is aware that levels of attendance are unsatisfactory. As a result

⁶ Code of Practice gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities, duties and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act.

they have set themselves a target of 93 per cent by the end of the summer term. Levels are improving. Friendly rivalry encourages the pupils to improve their attendance. In the 'celebration assembly', the winning two classes get a prize. Certificates for good attendance are awarded. Badges for one hundred percent attendance are worn with pride.

36. Procedures to monitor and promote behaviour, including eliminating racism or oppressive behaviour, are very good. The school's behaviour policy was sent to every parent. Tracking and monitoring behaviour is undertaken through the individual behaviour plans and good review systems. Where necessary, a child has a 'behaviour plan chart' which is shared with parents. Parents are fully involved, together with the outside agencies, to approach behaviour concerns on an individual basis. The education psychologist has noticed dramatic improvements in overall behaviour and pupils' self-esteem. In and around school, behaviour is consistently well managed by staff. Any incident of violence, racism or bullying is dealt with swiftly. As a result, the midday supervisors have noticed that behaviour has improved since the amalgamation. Pupils now listen to staff and obey their instructions. The pupils themselves feel behaviour is much better since the new policy and that this helps learning and understanding.
37. The school has established good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science. In addition to the national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils take tests in Years 3, 4, and 5. This builds a good picture of strengths and weaknesses that the school uses effectively to decide on priorities for the curriculum and particular group targets. There is a clear draft policy for assessment and teachers adhere carefully to the guidelines. There is a good whole-school marking policy that encourages constructive comments and points for development, as effective marking in English and science demonstrate. Careful analysis of pupils' progress leads to whole-school decisions on specific targets. For example, teachers have used the clear focus on writing skills effectively to adapt their planning across a wide range of subjects. The school is aware of the need to spread this good assessment and marking practice into all subject areas.
38. Overall, the school has very good procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress. Pupils' assessment folders are informative and show pupil progress clearly in English, mathematics and science. Pupils, especially from Years 3 to 6, understand what they need to do to improve their work, as teachers share precise targets with them. There is good use of self-assessment with the older pupils and a strong sense of helping each other to improve through positive comments on good work. The assessment for pupils with special educational needs is thorough and pupils can see that they are making good progress. The very good procedures for assessment play a key role in building confidence and self-esteem, which, in turn, motivate pupils to succeed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. The school has worked hard to improve its links with parents and carers. Parents' questionnaires, the meeting with parents before the inspection and the many parents and carers interviewed during the inspection confirmed that the links are now very good. Many, particularly those whose children have special educational needs, praised the school. These links have a significant influence on improving pupils' progress.
40. For parents of children new to the school, there is a good system of monitoring to ensure their child settles in quickly. After 14 days the parents are contacted to enquire if they have any concerns. As a result, confidence between parents and staff is created and a good home-school link established. Parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs are involved in reviews and setting of targets. They are most appreciative of the school's efforts to enable pupils with special educational needs to make more progress.

Many gave personal examples where their children, who having had bad experiences at previous schools, have made significant progress at this school. This relationship is a strength of the school.

41. The school gathers parents' views from a number of sources, including questionnaires sent with the behaviour policy guidance and from regular parent evenings. Staff have a high profile and are easily available should parents wish to see them. Management pay careful attention to these views and feedback is given to re-assure the parent or carer. Routine information given to parents is varied and is usually of a good quality. Newsletters include the list of the weekly 'stars of the week' so parents can follow their children's progress. There are evening classes, curriculum evenings and a wide variety of events advertised on the parents' notice board. Not all these events are well supported. The innovative children's prospectus is sponsored by the Midlands Co-operative Society. However, the school's prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are not sufficiently precise over attendance statistics and a greater awareness to facilities for the disabled respectively. The pupils' annual reports are well presented and specific to each child. However, targets for improvement are not clear in every year group.
42. To develop their own understanding of the topics, parents of Year 6 pupils are often invited into class when sex or drugs education is being taught. A number of parents do support teaching through the homework diary and reading log. Many diaries and logs however, do not contain parent comments or signatures. They show that many pupils do not read with adults on a regular basis. In some cases, this prevents parents being able to monitor or support their child's progress in reading.
43. A small but enthusiastic group of parents have formed a parent support group called 'PULSE'. Some fund raising has occurred which purchased curtains for the school. They work hard to attract more parents into the life of the school or support with events. In recent months, they have detected a greater response which they hope to build upon. Very few parents help in and around the school in a voluntary capacity. Those that do help mainly in the Foundation Stage. A few parents have developed their role, such as midday supervisors or escorts for the 'walking bus'. The 'after school club' is a useful support for pupils to improve their learning and social skills. It is self-financing and proving an effective additional link between the school and parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The leadership and management are very good. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher provides excellent direction to the work of the school. She works in very close partnership with an excellent and influential deputy headteacher. This senior management partnership, supported very well by staff and governors, has been the most significant factor in enabling the two schools to amalgamate successfully. The headteacher's clear vision of what she wants the pupils to achieve and her supportive, enthusiastic personal style have enabled the 'new' school to make remarkable progress since its opening in September 2000. The new headteacher and deputy headteacher have established a positive, supportive ethos. The aims of 'Safe, Secure and Successful' are known and shared by everyone and are reflected in all aspects of school life.
45. The headteacher has established a very good management structure, based on three distinct phases. This enables the different phase teams to work together effectively to contribute to separate phase and whole-school issues. Staff show excellent commitment to raise standards and their capacity to succeed is excellent. At the time of the amalgamation, the junior school had been placed in special measures. The positive influence, personal drive and enthusiastic examples given by the headteacher and her deputy have been instrumental in creating this team approach and in dramatically improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour. This was confirmed by the many comments

made to the inspection team from parents and pupils. Ninety-four per cent of the parents' questionnaires showed that the school is well led and managed. Many parents and pupils wrote or spoke to the inspection team; one comment from many similar examples was, 'There have been outstanding improvements in the transformation of the school over the past couple of years. Mrs Allen has improved the layout and atmosphere immensely. We have come a long way but still our head says 'we can go further' and I believe we will'.

46. The senior management focused initially on establishing clear policies and procedures that were known and consistently applied by all staff. These included behaviour management policies which were focused on improving pupils' behaviour and raising their self-esteem. These have been very successful. Pupils now feel valued. They want to succeed and achieve well. All staff have worked consistently well together to encourage a positive attitude to learning. Although standards of attainment are still low, they are improving. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have developed very good procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning. They have focused initially on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. They have involved subject co-ordinators in joint monitoring so that those with subject responsibilities have a clear understanding of the standards expected. The senior management team has worked with and encouraged co-ordinators to develop monitoring packs to show 'indicators of good practice'. These are shared with other teaching staff so that they are aware of what the subject co-ordinators expect them to develop in their teaching. The monitoring of teaching and learning show that these are improving standards, for example, in science. The school plans to extend these successful methods to raise standards in other subjects.
47. The senior management team track pupils' progress carefully. Phase managers have non-teaching time to look carefully each half-term at a good range of assessment information kept on each class to check on any pupils not meeting their predicted targets. They inform the headteacher and deputy headteacher in a written report and any concerns are then given priority for improvement, for example by targeting additional learning support. The deputy headteacher looks very closely at the impact of the high pupil mobility caused by the regeneration of the local area. She, together with the class teacher, assesses pupils' needs quickly. They involve the parents successfully in working with the school to enable their child to settle quickly and to improve any areas of weakness. These very good management procedures enable the school to track the progress of individual pupils closely and to ensure that they are given additional support or extension when needed. These very effective procedures are raising standards of attainment.
48. The governing body was particularly supportive of the school during its amalgamation. It continues to be very successfully involved in shaping the direction of the new school. Governors work closely with staff and have a very good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have subject responsibilities and are kept well informed through visits and meetings with headteacher, senior management and subject co-ordinators. They monitor and review subject development. Some governors have specific links with staff involved with special educational needs, and the Early Years. Governors use their good links with staff to visit school regularly to evaluate developments. The influential chair of governors maintains a very supportive partnership with the headteacher and senior staff which encourages them to implement key strategies to improve standards, for example in pupils' behaviour. Some governors have benefited from training from the local education authority. This has helped them to carry out their 'critical friend' role with increasing effectiveness. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties and is a valuable partner in contributing very well to school improvement.
49. The school has established efficient financial procedures. This was confirmed by the most recent auditors' report. They have used the two improvement plans, which the school has developed since its amalgamation, to ensure that finances are monitored carefully and targeted successfully on improvement priorities. They have linked funds closely to each

priority, although the sources of funds are not consistently identified. The school makes excellent use of a range of additional funds, for example, those from the Small Education Action Zone, Excellence in Cities as well as the Standards Fund. These have been targeted very successfully on some specific initiatives, for example the 'walking bus' and a learning mentor for Year 6 pupils, and to provide additional booster support for pupils, for example through the additional literacy sessions and the Acorn nurture room. These have made a very positive impact on pupils' standards of work and behaviour. The school faced some initial difficulties in its budget setting process due mainly to some confusion over amalgamating the previous two schools' budgets. Co-operation from the local education authority enabled these uncertainties, especially the overspends, to be resolved. The school now has a sound budget strategy. Governors are trying to develop a strategic aspect to their planning, although the possible impact of the regeneration of the local area on pupil mobility is not fully known. The school makes very good use of principles of best value. The headteacher looks very carefully at value for money, for example, by renegotiating all the contracts held by the previous schools in order to ensure that the new school is given an improved service.

50. The school manages its provision for pupils with special educational needs very well. There is a governor with responsibility for special educational needs who has a very good understanding of the range of provision within the school and monitors the provision well. The special educational needs co-ordinator has worked extremely effectively with other agencies and has developed the provision very successfully and efficiently. Funding for special educational needs is spent very prudently. Money spent on the provision of a team of extremely skilled teaching assistants and the Acorn Room has been well spent and supports the work of class teachers very effectively.
51. The number of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers is good and meets the demands of the curriculum. The number and quality of learning support assistants and other support staff are good. They work very effectively to provide good quality support for teachers and pupils. They make a significant contribution to the quality of education. Performance management has been established successfully. This is linked closely to staff professional development needs and school improvement priorities. The procedures for newly qualified teachers and new appointments are very good. Mentors are in place and regular appraisal ensures that any new appointments settle in effectively. They are fully supported throughout their formative period.
52. The school's buildings and grounds provide very good accommodation. Classrooms are all kept neat and tidy and organised well to enable teachers to supervise or visit individuals easily, without disruption to others. Teachers make good use of the walls to display the pupils' work or to emphasise personal and social education. For example; there is a meaningful anti-bullying display in the corridor. The school has clearly identified the priorities for improving the accommodation. For example, the library for the younger children is bright and inviting. Sessions are held there to improve library research skills. However, the school recognises the need to improve library facilities for the older pupils. The whole building is kept in a clean and hygienic condition by the very competent caretaker and cleaning staff. The school provides an attractive and safe learning environment, although it has identified a small concern over the safety of the floor in the 'Acorn Room'. The School Council helped develop the school's playground. They interviewed a number of companies before opting for what they considered the best 'value for money' option.
53. Resources overall are good. Since the amalgamation, the school has placed great emphasis in ensuring that resources for English, mathematics and science match the range of pupils' needs. During the inspection, there was little evidence of computers, other than those in the computer suite, being used either to support teaching or improve pupils' skills. Resources in some other subjects, such as geography and design and technology

are not developed fully. Playtime resources are very good, offering a wide variety of activities. For example; chess and draughts are played outside, weather permitting, using a raised chessboard table and seats.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In the context of its many strengths, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) a) raise standards in English by:
 - improving pupils' speaking skills through more role-play and drama;
 - establishing more precise targets and ways of recording pupils' progress in reading;
 - further extending pupils' writing skills;(paragraphs 2, 3, 68, 71 and 72)

- b) raise standards in mathematics by:
 - improving the pace and quality of pupils' work in Years 3 and 4;
 - improving teachers' marking of pupils' work to a consistently high level;(paragraphs 2, 77, 81 and 86)

- c) raise standards in information and communication technology by enabling pupils to use their skills in a broad range of subjects;
(paragraphs 7, 117, 119 and 121)

- (2) improve pupils' skills in art and design, geography and design and technology by ensuring that they build effectively on prior learning;
(paragraphs 24, 96, 101 and 105)

- (3) improve pupils' attendance by continuing to focus on ways of increasing the attendance of a small but significant number of pupils.
(paragraphs 13 and 35)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	67
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	3	23	26	14	1	0	0
Percentage	4	34	39	21	1	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	29	237
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		181

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	80

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	54
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	41

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.6
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	15	8	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	14	13
	Girls	7	8	7
	Total	19	22	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (N/A)	96 (N/A)	87 (N/A)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	12
	Girls	8	7	7
	Total	21	20	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (N/A)	87 (N/A)	83 (N/A)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	17	15	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	9	15
	Girls	11	12	14
	Total	14	21	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	44 (N/A)	66 (N/A)	91 (N/A)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	9	11
	Girls	11	12	13
	Total	17	21	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (N/A)	66 (N/A)	75 (N/A)
	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	6
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	210
Any other minority ethnic group	16

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	12	0
Other minority ethnic groups	3	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	20

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	276

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001 / 02
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	£
Total income	859,593
Total expenditure	936,809
Expenditure per pupil	3,717
Balance brought forward from previous year	117,000
Balance carried forward to next year	39,284

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	14

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 39.5%

Number of questionnaires sent out	266
Number of questionnaires returned	105

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	27	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	65	30	4	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	41	7	1	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	31	12	4	6
The teaching is good.	64	33	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	30	4	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	24	2	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	20	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	57	33	5	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	69	25	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	34	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	31	8	6	10

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

55. There were 31 children in the nursery at the time of the inspection, 8 of whom attend on a part-time basis, and 41 children in reception. Children are admitted in the September after their third birthday and the majority move into reception in the September after their fourth birthday. The rooms are attractively decorated and children are provided with a caring, supportive and stimulating start to their school life. The attainment of most children on entry to the nursery is well below the levels typical of children of this age. Children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress across all the nationally recommended areas of learning. By the time they are five, the majority of children are much closer to the expected levels of attainment in reading, writing and numeracy, but are still below the levels expected for their age in these areas.
56. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and a confident start has been made to planning across the six areas of learning. The good teaching enables children to make important gains in learning and prepares them well for Year 1. Teachers' planning takes good account of children's needs and identifies links with the National Curriculum. All staff have a very good understanding of the needs of children under five. The shared outdoor area is both attractive and stimulating for all children. Assessment is used effectively to identify children's needs and for tracking progress from entry into the school. Parents are kept well informed through informal discussions and parents' meetings.

Personal, social and emotional development

57. The majority of children enter nursery with personal and social skills that are very low in comparison with those found nationally. Children make very good progress and the majority attain the expected levels by the time they are five. Much emphasis is placed on the development of independence, working together, a sense of self-worth and feeling of achievement. For example, when they finish their models of a chick, children are proud to own their work and have their name displayed on it. Routines are well established and children become used to sitting on the carpet as soon as they arrive in school. They go into assemblies quietly and behave well, showing an interest in what is happening and the awards that are given. They know that there are rules to follow. For example, children wear a band when in the home corner, get on with their work and play happily with or alongside each other. Poor understanding of language and expectations make it difficult for some children to settle into group activities, but adults' skilled interventions help them to understand the social rules of taking turns, listening to others and carrying out instructions.
58. In reception, children build successfully on the progress made in nursery. Children's concentration and awareness improve so that most are able to sit and participate in literacy and numeracy time because of the teachers' skilful presentation of the material. Most children share and co-operate well, but there are a few children who need additional adult support to cope with a group situation and to take turns. There are clear rules and routines and most children begin to select activities and use resources independently. More-able children begin to develop an awareness of the needs of others. For example, a group of children share materials for cutting and sticking transport pictures very well, admiring each other's efforts. Children work sensibly in small groups because there are always adults to give them guidance and support.

Communication, language and literacy

59. Children make good progress in their learning because of the good teaching and emphasis placed on the development of speaking and listening skills. Many children enter the nursery with poor language and communication skills. For example, only a few more-able children speak in simple sentences, and many use single words or remain silent. Staff plan creatively to develop early reading, writing and imaginative play. Children visit the library and the library bus and the teacher's immediate use of photographs of the visits enables children to think about where they have been and sequence the events. With some prompts, children form descriptive sentences and develop a simple conversation with each other. Teachers read stories well to children and use questions skilfully to help them understand the stories. A very good link is created between the book corner and the painting area. Children are asked to find a book with a picture of an animal they want to paint. This provides an opportunity for selecting a book, looking again at the story and finding the name of the animal.
60. Valuable assessments of children's progress are passed on to reception so that future learning builds on skills developed in the nursery. As a result, a few more-able children begin to recognise words, read simple stories and recognise letters and sounds from the alphabet. They achieve the expected levels by the time they are five. Children make good progress in learning the first words from the books they read. More-able children write simple sentences independently and, after a lesson on floating and sinking, they write details of their experiment, which they read back to the class. Many lower-attaining children still need support to tell a story, although they show a great interest in books. They attempt to write a sentence, making use of any sounds or words that they know or copy under a model of the teacher's writing. Thoughtful management of the children ensures that they receive tasks that are matched well to their prior attainment. Staff plan well together to encourage reading and writing. Teachers make very good use of the time at the end of the lesson for the development of speaking and listening skills. Children are given the opportunity to talk about what they have made or done in the lesson and this is a very valuable sharing time for everyone.

Mathematical development

61. Most children's achievement is very good relative to their prior attainment. This area of learning is taught well through many practical tasks. Staff plan carefully because most children's mathematical language and understanding are very limited. The teacher makes sure that each area of learning provides opportunities for mathematical vocabulary to be developed. For example, in a games lesson, children select a big or small ball, see how many goals they can score or how many beanbags go into a hoop. Staff consistently ask children questions, such as 'How many people or objects?', and this gives them an opportunity to practise their counting. Songs and number rhymes are used well to reinforce understanding of 'more' and 'less'.
62. By the time children enter the reception class, they have gained more confidence and their concentration skills have improved because of the good teaching in the nursery. Most children do not achieve the expected levels by the time they are five. Children join in counting to 100 and in tens to 100. Children thoughtfully estimate how many bricks in a group and are pleased when they discover that they are close to the actual number. Children compare models and people, which extends their understanding of words, such as 'bigger', 'smaller', 'taller' and 'shorter'. Staff work very well together to plan and run well-organised numeracy lessons. Teachers are confident about teaching basic numeracy skills and provide challenging tasks that are matched well to children's prior attainment. They phrase questions carefully to assess children's understanding and keep detailed records in order to assess progress.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. Children achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Most of the current group of pupils are very close to achieving the expected levels by the time they are five. Teachers plan to attract children's interest and curiosity and to stimulate learning. For example, children transfer their beans from individual pots to a large pot. They are amazed when they see the root systems that have developed since their bean was planted and look carefully through magnifying glasses at the roots and leaves. Children use the computer without adult support and more-able children 'click' and 'drag' parts of pictures to complete the whole. Children have visitors to talk to them about their work. These include the crossing patrol lady, fire officers, the librarian and a postman. *Mr Messy* visited the nursery and children were not at all happy with his untidiness, because they knew his behaviour was not acceptable.
64. In the reception classes, teachers extend children's understanding through very effectively planned experiences. Children make choices and select their own materials and resources. They learn to experiment and build with construction materials. Very careful prompting and questioning by adults help children to think about what they are making. Children make boats and test them to see whether they sink or not. If they sink, they are asked, 'What can you do to stop your boat sinking?' When all boats will float, children test their boats to see which goes the furthest when blown or flicked. Adults help children to work out how to make the test a fair one and this develops their thinking skills well. There are many opportunities for structured play and exploration and children respond well to these. When using the computer, children gasp when they click on a key and a picture of them appears on the screen. With adult support, every child enters his or her name on the screen, more-able children using the 'shift' key to make capital letters.

Creative development

65. Children make good progress because of the range of opportunities to develop skills. Most children are likely to attain the expected levels by the time they are five. Children enjoy finger or hand painting. They concentrate well when painting and use brushes and colours carefully. Adults use skilful questioning to make children think about their task and this improves their concentration and their skills. Children make interesting collages with a wide variety of textures and shapes and colour in outlined figures with pens and crayons with some care. Children enjoy music and are delighted when they hear the song they have created about the library bus on a tape. They sing along to this very proudly. Staff plan very good opportunities for imaginative play both in the classroom and in the very well equipped outside area. Children learn to play with each other and conversations are developed well by adults who intervene to extend answers quickly and effectively.
66. In reception, children have a good understanding of primary colours and paint with deliberation and care. The quality of children's observational drawings improves as they mature and children's attention is drawn to what they could improve. Children enjoy listening to music and join in the singing in assemblies enthusiastically. They play imaginatively with construction materials and become very involved in 'a flight into space' in 'a space ship' in the room because it is so realistic and well resourced.

Physical development

67. In the nursery, there are many opportunities for physical development through indoor and outdoor activities. The majority of children should attain the expected levels by the time they are five. Children make imaginative and active use of the delightful outdoor area, moving with control and confidence on wheeled toys and playing with balls or gardening. They have weekly sessions in the hall where they learn to throw and kick balls accurately. By the time they reach reception, children's ball skills are improving so that they dribble

and bounce balls around the hall, many of the children controlling them well. About half of the children find close control difficult but everyone tries hard and they join in a competitive team game very co-operatively. Their use of space in the hall improves as they become more used to working there and responding to the teacher's signals to stop and move. From entry into the nursery, children are learning to use tools. They use materials and equipment with increasing dexterity and demonstrate good use of modelling tools when working with play dough or emptying and filling containers. Children, in reception, use scissors competently to cut out circles and show good manipulative skills when fixing construction toys together.

ENGLISH

68. Pupils enter the school with standards in English that are well below the national expectations. By the end of Year 2, pupils show good improvement and attain standards that are below the national average overall. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards that are well below the national average but above that of similar schools. These standards reflect the very high number of pupils with special educational needs in the present Year 6; the above average number of pupils who enter the school during their primary years; and the fact that the boys have not been achieving as well as the girls.
69. The school has taken urgent action to improve pupils' attainment. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support, through a range of specifically designed programmes and very good teacher and teaching assistant support. They make good progress. They also benefit from the carefully targeted individual work that is evident in lessons for all pupils. Newly arrived pupils are promptly assessed and given good support to help them settle quickly and take advantage of the exciting work in lessons. The boys benefit from the good selection of reading materials and the wide range of activities designed to appeal to a variety of different ways of learning. They are now as highly motivated as the girls and are making significant progress, especially in writing, which is the current special focus in the school. The few pupils with English as an additional language have at least satisfactory English language skills. They benefit from the rich language environment established in the school and make progress in line with other pupils. The fast stream⁷ in Year 6 and the careful grouping in all classes help more-able pupils to explore ideas further. They produce good work, for example, in the writing booster⁸ classes, where boys and girls write with confidence in a wide range of styles.
70. The other important key to the improving standards comes from pupils, especially from Years 3 to 6, understanding exactly what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers' precise, constructive, marking pinpoints targets for development and pupils try hard to use these suggestions in future work. Pupils are beginning to correct their own work and appreciate the need to draft and redraft written pieces. They benefit from being involved in assessing their own work and that of their classmates.
71. The standard of pupils' speaking and listening skills remains well below nationally expected levels throughout the school. By the end of Year 2, pupils still give single word or short phrase answers with descriptions to cover words that they do not know or recall. For example, one boy described 'The green stuff in the sea' when searching for the word 'seaweed'. Where there is good teaching, teachers ask carefully sequenced questions to help the pupils build up extended answers and model whole-sentence responses. Teachers are very aware of the pupils' need to expand their vocabulary. All classrooms have key words on display and, where there is good or better teaching, these are constantly reinforced throughout the lessons. The 'think, pair, share' strategy is very effective and is improving pupils' confidence and fluency, as they establish their ideas in small groups before telling the whole class. In Year 3, role-play in pairs helped pupils

⁷ The school organises Year 6 pupils into [three](#) ability sets or streams for literacy, numeracy and science.

⁸ Booster classes provide extra help for pupils who need it to reach Level 4 in literacy and numeracy at the end of Year 6.

forget their own inhibitions and encouraged them to speak with confidence in front of the class. Teachers are aware of the need to develop role-play and drama opportunities more fully in order to improve confidence and speaking skills. The good behaviour policy throughout the school gives pupils the chance to listen to each other. They show respect when others speak. Good teachers encourage pupils to listen carefully to instructions and to each other's work so that they can comment on particular areas for improvement. Good or better teaching leads to pupils building on each other's ideas in discussions, where they develop both listening and speaking skills.

72. Pupils' reading skills are below the national average by the end of Year 2 but well above similar schools. Pupils know how to build up words using phonics and pick up clues from the context and pictures. The more-able pupils use these strategies to self-correct. Standards in reading are well below average by the end of Year 6, although there were significant improvements in the results in reading in the 2001 national tests. The low attainment in reading comes significantly from the low standards in speaking. Throughout the school, many pupils are not very confident with reading aloud. The more-able pupils read with accuracy but little expression. As pupils get older and reading materials become more complex, they do not readily understand the more subtle meanings. Good teachers and teaching assistants constantly check for understanding and encourage pupils to predict what may happen. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with their reading through individual and small group support. All pupils enjoy the good range of books available in the classrooms. Years 1 and 2 classes love their specially designed library, with its jungle theme that they chose, and benefit from planned lessons in the library. The junior library has a good selection of non-fiction books that appeal to the boys and help with independent research skills. However, it is not fully developed into the multi-media resource centre for learning planned for the near future. This resource is crucial to the development of independent learning skills. Some pupils use the public library and have access to computers at home, but most pupils rely on school to provide them with good learning materials and opportunities. Pupils take reading books home and keep reading logs but these do not reflect progress in sufficient detail. The school has detailed plans to tackle reading skills as the next priority.
73. Improving writing skills has been the highest priority since the new school opened. Teachers and pupils are very clear about the writing targets. This has led to significant improvements in writing skills throughout the school, although such improvements have not had time to impact on the national test results at the end of Year 6. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 form letters with reasonable accuracy and are building their confidence in spelling through using word banks and spelling strategies. They are proud of their work on display and presentation skills, especially for boys, are improving. Teachers concentrate on developing writing skills in all the subjects. This means that pupils from an early age realise that they need to write in different ways for different occasions. For example, they appreciate that they should use a different style when writing a science report to the style needed for creative writing. This appreciation develops as they progress through the school. The booster classes in Year 6 show the benefits of highlighting the use of writing across a wide range of subjects. Pupils are now aware of the need to choose words and phrases carefully according to the audience. They benefit from reading their written work to each other in pairs and to the whole group. They offer helpful comments to each other and this improves their own understanding of what makes for successful writing. Teachers and pupils take this mutual assessment very seriously and pupils' work benefits from the mature relationships established through this process. Pupils are beginning to use word-processing to help improve presentation skills and teachers are aware of the need to develop the use of computers further.
74. Teaching is sound overall in Years 1 and 2 and good overall in Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 and 2, the mostly sound teaching develops pupils' basic skills and provides them with a secure environment in which to learn. Activities are not always very stimulating but the

pupils are keen and want to learn. Teachers do not always time activities crisply. This leads to unnecessary repetition or overlong explanations, which reduce the time when pupils could be actively involved in the learning process. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, the lack of precise timing meant that pupils did not make sufficient progress. Where teaching is good, there is clear, concise sharing of learning aims, expressed in language that the pupils can understand. Teachers use questions effectively to check for understanding and to further promote pupils' thinking. There is a good range of lively activities and use of visual aids, such as puppets, that motivate pupils and challenge them to improve their work. Pupils respond well to these higher expectations and are keen to please. However, overall teaching in Years 1 and 2 needs a more tightly focused approach in order to ensure pupils continue to make the required progress.

75. In Years 3 to 6, teaching in lessons is predominantly very good with some excellent features. Here, the teaching sparkles with stimulating ideas that encourage pupils to take risks and 'have a go'. Through constructive comments and praise, pupils develop confidence and self-esteem that encourages them to work hard. They now want to succeed and, through the careful guidance offered by good teachers and teaching assistants, they understand how they can improve. The good and better teaching involves detailed planning and accurate timing that moves pupils in careful steps through a series of lively activities, designed to reinforce key concepts and skills. All teachers in Years 3 to 6 have high but realistic expectations, which the pupils make every effort to meet. The lessons are rigorous but enjoyable, to the extent of pupils expressing disappointment when the lesson has to end. In the very good and excellent lessons, the level of concentration and determination to succeed is remarkable. This applies to all pupils, regardless of gender or levels of attainment. For example, in Year 6, the lower-attaining pupils thoroughly enjoyed the discussion and activities involved in doing a previous national test paper. The subsequent pride and rise in their self-esteem was clearly evident. In a similar manner, the more-able group took immense care in redrafting their horror stories in order to bring in the key criteria discussed in previous lessons. When they read their work to each other, there was genuine interest and thought-provoking comments that pushed their learning forwards. Although progress over time is still not meeting teachers' high expectations, learning in lessons, throughout the juniors, is at least good and often very good. There are clear signs of improving standards, especially in the specifically targeted area of writing.
76. There is good attention to developing literacy skills in a wide range of subjects, which is constantly updated and expanded as practice develops. For example, there was evidence of pupils using them well in history, information and communication technology, religious education, geography and science. The very good leadership, management, and teaching skills demonstrated by the co-ordinator instil a desire in teachers and pupils alike to improve standards further.

MATHEMATICS

77. Pupils attain standards in mathematics at the end of Year 6 that are below the national average. Although this appears similar to the results of the national tests in 2001, the school's performance is, overall, improving rapidly. Evidence from the inspection and analysis of the school's predictions for pupils' performance indicate that although the overall percentage of pupils achieving the expected level may have declined slightly from 2001, the proportion achieving the challenging higher level is likely to have increased significantly. This is being achieved in a year group where more than half the pupils are on the register of special educational needs and a significant number have been in the school for only a short time. Teachers work very closely with support staff to ensure that all these pupils are fully included in learning activities and make good progress. Some are likely to achieve average levels by the end of the year.

78. Pupils attain average standards at the end of Year 2. This is an improvement on the results in the national tests in 2001, when standards were slightly below average. An increased proportion of pupils is working at the higher Level 3, having benefited from the more rigorous approach to the teaching of mathematics now evident across the school.
79. Although there is some variation in the range of ability and prior experience of different year groups, standards in mathematics are rising across the school. This is the result of the rigorous implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, the raised expectations of teachers and their very good management skills, the very tight planning of lessons and the highly effective use of learning support staff.
80. Most Year 2 pupils are confident in counting in twos, fives and tens to 100. They have a good knowledge of place value up to 100. They recognise odd and even numbers accurately. They confidently add on, totalling numbers to 20, sometimes with the support of a number line. More able pupils achieve well. Some sequence confidently to 1000 and recognise place value to hundreds, tens and units. They add on 100 to a given number and identify coins which add up to £10. Average-attaining pupils are dividing accurately by two and five, while the more-able are dividing, mainly accurately, by four and six. More-able pupils are successfully attempting linear addition sums with totals up to 200.
81. Year 3 and 4 pupils build satisfactorily on these number skills, although the pace of progress is rather slow in Year 3. Progress in Year 4 is accelerated for some pupils because of the setting of the year group by ability. There is a high proportion of pupils with challenging behaviour in the year group. This restricts the progress in the lower attaining set, off-setting the particularly good progress in the upper set. In Year 3, only a small proportion of pupils are confident in the subtraction of one and two-digit numbers mentally. In written work, more-able pupils add and subtract two and three-digit numbers confidently, calculate doubles of given numbers and are beginning to cope successfully with number tasks which are embedded in word 'problems'. In Year 4, more-able pupils have good recall of a range of tables and number bonds. They double three-digit numbers mentally using a range of strategies, mainly partitioning, where they deal with the hundreds, tens and units separately and then combine the totals. Lower-attaining pupils have less well-developed skills in number. They are challenged by doubling numbers less than ten and a few cannot halve 20 or 24 mentally.
82. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 show the best progress in their number skills, as a result of very intensive teaching, particularly in Year 6. Year 5 pupils accurately add or subtract three digit numbers, or larger, in vertical format, divide with remainders, round numbers to the nearest 10 or 100 and work successfully with negative numbers. Year 6 pupils use a much wider range of number strategies, largely acquired through a period of intensive revision and extension, to compensate for significant prior gaps in their learning. More-able pupils confidently divide by 10, 100 and 1,000 and use the grid method accurately for multiplication. They work out long multiplication calculations correctly and are tackling word problems involving money with increased confidence. In the lower Year 6 set, one pupil, when looking at a 'fares table', calculated the difference between £15.00 and £17.50 mentally, by adding on whole pounds and then the extra pennies, finally combining his two answers. There is a focus on guiding pupils towards being more aware of the range of strategies they use and explaining their thinking logically. This is improving pupils' knowledge and understanding of number.
83. The mathematics curriculum fully includes all required aspects. Pupils have secure knowledge of other topics, such as angles and basic geometry. They calculate area and perimeter by applying formulae correctly. By Year 6, they understand the basic concepts of probability. In a very good Year 6 lesson, the highest-achieving pupils were transforming shapes on a four-quadrant grid, involving translation, rotation and reflection. This was a highly challenging activity and was largely achieved successfully by the group

- a good example of an extension activity which really moved pupils' learning forward. A similar, and very successful lesson was seen in Year 5, when the most-able pupils were coping confidently with aspects of data-handling – calculating mean, mode and median quickly and accurately. The school has worked hard to support pupils in applying their skills when faced with number problems. For many pupils, this reflects underlying difficulties with language, but there is evidence that they are becoming increasingly confident – particularly as the school becomes more successful in securing basic literacy skills.
84. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy very successfully. This has encouraged pupils to have positive views about mathematics, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Pupils' mental skills are developing rapidly. They enjoy being challenged. The key strength in many lessons is the brisk pace which teachers sustain. This was evident particularly in Year 5 and with the more-able in Year 6. This promotes good progress and improves pupils' learning. There is increased challenge for all pupils, in particular the more-able. This is raising the proportion of pupils who achieve at the higher levels in both Years 2 and 6. The Year 5 teacher developed her lesson very effectively, with a general introduction for all. Then groups left in turn, with support staff, to begin work. The highest attainers remained until the teacher had explained the most challenging tasks and then they went off to begin work. Occasionally, teachers introduce learning activities too slowly, making it difficult to hold pupils' attention.
85. Teaching is satisfactory for the younger pupils. It is good for the 7 to 11-year-olds. Occasionally, for the older pupils, it is very good. Teachers manage their classes well, effectively holding pupils' attention. They plan well and share learning objectives with their pupils. For example, Year 2 pupils have recently started to write the learning objective before starting their written work. Teachers use the end-of-lesson feedback session well, to check pupils' learning, but this is sometimes rather rushed. Most teachers use questions very effectively to extend pupils' thinking. This was frequently seen in Years 5 and 6. In particular, questioning is effective when it challenges pupils to analyse their strategy and to explain this to the group. Pupils use their numeracy skills frequently in science and occasionally in geography. There are missed opportunities for pupils to extend these skills, for example, in design and technology. There is very little use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in mathematics.
86. The use of assessment information in mathematics is very good. This is improving standards rapidly and gives teachers a clear view of what pupils have achieved and still need to do. They have plenty of challenging material available to extend the more-able and pupils have responded well to their teachers' ambitions for them. The marking of pupils' work remains an area for further development. Although most teachers follow the school's policy, too often their brief, sometimes over-enthusiastic, comments do not give pupils a clear direction for improving their work.
87. The subject co-ordinator provides good, clear leadership for the subject. She has monitored teaching effectively, supported by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, and has monitored and evaluated pupils' written work. Resources are good in both range and quality. The subject benefits from the good availability of well-prepared learning support staff who deal very effectively with those pupils who have special educational needs.

SCIENCE

88. The provision for learning is good and pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Pupils attain standards that are very close to the levels expected nationally in all areas of the subject by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In all year groups, there are a considerable number of pupils who have special educational needs or have come into the school during the school year. This has a significant effect upon results in statutory assessment tests. Standards have improved on those attained by pupils in the 2001 national tests for 11 year-olds and the teacher assessments for seven-year-olds. Factors that contribute to the improving standards in science include:
- an imaginative and consistent approach to the teaching of science through the school's guidelines, 'Six steps to super science'
 - good, and frequently very good, teaching by teachers and teaching assistants
 - a strong emphasis on practical scientific enquiry and experimentation
 - good use of assessment for the formation of groups to ensure that tasks match pupils' abilities and very careful monitoring of pupils' progress
 - very good emphasis on the correct use of scientific vocabulary
 - pupils' enjoyment of the subject.
- An area for further improvement is:
- more use of information and communication technology for data handling.
89. Pupils enter Year 1 with knowledge and understanding of the world that is below that expected for their age. They know that humans have babies and sequence six pictures to show how babies grow into older adults. With support from the teacher, pupils complete a grid to show that they understand the different skills we develop as we grow older. They refer thoughtfully to the grid to write simple sentences next to the pictures they have ordered. Pupils in Year 2 look forward to their lesson about the cycle of human growth. The teacher uses the lesson as an opportunity to develop initiative and skills of working in small groups. Groups decide upon questions for two mothers who bring in a baby and a toddler. Their questions are relevant and the parents work very well with the teacher to extend pupils' questions and answers. 'Let's have some detectives', says the teacher. 'Why don't these clothes fit the baby any more?' By rephrasing and simplifying questions, the teacher enables pupils to realise that the baby has grown and what has made her grow. Pupils think hard about questions and answers in the lesson and conclude that, since adults have babies, the cycle repeats itself.
90. Pupils in Year 3 look with horror at photographs of unhealthy mouths and teeth. They recall the visit from the 'Health Caravan' and their previous learning about teeth, using the terms 'molars' and 'incisors' confidently. The teacher introduces the word 'plaque' purposefully and tells them that they will see how much plaque they have on their teeth. Many are unsure of the disclosing tablets but all persevere. They look with great interest at the areas of pink in their mouths before cleaning their teeth extremely thoughtfully. Pupils in Year 4 demonstrate very good recall of previous learning about solids and liquids. They have a good understanding of the need to make predictions about what will happen when some solids are added to liquids. They realise that, if the water were coloured, they would not be able to see what was happening to the solids. Lower-attaining pupils have prepared grids on which to record their observations about the experiment but more-able pupils draw their own grid, measuring out how many lines they will need. A third group works with the teacher to draw the grid, discussing each stage carefully. Pupils understand the need for a fair test and realise that if they mix the solids for example, flour and sugar, their test will not meet requirements.
91. More-able pupils in Year 6 revise how to plan a fair test and think of some of the key words they have learnt. They discuss some very good ideas for an investigation with their discussion partner and identify areas where they make errors. The teacher ensures that

revision takes place in a lively and purposeful manner and refers pupils to pages in their study guide that will help them check what has been discussed in the lesson. Pupils are clear about the terms they use and have a good understanding across all aspects of science. Pupils with lower prior attainment know that 'good scientists think, speak and use correct vocabulary', such as 'force' and 'air resistance'. They devise a fair test for an experiment with parachutes, discussing the problems of their previous test openly and objectively. Pupils know why predictions are not realised and are very clear about the construction of a fair test. The teacher's enthusiasm motivates pupils very well and they realise that revision can be fun.

92. Learning throughout the school is good and pupils make good progress. Pupils build on what they have learned before, recalling terms and equipment used well. Very good support is given to pupils with special educational needs and tasks are matched well to their abilities. For example, pupils work in the 'reinforcement' groups and teachers and teaching support staff write down ideas for pupils. They ask open-ended questions which help pupils to structure their replies and thinking. Teachers and teaching assistants frequently record what a lower-attaining pupil says about an experiment. This enables them to check pupils' level of understanding of the task and note areas where more support is required. More-able pupils have opportunities to work and achieve at a higher level.
93. Pupils' behaviour in science is good because pupils enjoy the lessons and find them interesting. They say that they like to learn and concentrate well for extended periods on their practical activities. Although some find the writing difficult, they try hard with the written elements.
94. The quality of teaching is good, and sometimes very good. There are good features in every lesson. Scientific terms are introduced and used correctly so that pupils' understanding of them is increased. Teachers plan stimulating lessons and use interesting resources. This ensures that pupils are purposefully involved in the practical activities. The practical work develops pupils' social skills very well. For example, pupils use the time given for them to discuss with their partner very purposefully. Teachers explain clearly the purpose of lessons and discuss with the pupils what has been achieved during the lesson. Marking of pupils' work is helpful and there is usually a suggestion of how the pupils could improve their presentation or the quality of their work. Teachers have high expectations of the quality of presentation and most pupils present their work carefully, using the correct formats. There is a clear emphasis on developing pupils' thinking skills and staff ask relevant questions that will extend pupils' understanding very skilfully. They strike a fine balance between leading pupils to expected conclusions and allowing them to find out for themselves. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to maintain pupils' enthusiasm for the subject.
95. The co-ordinator leads the subject very well and regularly monitors teaching, teachers' planning and pupils' work. The use of language and literacy skills in the writing of reports and the discussions is good. Numeracy is used effectively in graphs and measuring. Resources are good and visits, for example to the Botanical Gardens, enhance pupils' learning greatly. There are some good examples of observational drawing skills of flowers and plants but more use could be made of information and communication technology for data handling.

ART AND DESIGN

96. Pupils attain standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 that are below national expectations. Although there are some good individual examples of art work, pupils do not make satisfactory progress overall in their learning. They do not develop their skills consistently and teachers do not ensure that pupils build their skills and knowledge soundly on prior learning. The school's strong focus on literacy and numeracy is limiting the opportunities for promoting pupils' artistic and design skills. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, do not have enough opportunities to develop their own ideas, try out a broad range of materials and techniques and evaluate their own work and that of others. In discussion with pupils, their knowledge and understanding of the styles of other artists were limited. Teachers do not encourage pupils to use their sketchbooks consistently to try out ideas and improve initial designs. The sketchbooks that are being used do not show any significant improvement in pupils' skills across the school, for example, in drawing.
97. Year 2 pupils work in a limited range of media. Most have average observational drawing skills. They used pencils carefully to draw a natural object, for example, a stone or a tree branch. Pupils of all abilities drew its shape quite accurately, although few tried to show the tone and texture of the object. They used their drawing to develop a collage, using different materials to represent the changing colour and texture. Some more-able pupils were careful in choosing and selecting from the range of materials. They had some good ideas over using different shades of colour, for example, grey and black, to show lines on their object. Most Year 2 pupils concentrated more on the enjoyment of the cutting and sticking activity. Few considered carefully the quality of the materials and how they could be used to show the differing features of their chosen object. They did not try to evaluate what they had achieved in order to identify ways in which it could have been improved.
98. Year 4 pupils achieved well when the teacher provided a good range of picture resources to encourage them to think carefully about different chair designs. She encouraged them to look carefully at the designs and then comment on the differing styles. This focused pupils' attention effectively, especially on how to use perspective in their drawings. However, pupils' sketching skills were not sufficiently well developed. Although many could see that the perspective of the chair changed as the angle of the view altered, very few were able to create a similar perspective in their designs. Most pupils improved their knowledge and understanding of how to use their sketches to show perspective, shape and texture. However, few had the skills needed to reflect their knowledge in their drawings. Most Year 6 pupils use a view finder successfully to provide a frame for their still-life drawing. However, their drawing skills are not developed enough to allow them to represent shape and perspective with any consistent accuracy. Year 6 pupils evaluate their work and that of others very well. They clearly identify what needs improving, although most lack the level of skill needed to make these improvements.
99. The quality of teaching in the five lessons observed was sound overall. It was good in two lessons and never less than sound. Where teachers have good subject knowledge, they use it well to identify ways in which pupils can improve the quality of their work. For example, in a good Year 4 lesson, the teacher used good picture resources to clearly illustrate the design styles of the different chairs and focus the pupils' attention on perspective. She pointed out ways in which pupils could try to create this effect in their sketches. This motivated pupils who worked hard and tried hard to implement some of the ideas which had been illustrated. Teachers provide some good artefacts to gain pupils' interest and sustain their attention, for example when encouraging them to practise their observational sketches. Where teachers do not sustain a brisk lesson pace, or do not make it clear what they expect pupils to achieve, this does not ensure that all pupils make good use of the time to complete their work. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the teacher encouraged pupils to look for suitable materials for their collage. She did not indicate how

long pupils had to make their choice. Many pupils took too long to decide on their choice. This did not leave sufficient time for them to complete the activity.

100. The subject co-ordinator has only recently taken on the responsibility. She has a strong subject expertise and clear ideas on developing the subject and raising standards. The co-ordinator has used national subject guidance to improve the curriculum and indicate ways in which the subject can be promoted through other subjects, for example, historical sketches. She has identified opportunities to use the Internet to extend pupils' knowledge, for example, in art appreciation, although this is not yet developed effectively. She has enhanced the range of learning activities for pupils. For example, in the autumn term, she arranged for Year 4 pupils to work with an artist from Birmingham's Ikon Gallery on a 'Drawing Power Project'. The artist came into school to work with the group of pupils. Their work was displayed at the gallery and a compact disc and video were made to show what the pupils had achieved. This encouraged pupils' positive attitude to the subject and improved their skills and knowledge.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. Pupils attain below expected standards in design and technology at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve less well than they should. At present, they make unsatisfactory progress over time. The main reasons for the weaknesses in design and technology are:
- the subject has not been a priority in the school;
 - basic but essential skills in design, making and evaluating are not developed progressively, or monitored, across the school;
 - there are no assessment procedures;
 - there are insufficient resources and they are not efficiently organised.
102. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on the analysis of the very limited amount of pupils' work which was available, wall displays, subject documentation and discussions with staff and pupils.
103. Currently, Years 1 and 2 pupils are covering the same curriculum. There is some evidence of plans, earlier in the current year, for pupils to make a wheelbarrow and a puppet. Wall displays indicate recent work on textile design when making 'Joseph's Coat'. The designs seen are at a very basic level. There is no evaluation of the wheelbarrow design in the design and technology folder, and no design (but an evaluation) for the puppet-making task. The school has not retained any sample artefacts as evidence and it is not clear whether these projects were fully completed. Overall, the available evidence indicates that pupils' experience is inconsistent and fragmented. There is no structure within which pupils' skill development can be effectively promoted.
104. It is similar in Years 3 to 6. A number of projects have been undertaken in Year 3, such as designing a photograph frame, designing a greetings card and making/evaluating sandwiches. At best, these have been covered superficially. The design process is basic, no sample objects have been retained and no tasks, other than the current one, appear to have been evaluated. The same weaknesses exist in Year 4, with insufficient time given to the planning or evaluative stages. Year 5 pupils have studied musical instruments and, at the time of the inspection, were making and evaluating bread. Again, the design, make and evaluate process was not consistently developed, although the lesson observed was well managed and successful. No work in design and technology has been covered in Year 6 in the current year, although it is planned that opportunities will be provided in the second half of the current term.

GEOGRAPHY

105. Pupils attain standards in geography that meet those expected by the end of Year 2. They attain standards that are well below what is expected by the end of Year 6. This is because:
- geography has not been a priority in the curriculum;
 - basic geographical skills are not built effectively on prior learning;
 - assessment procedures are unsatisfactory;
 - resources are not as good as they should be.
106. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. Other evidence was drawn from the analysis of pupils' work in books, from looking at displays around the school, and from talking to pupils and staff.
107. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, currently following the same curriculum, have completed a unit of work on 'Our Island Home', based on the *Katie Morag* stories and the imaginary Isle of Struay. This has provided opportunities to look at maps of Great Britain and of holiday destinations around the world, together with a 'map' of Struay. They know that islands are different from the mainland and that you have to cross the sea to get there. They know about the types of transport which might be appropriate for a small island, for example, small boats and tractors. They know that the post office is a service which links many tiny communities. They know and understand some of the similarities and differences between the world they know in Northfield and the isolated communities on Struay. This was enhanced by a walk in the local shopping centre to observe key features of the locality. The work seen indicates that although the level and quality of recording varies slightly between classes, there has been a fairly thorough coverage of the topic, with standards around the expected level. This topic gives effective early support for learning about maps. Literacy skills are not strongly developed in geography. Much of the recorded work is either in the form of maps or worksheets, where little writing is required.
108. Evidence of work covered is spasmodic in Years 3 to 6. While almost all planned units of work have been started (apart from Year 6), the quality and extent of recorded work are very variable. Typically, units of work are underdeveloped and incomplete, suggesting that too little time has been given to the work and that teachers' expectations are too low. In Year 3, there is a small amount of recorded work relating to the local area study. There is little evidence that the work on 'Weather around the World' was covered. In Year 4, while there is little record of the work on 'Improving our Environment', the study of an Indian village is more thorough and detailed. Written work is of a better standard in this topic. In Year 5, recorded work on the study of 'Water' is limited and gives no clear indication as to how the topic was developed or how pupils' knowledge was extended. There is some reference to the key characteristics of monsoon and desert climates. There has been no geography taught in the current year in Year 6. However, the school has planned to cover two units of work in the second half of term, in conjunction with the residential visit and a river field trip. Discussion with Year 6 pupils indicated that their recall of past work on countries, rivers, landscape, physical features, weather, mapwork or developing countries is very limited.
109. The one lesson observed, in Year 5, was successful. Pupils had conducted a survey as to whether the nearby High Street should be closed to traffic and to look at options for alleviating traffic problems. They had collected data which they had analysed and graphed and, in the lesson seen, were drafting a letter to the mayor to put forward their best proposals. This session provided good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills. Although pupils' underlying geographical skills were weak, this well-managed lesson ensured, by constantly referring to the key points, that pupils increased their awareness of how environmental problems could be managed more effectively.

110. While teaching in the lesson observed was good, it is satisfactory overall for pupils in Years 1 and 2. It is unsatisfactory for the older pupils. Teachers' expectations are not high enough and there is a lack of challenge and rigour. Teachers do not extend more-able pupils sufficiently and the development of pupils' geographical skills is weak. Where teachers' subject knowledge is good, they use time well and their expectations are high, as in the Year 5 lesson, then standards rise. Pupils with special educational needs, although supported very well, achieve standards similar to the other pupils.
111. The subject co-ordinator is responsible for geography and history and both subjects are managed satisfactorily. While the co-ordinator is knowledgeable and able to help colleagues, the subjects do not yet have a high profile in the school, given other priorities at present. There have been no opportunities to evaluate teaching and its impact on learning. There are no assessment procedures to track pupils' progress. Resources in geography, while plentiful, need updating so that atlases, for example, reflect more closely the world we know today. Information and communication technology is used only to a limited extent to support learning.

HISTORY

112. Pupils attain standards that are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils benefit from the good links made between history and developing their speaking, reading and writing skills.
113. In Years 1 and 2, pupils appreciate the differences in aspects of British life in the past and the present. From pictures, they spot the difference but do not find it easy to explain these observations orally. Where there is good teaching, the teacher helps them build up the information into sentences by asking sequential questions. In this way, for example, a boy moved from the single word response of 'Beach-huts' to describing when and where they were built and what they looked like. Pupils recall famous people that they have studied, such as Florence Nightingale, and talk and write about their achievements.
114. In Years 3 to 6, pupils enjoy history, especially when they are involved in visits or making or examining artefacts. Year 3 relish the gory details of the mummification process in Ancient Egypt, with more-able readers helping others to find the relevant information on the website or in reference books. They take a pride in their work on display and enjoy using the specialist terms associated with mummification. Year 4 pupils show close observation skills when looking at pictures of Anglo-Saxon artefacts at Sutton Hoo. For example, one pupil suggested a connection with Christianity when noticing a cross on an item of jewellery. They benefit from seeing further artefacts first-hand in a local museum and delight in their finds on the Internet. They show understanding of the difference between primary and secondary sources and benefit from the teachers' reminders of possible bias in secondary sources. It was not possible to observe lessons in Years 5 and 6 during the inspection but work in books and talking to pupils show a sound progression of skills and knowledge.
115. In the few lessons seen, teaching was good. Teachers encourage close observation and help pupils articulate their ideas more fluently by deliberately teaching and reinforcing key vocabulary. Through effective questioning, they help pupils pick up on each other's ideas and expand them. Where pupils are in small groups, either in the Acorn Room or with teaching assistants, they benefit from very good individual support that builds confidence and develops independent learning skills. Teachers work well with the enthusiasm shown by pupils and engage them through a lively range of activities, such as finding and identifying Saxon coins found in a bucket of earth.
116. There is a lack of formal assessment in history but marking does follow the good, constructive school guidelines. It is important to ensure a good balance of history

throughout the school and to realise the potential for developing speaking skills through role-play and drama activities linked to history topics. The subject co-ordinator (see paragraph 113) has a sound knowledge of the need for developments within the subject when it becomes a curriculum priority.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

117. Pupils attain standards that are below those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school has improved resources since the amalgamation. A new computer suite was established soon after the school opened. After some initial technical difficulties, pupils are now using the suite regularly with every class having weekly time-tabled lessons. Pupils were very enthusiastic about working on the computers and eagerly talked about what they have learnt. Teachers are using these lessons, supported well by national subject guidance, to teach basic skills soundly in most of the required aspects. Resources in some aspects of control and multi-media work are not enough to enable pupils to develop their skills fully in all areas. Sound and often good teaching is helping pupils to make satisfactory, and occasionally good, progress in lessons, for example, in developing their word processing. However, pupils, especially older juniors, have not benefited enough from the new resources to raise their skills to standards expected for their age. They do not have enough opportunities to apply and extend these skills to support work in a wide range of other subjects. Few benefit from using a home computer to extend their skills. Although each class has one computer set-up with Internet access, there was little evidence of pupils using it frequently to gain information for topics in other subjects, such as history and science. Pupils with special educational needs use information and communication technology effectively to improve their skills, especially in literacy and numeracy. They regularly use computers, with the help of support staff and specific support programs, to increase the range of words that they use in their writing and to reinforce their number knowledge and understanding.
118. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in some years are close to attaining expected standards, for example, when all the pupils in a Year 3 class successfully combined a digital photograph and a text box. They then entered their own text, successfully choosing the size and font style. As pupils build on these skills, they will attain higher standards by the time they are in Year 6 than are currently being achieved.
119. Many pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the use of word processing, although their skills are restricted by literacy weaknesses. These limit the speed and accuracy of their keyboard skills and restrict the amount achieved in the lesson. Most Year 2 pupils know how to enter text and use their mouse control skills to move their cursor to a different word or line. Few were confident about how to edit their work, for example, by deleting mistakes or changing upper and lower case letters. Year 3 pupils make good progress in developing their skills. They confidently log-on to gain access to the program. They create a text box and, some with support from teaching and support staff, type a description accurately of the photograph which they have inserted above the box. The progress of some pupils is restricted by language uncertainties. For example, one pupil's uncertainty over the spelling of 'ghost' led her to use the dictionary to find out the correct spelling. The pupil could not remember if 'g' was before 'h' in alphabetical order. She spent some considerable time locating the word in the dictionary. This prevented her from entering all her text into the box. Many Year 6 pupils use their word-processing skills soundly to support work in literacy, for example, by typing their 'Space Stories' and their 'interviews' with favourite literary characters, such as J K Rowling. Year 6 pupils use their information and communication technology skills to support work in some other subjects, for example, to describe the life-cycle of a caterpillar in science or the building of the Ancient Egyptian pyramids in history. However, there was little evidence to show that pupils are consistently using their skills in many other subjects.

120. Most Year 4 pupils accurately give instructions to control the movements of an 'on-screen turtle'. They enter the details clearly to enable the 'turtle' to draw each side of a square. Some enter the procedure to enable the 'turtle' to repeat the process four times and create the complete square. Although the teacher challenged the pupils to extend their knowledge by trying to create other shapes, some mathematical uncertainties in trying to calculate the size of the angle through which the 'turtle' should turn limited their success. Many Year 6 pupils use their sound mouse control skills in a 'design program' to draw and manipulate different shapes on screen. They create a 'painting' in the style of 'The snail' by Matisse, although few confidently use key skills, such as 'copying' to overlay different parts of their 'painting'. Almost every pupil sustained their concentration very successfully, focused strongly on controlling their mouse to 'draw' straight and curved lines and achieved their 'picture'.
121. Teaching is sound overall. It is often good in teaching key skills, for example in word processing and aspects of control. Teachers use good knowledge of specific programs to show pupils what they have to do in the lesson. This enables pupils to settle quickly to the task and know exactly what they are trying to achieve. This gives a good focus to pupils' learning. For example, in a very good Year 3 lesson on 'control', the teacher used the central server system to enable all pupils to see how to insert and resize a digital photograph. She then challenged pupils to apply this skill and made it clear that she expected the more-able pupils to achieve all four pictures on screen, together with suitable text. Pupils responded well to this challenge and many met the teacher's expectations. This enabled Year 3 pupils to attain standards which were in line with those expected nationally for their age. Evidence from an analysis of pupils' work since the start of the school year show that teachers do not consistently require pupils, especially older junior pupils, to apply and extend their information and communication technology skills. This does not enable pupils to attain sufficiently high enough standards.
122. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership. She has used national subject guidance successfully to establish a detailed scheme of work that meets all required aspects. The co-ordinator has arranged for staff to undertake training to improve their subject knowledge and enable them to teach all aspects more confidently. She has a good knowledge and understanding of how the subject is being taught. She has used her non-teaching time to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. For example, she has monitored all teachers and has a good understanding of the range of staff competence and confidence in teaching the subject. The co-ordinator has developed a good information and communication action plan which is giving a clear direction to improving the standards attained. The school benefits from a weekly visit from the Kings Norton Education Action Zone technician who maintains the computer network and supports staff with new software. This helps teachers to plan and prepare their teaching and to be more confident in the reliability of the resources. This contributes well to improving pupils' skills.

MUSIC

123. Pupils attain the standards expected for their age by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the practical approach and the effective teaching that builds well on previous learning.
124. In lessons, assemblies and hymn practices, pupils build up a good repertoire of songs. They think about the words in each song and give added depth and interest to their singing because of the changes in speed and volume. They sing tunefully and because they listen to the music and words carefully their diction is clear. Pupils match any actions and clapping well to their singing. When members of Year 6 sing a line of a song, the rest of the school comes in accurately with the echo. Pupils in Year 1 sing 'Crazy Moose' together with great enthusiasm. They listen carefully to the teacher and echo the sounds she makes with amusement. All are keen to play a loud and soft pattern on their

instrument, especially when one of the group is chosen to be the conductor. As a result, everyone does it correctly although it is more difficult to achieve with some instruments for example, the bells, than others. Pupils organise themselves into groups quickly and make up loud and soft patterns using symbols. They are confident that they have achieved well in the lesson because every member of the group produces an interesting pattern.

125. Pupils in Year 3 have fun as they jump up when the teacher plays a high note and go down when they hear a low note. They listen and watch well when the teacher plays a tune with three different notes and work hard to create their own tunes. A majority have difficulty in restricting themselves to three notes because they enjoy playing and want to make up more complex tunes. Almost half of the group are confident that they are able to order their notes from highest to lowest. Pupils in Year 5 build well on previous learning about *crotchets*, *quavers* and *rests*. They use this knowledge when working out the time of three or four beats in a bar. They listen to music by Handel very thoughtfully so that they are able to identify the number of beats in a bar and clap them accurately. Pupils show very good levels of concentration as they try to construct patterns using notation although they find this difficult. The teacher and teaching assistant circulate well and successfully to help pupils to improve their confidence and skills in clapping the patterns they have on their tables.
126. Pupils find music an enjoyable subject, whatever the activities, because they like to sing and use the instruments. They work sensibly together and share instruments well. Pupils are clear about what they have achieved in the lesson and their recall of previous learning is good. When other individuals or groups perform, they listen attentively. This contributes well to their knowledge and understanding.
127. The quality of teaching is good. Pupils learn how to listen to music and improve their skills in playing instruments and composing because teachers provide a wide range of interesting opportunities and musical experiences. Lessons are planned thoughtfully to include time to practise previous skills and extend what pupils know and can do. Staff communicate their own enjoyment of music and this helps pupils to participate with enthusiasm.
128. The effective co-ordinator provides good support for colleagues who have less confidence in the teaching of music and the curriculum has been developed so that all elements are taught over the year. Music is an integral part of productions and special services or festivals. Pupils enjoy their involvement in these. The pupils who visited Birmingham Concert Hall found this an unforgettable experience. The school has plans to develop the curriculum and range of visiting artists significantly. For example, the school is to have a set of steel drums next term and an African drummer is to perform and present workshops. A small group of pupils have good tuition on brass from a visiting teacher and pupils from Year 2 upwards attend the weekly choir sessions. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. Pupils attain standards that are in line with those expected nationally by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. During the inspection, the focus was on developing pupils' skills for games and gymnastics. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully involved in all activities and make sound progress overall in their learning. Sound and, occasionally good, teaching helps most pupils develop their skills satisfactorily in lessons. However, there was not sufficient evidence of pupils being challenged to extend their skills, especially in games activities in Year 6, where pupils find it hard to co-operate enough with each other to play team games in full. This is not helped by the lack of opportunities to play for school teams at present. All pupils benefit from good provision for

swimming in the local baths. They make significant progress that is recognised with certificates; for example, many achieve 25 metres unaided.

130. The quality of teaching is sound overall in the games skills lesson seen. Teachers demonstrate skills well and use pupils' performance to further reinforce key skills. Teachers have satisfactory planning based on the detailed schemes provided. However, due to slow changing on the part of the pupils, or to slow delivery of the lesson on the part of the teacher, pupils did not always fully complete the planned activities. This meant that pupils could not extend their skills beyond a satisfactory level. In some lessons, teachers introduced too many variables in the warm-up activities, including speed, direction and levels, all in one go, which led to the pupils becoming confused. The one gymnastics lesson observed was good, as it provided better challenge for the pupils. Pupils responded positively to the problem-solving activity and worked co-operatively to achieve their goals. They demonstrated sound confidence in travelling along benches and jumping from the horses.
131. Overall, pupils enjoy physical education lessons and are keen to succeed. Most teachers relate the activities well to health and fitness and pupils from Year 1 onwards show that they understand the effects that physical activity has on their bodies. There is some sound recording of performances, following the use of stop-watches developing in Year 2. This personal challenge to improve on previous attempts needs developing more systematically throughout the school. There is a lack of formal assessment, apart from in swimming. Older pupils, especially, would benefit from a structured programme leading to certification or to recording of personal bests.
132. The new co-ordinator has not had time to monitor teaching and learning but this is planned for the next academic year. There is a need for whole school training in order to share good practice. It is urgent that the links are made between the co-ordination demanded in good physical education and the development of pupils' reading and writing skills, in order to improve their key skills.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

133. Inspectors only observed two junior lessons during the inspection. Further evidence was gained from an analysis of pupils' work, school documentation and discussions with staff and pupils. Pupils attain standards at the end of at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 that meet expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils achieve soundly in their learning. Many make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of aspects of religious beliefs and practices, for example, in Christianity and Sikhism. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and are fully involved in all activities, for example, when preparing and asking questions to visiting speakers. They make sound progress overall in their learning and make valuable contributions when expressing their opinions or contributing to discussions.
134. Many infant pupils have a sound knowledge of the main Christian celebrations, such as Christmas and Easter. They describe some of the main differences between Christian festivals and those in other religions, for example Diwali and Holi. More-able Year 2 pupils describe in detail the Christian celebration of Harvest and how the Jews have a similar celebration in the festival of Sukkot. Many Year 2 pupils recall details of some stories from the Bible, for example, Noah and the Great Flood. One pupil described how *'the ark was stuck on a mountain when the flood went away'*. Some pupils show a sound understanding of spiritual aspects when describing how 'God is all around in the natural world during the different seasons of the year'. They use drawings effectively to illustrate their writing, for example, to show the sun and the wide range of colourful flowers. Year 2 pupils show a sound understanding of aspects of the Sikh religion. They use their literacy skills soundly, supported by drawings, to illustrate the Sikh's five Ks and how they are

worn or carried. Many know that churches and temples are places of worship.

135. Junior pupils build on this knowledge successfully. For example, many Year 3 pupils show a sound understanding of the differences between signs and symbols through a class discussion then follow-up drawings. More-able pupils know that symbols have more than one meaning. Year 4 pupils use their literacy skills effectively to describe why 'Jesus is special'. Some explain that he can '*do miracles*', for example by helping sick people to suddenly get better. Many Year 5 pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of other faiths and beliefs by describing some of the Muslim prayer rituals, for example *Wudu*, to wash and cleanse before prayer. They show a good awareness of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves by explaining which charity they would like to support. One Year 5 pupil chooses a hospice because '*I want them to enjoy the little time in their life they have got left*'. Year 6 pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of the main beliefs, ritual and practices of the Sikh religion. They make very good use of the opportunity to talk to, and ask questions of a Sikh visitor. This helps them gain a very good, clear understanding of the day-to-day life of a Sikh living near their school. They make very good use of their literacy skills to prepare a list of questions, for example, 'Can you tell us about the Sikh Holy Book please?' and 'Do Sikhs believe in heaven and hell?' Year 6 pupils use their speaking skills very well to ask their questions clearly and note down the visitor's replies. The detailed answers promote pupils' knowledge about Sikh beliefs and practices to above expected levels. Many pupils have a sound understanding of the influence of religion on people's everyday lives and especially their knowledge of such human qualities as tolerance and respect.
136. Teaching in the two lessons observed was never less than good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it very well to promote pupils' knowledge. For example, in a good Year 3 lesson, the teacher had good knowledge of creation stories from different religions. She used this knowledge very successfully during the end of lesson feedback activity to summarise the main points from different religious stories, such as those from Christianity, Ancient Egypt and Chinese Taoism. This helped pupils to gain a sound understanding of the main points from each story. Teachers use very good methods to capture pupils' interest and promote their learning. For example, in an excellent Year 6 lesson, the teacher had arranged for a member of the local Sikh community to attend the lesson. He had been given a list of the questions which the pupils had drawn up in the previous lesson. The visitor was fully prepared for the lesson and gave detailed replies to each question asked by the pupils. This allowed most Year 6 pupils to gain a detailed insight into how the beliefs and practices affect the daily lives of Sikhs in their local community. The lesson was clearly enjoyed by everyone involved. It made a considerable contribution to improving pupils' religious knowledge and understanding. It also enhanced the knowledge of other cultures and gave them greater racial understanding.
137. The school makes very good use of acts of collective worship to enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding of such qualities as tolerance and respect. For example, in a very good infant assembly on '*Mary Seacole*', the teacher used questions and a lively teaching style to ensure that everyone sustained their attention. She gave a very strong message about racial intolerance and reinforced the school's ethos by reminding all the pupils that, 'Here at Wychall we all are friendly to each other and treat everyone with respect'.
138. The co-ordinator, working closely with the headteacher, provides good subject leadership. She has used national guidance to develop a scheme of work which meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. She is drawing up a set of lesson plans for each year to ensure that pupils' skills and knowledge builds on prior learning. The co-ordinator is improving the range of visitors and visits, for example, to local mosques, gurdwaras, churches and temples, to enhance pupils' learning opportunities.

