

INSPECTION REPORT

NEWFIELD PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Halesowen

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103815

Headteacher: Mrs S Pearce

Reporting inspector: Ian Nelson
2220

Dates of inspection: 18th – 21st November 2002

Inspection number: 246319

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: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Whittingham Road
Halesowen

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: John Stone

Date of previous inspection: July 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2220	Ian Nelson	Registered inspector	Physical education	What sort of school is it? Standards, results and achievements Leadership and management What the school should do to improve
1329	Kevern Oliver	Lay inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Care of pupils Links with parents
8358	Alan Blank	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology	Quality of teaching and learning
19507	Beulah Andrews	Team inspector	History Geography	The curriculum
7583	John Collier	Team inspector	Mathematics Music	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
22805	Jo Greer	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Design and technology Religious education	
11901	Pat Lowe	Team inspector	Educational inclusion Special educational needs English as an additional language English Art and design	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number on roll	350 (above average)
Pupils entitled to free school meals	5 per cent (below average)
Pupils with English as an additional language	2.8 per cent (above average)
Pupils on the register of special educational needs	11 per cent (well below average)

This is a large community primary school for pupils aged four to eleven years. Around six per cent of the pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. Of the 12 pupils who have English as an additional language, only two are at the early stages of acquiring English. The school takes pupils from both private and local authority houses, and increasing numbers from outside its immediate area and from neighbouring education authorities. At the time of the inspection the headteacher had been in post just over two years and there had been several other staff changes. Attainment on entry to the reception class is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school where pupils receive a satisfactory education. Current standards are above average in mathematics and science at Year 6 and in English, music, art, religious education and history throughout the school. The school is very effective at promoting the social development of pupils and ensuring good behaviour. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although it ranges from excellent to satisfactory, so that most pupils make satisfactory progress. Leadership and management are good overall. The governors, head and deputy have a very clear vision for the future of the school and a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve standards further. It provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are above average at Year 6 in mathematics and science and throughout the school in English, music, art and design, history and religious education.
- The governors, head and deputy provide effective leadership.
- Provision for children in reception is good so that they make good progress in their learning.
- The school provides a good curriculum covering all subjects and a very good range of after-school clubs and activities.
- Provision for the social and cultural development of pupils is very good.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress because of very good provision.

What could be improved

- The use of the systems the school has for checking how well it is doing.
- The consistency of teaching.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 2000. At that time it was judged to be underachieving. It has improved enough to take it out of that category. In the two years since the last inspection the school has made good progress in addressing the key issues. It has developed secure systems for checking how well it is doing and now needs to ensure that these are used rigorously and systematically. As well as addressing the key issues from the report, the school has made many other improvements, including enhancing the building and providing extra computer facilities. Teaching is better and standards have improved slightly. Overall improvement has been good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	A	C	B
Mathematics	C	B	C	B
Science	D	B	A	A

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

The table shows that in the 2002 national tests for eleven year olds the school achieved average standards in English and mathematics and well above average standards in science compared with all schools. Compared with schools with similar pupils, Newfield Park achieved above average standards in English and mathematics and well above average standards in science. In the tests for seven year olds standards were well above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics compared with all schools and with similar schools. Although standards at eleven have fluctuated over recent years they have risen in line with standards nationally. Overall standards have improved since the last inspection, particularly in science at Year 6. However, standards in mathematics at Year 2 show a slight fall since then. The school narrowly missed its target for the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels or above at eleven in English and was well short of its target in mathematics. Most of the pupils who took the tests at eleven made at least satisfactory progress overall in English and science but too many did not make enough progress in mathematics. The school appears to have addressed this issue as the standards of the current Year 6 pupils are above average in all three subjects, indicating satisfactory progress since they took the national tests at seven. The school has set appropriate targets for the current Year 6 pupils. Standards are above average at Year 2 and Year 6 in art and design, history, music and religious education. Standards in all other subjects are average at both seven and eleven. Most pupils are now making satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs, English as an additional language and children in the reception class make good progress. Most pupils achieve at least satisfactorily.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school. They particularly enjoy lessons when they do practical activities and they work hard at these.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They know the rules and stick to them.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils get on well with each other and with the adults in school. They are polite and welcoming to strangers and enjoy the chance to show initiative and take responsibility when it is given.
Attendance	Good. Despite a significant number of families taking holidays in school time the attendance levels are above average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory. However, in the lessons seen during the inspection, they ranged from satisfactory to excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and the number of good and very good lessons was higher than in the last inspection. The quality of teaching overall, therefore, has improved. In the reception class, teaching is good and children make good progress. In the rest of the school teaching is still inconsistent. Some of the best teaching is in those lessons that involve practical activities, like music and art. In music, for example, many pupils learn to play a musical instrument and they enjoy composing their own tunes. These lessons are successful because teachers expect pupils to achieve high standards. They involve them in practical activities where pupils have a measure of responsibility for their own learning. Teaching methods go beyond the mechanics of gathering and recording facts and encourage pupils to be creative and work together. Where teaching is only satisfactory, opportunities are missed to make it more exciting and imaginative, and to involve pupils more in planning, organising and evaluating their own learning. These lessons often rely too heavily on working through textbooks and exercises, with all the pupils doing the same work before the more able move on to harder tasks. The teaching of English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy, is satisfactory overall, although some of the lessons are good and very good. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good, so that these pupils make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school teaches all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. It has particularly good provision for music and emphasises creative subjects like art. It provides a very good range of after-school clubs and activities that pupils enjoy.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school provides very good support for pupils with special needs so that they are well supported in their learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' social and cultural development. They enjoy being on the school council and acting as 'wet weather watchers' during wet playtimes. Provision for spiritual and moral development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school ensures the security and well-being of all the pupils. Staff know their pupils well. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall but could be used more effectively.

The school's partnership with parents is good. It provides plenty of opportunities for parents to get involved in their children's learning and in the life of the school. There is a thriving parents' association that works closely with the school and raises useful funds to enhance resources.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The head and deputy have a very clear vision for the future of the school and know what needs doing to ensure continuous improvement. They have a clear set of priorities for improving the school further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors fulfil their duties effectively and are committed to making this an excellent school. They have a clear understanding of the principles of best value*.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has developed comprehensive systems for checking how well it is doing and now needs to ensure these are fully implemented.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school identifies its priorities and allocates the budget effectively to meet them. The head and governors have a very clear understanding of how value for money means making sure that spending helps to raise standards.

(*Best value requires the school to challenge the need for spending, to get competitive prices for goods and services, to compare its performance against similar schools and to consult its users.)

The school has a good number of teaching and support staff and uses them well. Resources for learning are good and are used effectively. There is plenty of accommodation which is generally well maintained, although the flat roof does not appear to be in a very good state of repair.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. • The school is well led and managed. • Their children like school. • The teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work children get to do at home. • The range of activities outside lessons.

The inspectors largely agree with what pleases parents most about the school. The school does expect children to work hard, and staff go out of their way to be approachable to parents. Leadership and management are good and children do like school. Overall teaching is satisfactory but in some subjects it is mainly good. The inspectors think that most children get enough homework and that the school provides a very good range of activities outside lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 The school administers tests to children soon after they enter the reception class and these show that standards are slightly below average. They have declined since the last inspection. As teaching and learning are good in the reception class, children make good progress and most enter Year 1 at the expected standard for their age in all areas of learning.

2 The national tests for seven year olds in 2002 show that pupils attained standards well above average in reading and writing, and average standards in mathematics, when compared with all schools and with similar schools. Standards have risen since the last inspection in reading and writing but have fallen slightly in mathematics. This is shown in the table below.

	2000	2002	Increase
Reading			
School	16.8	17.9	+1.1
National	15.6	15.8	+0.2
Writing			
School	15.1	15.5	+0.4
National	14.1	14.4	+0.3
Mathematics			
School	16.9	16.8	-0.1
National	16.0	16.5	+0.5

Table showing the improvement in the average points scores gained by seven year olds since the time of the last inspection. (*Points are given for the numbers of pupils who gain each level. The higher the level achieved the more points gained. This is how the government determines the national average in the tests).*

3 While the proportions gaining the higher than expected level 3 in the tests show that the school has tackled the issue of a lack of challenge for more able pupils in reading and writing, with proportions well above the national average, the proportion gaining that level in mathematics broadly matches the national average. This is shown in the table below.

		School	National
2002	Reading	44%	30%
	Writing	17%	9%
	Mathematics	27%	31%

Table showing the proportion of seven year olds gaining higher levels in the national tests for seven year olds in 2002 compared with all schools.

4 The national tests for eleven year olds in 2002 show that pupils attained average standards in English and mathematics and well above average standards in science compared with all schools. Compared with similar schools, standards were above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. Although these results are not as good as those attained in last year's tests in English and mathematics, standards have risen since the previous inspection as the table below shows.

	2000	2002	Increase
English			
School	27.1	27.6	+0.5
National	27.0	27.0	0.0
Mathematics			
School	26.8	27.4	+0.6
National	26.6	26.7	+0.1
Science			
School	27.7	29.9	+2.2
National	28.2	28.3	+0.1

Table showing the improvement in the average points scores* gained by eleven year olds since the time of the last inspection. (*Points are given for the numbers of pupils who gain each level. The higher the level the more points gained. This is how the government determines the national average in the tests).

5 Over the last five years standards have risen broadly in line with those nationally. However, standards did show a decline in 2000, when the school was last inspected, and although they have rallied since then, there is no room for complacency. The school does seem to have tackled the key issue from the last inspection about challenging the more able pupils. The table below shows the percentages gaining the higher than expected level 5 in the tests.

		School	National
2002	English	27%	29%
	Mathematics	32%	27%
	Science	52%	38%

Table showing the proportion of eleven year olds gaining higher levels in the national tests for eleven year olds in 2002 compared with all schools.

6 The figures show that in English the proportion gaining the higher level was average, while in mathematics it was above average and in science it was well above average. However the proportion gaining this level in the 2001 tests in English was much higher, at 48 per cent, and again the school cannot afford to become complacent and must work hard to eradicate the fluctuations in standards that have been a feature over the last five years. An analysis of the progress made by those pupils who went from Year 2 to Year 6 at Newfield Park (not including those who arrived part way through their junior years) and took the national tests for eleven year olds in 2002 shows that most made at least satisfactory progress in English and science during that period in terms of the numbers of National Curriculum levels they gained. However in mathematics a large proportion did not make enough progress. The school seems to have addressed that problem with the current Year 6 pupils, who are making satisfactory progress in mathematics. The school has set appropriate targets for the current Year 6 pupils in English and mathematics.

7 The inspection findings are that current standards at seven are above average in English and average in mathematics. At eleven standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. The progress that pupils make is judged to be satisfactory overall. The pupils currently in Year 6 were above average when they took their national tests at the age of seven and have maintained that position since then. Although pupils at eleven are currently above average in their knowledge and understanding in mathematics and science, they have too few opportunities for true practical investigative work and do not reach such high standards in these aspects. Children in reception make good progress from being slightly below average when they start, to average when they enter Year 1. The

school then provides a satisfactory quality of education overall which enables most pupils to make satisfactory progress.

8 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Early identification of their needs and the setting of clear and achievable targets enable them to make good progress in relation to the targets set for them. Their progress is good in most areas of the curriculum due to the support that they receive individually or in small groups. Pupils with special educational needs are supported sensitively in the classroom and work alongside other pupils, so that they are not easily identified. This enhances their self-esteem and encourages them to be active participants in the lesson. Overall, their rate of progress is better than that of their peers, due to the high level of trained support to which they have access.

9 Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress. Their needs are recognised early and targets are set to enable them to make structured progress. The additional support that they receive, either individually or in small groups, enables them to make good progress in their command of English and in all areas of the curriculum.

10 There were only minor differences in the attainment of boys and girls in mathematics and science in the national tests in 2002 at the age of eleven, but girls were ahead of boys in English by the equivalent of one term. At the present time, the differences are not significant. The progress of boys and girls is monitored and strategies and resources are used to enable both groups to achieve appropriately.

11 Standards are above average at seven and eleven in art and design, history, music and religious education. This is partly due to the school making use of particular teacher expertise and experience in these subjects. It is also partly due to the extra motivation of pupils for subjects where teaching methods are rather more exciting and wide-ranging than in some other subjects. A summary of the inspection judgements of standards in all subjects at seven and eleven is shown in the table below.

Subject	Year 2	Year 6
English	Above average	Above average
Mathematics	Average	Above average
Science	Average	Above average
Design and technology	Average	Average
Information and communication technology (ICT)	Average	Average
Geography	Average	Average
History	Above average	Above average
Art and design	Above average	Above average
Music	Above average	Above average
Physical education	Average	Average
Religious education	Above average	Above average

Table showing the standards found in the inspection in each subject by Year 2 and Year 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12 The majority of Newfield Park pupils enjoy their time in school. They are cheerful when they arrive for the start of the school day and are pleased to see their friends and all the adults who work with them. The overwhelming majority of parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire and attended the parents' meeting agree with this judgement.

13 Pupils have good, positive attitudes to their work. In the majority of lessons they try hard and work well, both together and on their own. They respond particularly well to very good teaching. In an excellent Year 4 religious education lesson about the Jewish festival of Hanukkah, for example, everyone was enthralled by their teacher's sensitive telling of the story of the festival's origins. They then contentedly and conscientiously went off to write their own versions of it. Older pupils in particular have a mature understanding of how they learn and how they prefer to be taught. They like to be challenged and encouraged to develop their expertise and understanding through "trying things out". A Year 6 pupil gave a good example of this when he explained that they really liked music because "the teacher is enthusiastic and helps us to write our own music". In discussions with inspectors the Year 6 pupils said that they enjoyed their work more when they were given the chance to plan and organise practical activities, like they do in art and music, for example. They regretted the lack of such real investigative work in mathematics and science and would relish the opportunity to take more responsibility for their own learning. They said the same about their work in physical education where, although they enjoy their lessons, they would like the chance to be more involved in devising and organising their own activities rather than being restricted to those set by the teachers.

14 Pupils respect each other and the adults who look after them. They are friendly, kind and thoughtful to everyone, including visitors to their school. A good example of this behaviour was the way that Year 5 pupils discreetly took care of a classmate who was recovering from a broken leg. They made sure that he was kept well out of harm's way and that he got safely up and down the stairs. Pre-school children, who were spending an afternoon in school, were warmly welcomed by older pupils. Pupils reported that the 'Buddy Stop' in the infant playground was a great success. Anyone who stood beside it was soon included in games and looked after by other pupils.

15 Overall behaviour, which was praised by the previous inspection team, is good. In lessons behavioural problems are rare and as a result teachers, pupils and their helpers are able to get on with the vital business of teaching and learning. However, in lessons where the emphasis is on telling pupils what to do, behaviour, whilst still being satisfactory, deteriorates. Behaviour in class becomes very good when pupils are stimulated and 'pushed' by their teachers. A good example of this was a Year 1 geography lesson where pupils were learning about the differences between towns and the countryside.

16 During the time that the inspection team was in the school there were a number of 'wet weather' breaks and playtimes. On these occasions pupils stayed in their classes and got on with reading, peaceful indoor games, chatting and, in some cases, voluntarily continuing with their studies. 'Good weather' playtimes were a happy mixture of running, chasing and ball games, chats and quiet activities. In the infant playground children also played traditional games such as hopscotch. Although play was sometimes boisterous it was never rough. No bullying or unkind behaviour was seen during the course of the inspection but pupils were frank in their reporting of past problems and how they were dealt with. They explained that bullying was always dealt with quickly, firmly and fairly. They had real confidence in the way the school handled such things.

17 Pupils are generous in their praise and admiration of their friends' successes, whether it be for a good piece of work or, as in the case of a pupil who won a national trophy for dancing, wider recognition. When the latter was announced, at the end of a whole school assembly, there was long and loud applause as everyone celebrated her success.

18 Pupils flourish on responsibility. Everyone helps to look after their classrooms and clear up after lessons. Year 5 and 6 pupils are proud of their respective roles as 'wet weather watchers' and prefects. They take their duties very seriously and are to be seen at

lunchtimes looking after doors and helping the team of supervisors to keep an eye on younger pupils. The members of the school council are very aware of their responsibilities as class representatives and the contribution which they are able to make to the life and further development of the school. They are keen to do this because they feel that their school is “pretty good but could be even better”.

19 The school promotes racial equality and equality between boys and girls, in its policy, organisation and equality of access in every aspect of school life. The number of serious incidents, including those concerned with race, gender and those involving bullying, is minimal. They are dealt with immediately in line with the school’s ‘zero tolerance’ ethos. Discussions with Year 6 pupils confirmed this. During the inspection, no incidents were observed of inappropriate racist or gender behaviour. The local education authority’s inclusion policy, adapted to the school’s context, is having a positive effect. Displays give a positive image of different cultures and draw on pupils’ experiences.

20 Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are integrated well into the life of the school. Their good attitudes, good behaviour and good relationships contribute to their integration and good progress.

21 Attendance is good. It is above the national average for schools of this size and type. However, even higher standards of attendance are proving difficult to achieve because of the number of pupils who go away for holidays during term time. In the current autumn term for example, 17 per cent of all pupils have already had some time off for holidays.

22 There have been no exclusions during the last school year.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23 At the time of the last inspection 97 per cent of the lessons seen were at least satisfactory, 35 per cent were good and another 15 per cent were very good or excellent. The profile of teaching in the current inspection shows an improvement. The teaching in all lessons was at least satisfactory with no unsatisfactory teaching observed. Eighteen per cent of teaching was very good or excellent, and in another 38 per cent of lessons teaching was good. This profile, and other evidence from pupils’ work, indicates a picture of satisfactory teaching overall throughout the school with significant strengths in particular age groups and subjects. For example, teaching in reception was at least good and was very good in half the lessons seen. Similarly, teaching in music, art and design, history and religious education is consistently good.

24 There are general strengths in teaching throughout the school. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons well, so that resources and equipment are available to enable pupils to learn, and time is well used. For instance, in a Year 5 science lesson, pupils looked at the effect on objects placed in water and how the water level rose as they were pushed under. In this case trays of apparatus were prepared before the lesson, so that pupils returning from different mathematics sets could get straight into the science work with a minimum of fuss. Teachers’ knowledge of the subjects they teach is good and in some subjects this results from specialist teaching such as in music. Sometimes teachers swap classes because they have strengths in a particular subject, for instance in art and design, ICT, religious education and history. Teachers use support staff well, particularly in helping pupils who have special educational needs. Classroom assistants are well informed and are sensitive to the needs of the children they work with.

25 The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is always at least satisfactory and frequently good or better. All adults show an awareness of

their needs and this is reflected in the nature of the work that is set and the quality of the support provided. Pupils with special educational needs work mainly alongside their peers and are given additional support, where possible, by teachers and teaching assistants who monitor their progress and use the information gained to plan for their future learning. The support for small groups of pupils by teaching assistants is particularly valuable in literacy and numeracy lessons in all classes. During withdrawal sessions with the special educational needs teacher, their learning is good, due to the good teaching that they receive.

26 Teachers ensure that pupils for whom English is an additional language are integrated well into the life of the class. Work is well matched to their needs and there is appropriate support to help them with their learning. They are encouraged to take an active part in discussions and to apply themselves fully to group work. The school teaches pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions and the diversities and richness of other cultures and to respect other people's differences, particularly their feelings, values and beliefs. With the help of a grant for 'Out of School Hours' learning, more able pupils are helped to reach their potential through after-school English, mathematics, science and German classes.

27 In lessons where teaching is only satisfactory, there is some aspect of organisation of the lesson that prevents teaching being good and pupils from making good progress. In some numeracy lessons the initial short warm-up activity lasts for 40 minutes. This is far too long. It leads to pupils losing concentration in the first place, and leaves too little time for other parts of the lesson to be followed up in sufficient depth. The practice of 'setting' for more able pupils in Year 6 in English and mathematics is proving beneficial, but in some lessons different work is not given to challenge more able pupils within a particular set.

28 Teaching in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory overall, though teaching in literacy is generally stronger and the work prepared for pupils does reflect the different levels of abilities in classes more closely. There is some good and very good teaching in both areas, for instance in Year 6, when pupils work on a numeracy project book prepared by the school. In this case pupils also benefit from being part of a smaller class of pupils of similar ability.

29 Overall teaching in science and mathematics is not practical enough. A significant number of lessons have insufficient opportunities to learn through games, experiments and investigations. Imaginative approaches to teaching are evident in some classes and especially in some subjects. For instance, music is taught successfully and pupils are provided with opportunities to work independently with minimal guidance. There is a direct link between the type of approach used in teaching and the learning that takes place. Generally pupils respond more positively and learn more effectively in lessons that are not too prescriptive. This type of teaching is seen more regularly in music, religious education, history, art and design and the better science lessons.

30 There is some evidence that pupils' progress is accelerated in Years 5 and 6 in some subjects, and this leads to the higher than average standards sometimes achieved in Year 6. The best practice in the school is very good or excellent. This, and very good practice in other schools, needs to be shared more widely amongst all staff to keep the school moving forward in improving teaching and learning.

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

31 The quality and range of the teaching programme is good throughout the school. Pupils of all ages and abilities are provided with a broad and relevant curriculum that meets

statutory requirements for all National Curriculum subjects and the agreed syllabus of religious education. The breadth of the curriculum is a major factor in promoting the enthusiasm that pupils have for the school. This is an improvement from the time of the previous inspection when the school was judged to provide a sound curriculum. The quality of the curriculum for children in the reception class has been maintained and is still very good.

32 The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented. The literacy strategy has been more successful in raising standards than the numeracy strategy. Basic literacy skills are taught well, improving the standards achieved by pupils. Teachers' planning is good. They plan together within year groups, thus ensuring continuity between classes.

33 The school allocates an appropriate amount of time to each subject. Curriculum policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects. However, the planned use of ICT to support learning in other areas of the curriculum is not yet fully developed. The school is to be commended for maintaining the profile of the non-core subjects (subjects other than English, mathematics and science) despite the many priorities that have demanded attention.

34 Equality of access to the curriculum is good. Teachers ensure, by their groupings, that girls and boys, pupils of differing abilities, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are given equal attention and encouragement. Pupils' progress is tracked and support is directed effectively to those who need it. Teaching assistants give valuable help to pupils who experience difficulties. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, are well integrated. Extra-curricular activities are open to boys and girls and there are opportunities for pupils of all ages to participate. No child is excluded from taking part in visits or other activities. The residential visits have the capacity to include all those children who wish to take part.

35 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. All adults have a good understanding of the needs of individual pupils, and classroom provision is organised to meet their specific needs. Pupils are given focused support so that their work is relevant to what is taking place in the classroom and meets the needs of their individual education plans. These are drawn up by the co-ordinator for special educational needs, in consultation with class teachers, and, in some cases, parents and external agencies. They contain clear targets relating to specific areas of learning or behaviour and suggest teaching and learning strategies. Class teachers and teaching assistants plan suitable tasks to help pupils to achieve these targets. The individual education plan is discussed with pupils, so that they are aware of the targets set for them.

36 Teachers ensure that pupils for whom English is an additional language are given appropriate support. Planned opportunities for raising the awareness of other cultures in literature, art and music and through specific weeks of multicultural activities, increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of the culturally diverse nature of society. The school policies for equal opportunities and inclusion are applied in all aspects of school life and are fully reflected in practice. A register for able pupils has been developed to ensure that the curriculum meets their needs. Challenge clubs are offered to these Year 6 pupils in order to support and raise achievement.

37 There is a comprehensive programme for personal, social and health education. These aspects are effectively developed through timetabled lessons, in assemblies and through the wide range of extra-curricular activities offered. Pupils' learning is enriched by

use of the locality for fieldwork, residential visits in Years 5 and 6 and regularly planned 'curriculum enhancement weeks'. For example, an 'enhancement week' during the summer term allowed pupils to develop their social skills and awareness of how to keep healthy. Music, art, history and religious education are also strengths of the curriculum provision. The school has appropriate policies on sex education, including relationships, and on substance misuse.

38 A very good range of after-school activities enriches the curriculum and reflects the teachers' commitment to ensuring pupils' learning extends beyond the formal lessons of the school day. Pupils benefit from opportunities to improve their skills in art and craft, sport, music, gardening, literacy, numeracy, German and French. Activities are popular with pupils and well supported. A number of parents expressed concern that there were too few extra-curricular activities offered by the school. Inspectors do not agree with this view and found the quality and range of activities very good for the age of the pupils.

39 Overall provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is now very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was good. Provision for spiritual development has improved from satisfactory to good. Opportunities for pupils to explore their spiritual nature are not just confined to assemblies but are occasionally exploited in lessons: in religious education, for example, pupils were given time to reflect on the 'special things' they had been discussing; in Year 2, pupils have thought about Remembrance Day and about the symbol of the poppy; in a music lesson, Year 5 pupils listened quietly to *Venus* from Holst's *Planet Suite* to get ideas for a composition about 'Peace'. Assemblies, however, offer regular opportunities for reflection and prayer. They are very pleasant occasions with the whole school coming together and sharing a quiet time before the busy day begins. Themes, such as 'sharing', are explored and pupils are challenged to reflect and wonder about extraordinary stories from the Bible, such as *The Feeding of the Five Thousand* and on the cultural contribution of famous people such as Guru Nanak, whose birthday was celebrated during the inspection. Requirements for an act of collective worship are met as pupils pray together and sing appropriate songs and hymns.

40 Provision for moral development remains good. The vast majority of parents believe that behaviour is good and inspectors agree that this is so. The code of conduct is well understood and is discussed with all pupils at the beginning of every school year. In addition, classes draw up their own rules and agree to abide by them. Recently, playground rules have been agreed with pupils and lunchtime supervisors and these are prominently displayed outside. When pupils show good effort in any sphere of school life, they are rewarded with certificates in an 'Achievement Assembly'. In lessons, house points are awarded and this promotes a feeling of belonging to a wider group than just their own class. Pupils learn to care for each other. In the infant playground, for example, there is a 'Buddy Stop' where pupils who have no one to play with are befriended. Locally, the school continues to care for the elderly in the community with gifts at Christmas and Easter, bought with money raised in school through the efforts of pupils in Years 5 and 6. In the wider world, those less fortunate are also helped. Recently, a collection of stationery has been sent to a Romanian school via its headteacher.

41 Provision for social development remains very good. Parents overwhelmingly agree that the school is helping children to become mature and responsible. Pupils themselves appreciate how lucky they are to have such a wide range of after-school clubs, visits and visitors that give them opportunities to mix in a variety of social settings outside the classroom. Competitive sports are played and pride is taken in the school's successes, for example in cross-country events. The provision of residential visits for the older pupils is particularly impressive with more than one being offered in a year. Pupils acknowledge the value of the newly formed school council. This meets every month but it has not had time to

instigate any major change in the way the school is organised or run. However, the pupils are grateful that their views are now sought and that their ideas for improved playground facilities, especially for the reception class children, are being actively considered. The oldest pupils carry out their duties as prefects and 'wet weather watchers' responsibly and pupils work well together in lessons when they are given the opportunity, for example in music where groups co-operate to create compositions. However, in too many lessons they are not allowed to exercise their own initiative because teachers prescribe exactly what they should do.

42 Provision for the pupils' cultural development has improved significantly and is now very good. At the last inspection it was judged to be satisfactory. Subjects such as music and art are strong in the school and pupils are familiar with the work of artists and designers such as Clarice Cliff and composers such as Benjamin Britten. History contributes very well to pupils' understanding of how British society has evolved and geography includes a study of Halesowen and of contrasting areas and ways of life in Britain and in India. Pupils regularly take part in local events, such as dance and music festivals, and there are German and French clubs for Years 3 and 5 respectively. Christianity and other world religions are studied in religious education and Year 6 pupils have visited a 'Faith Fair' to explore the variety of traditions and beliefs that make up our modern culture. The festivals of these faiths are celebrated. Recently a week's work centred around the theme of 'Celebrations' and pupils learnt at first hand about the dances, food and costumes of the Caribbean, China and India.

43 Educational visits are used very effectively to bring depth to the curriculum. They also make a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development. Visits are organised to museums and art galleries, farms, the Botanical Gardens, Dudley Zoo and sites of Roman remains. Older pupils benefit from residential experiences in York and Astley Burf. All pupils take part in field study walks around the local area.

44 Links with pre-school groups ensure successful induction procedures. There are good links with secondary schools and a local initial teacher training institution. The strong links with a local secondary school, to which many pupils transfer, smooth their transition from primary to secondary education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45 The governors and all the staff of Newfield Park Primary work hard to ensure that pupils spend their school days in a healthy, safe and secure environment. As a result security arrangements are good. Child protection arrangements, which follow the local education authority's guidelines, are also good. The headteacher is the person with overall responsibility for child protection. All other staff have been trained to deal properly with any problems that they might come across.

46 Safety arrangements and procedures follow the local education authority's guidelines. The governors, senior staff and caretaker make regular safety inspections of the whole site. The well-trained health and safety co-ordinator ensures that everyone is involved in safety audits and that appropriate risk assessments are carried out for new activities and off-site trips. The school has an appropriate policy and procedures to ensure the safety of pupils using the Internet. There is one fully qualified first aider on-site and the rest of the staff have had basic first aid training.

47 All of the school's policies relating to pupils' care such as health and safety, behaviour, bullying, recognition of achievement and attendance are comprehensive, up to

date and put into practice. The behaviour, bullying and achievement procedures, which are based on a whole school system of rewards and sanctions, are effective.

48 The school's computer-based attendance monitoring systems are very good. 'First day phone calls' check up on any pupil who is inexplicably absent from school and other unexplained absences are always followed up. Parents are kept well aware of the importance of regular attendance for their children's education, through, for example, the prospectus and reminders in newsletters where monthly attendance figures are always published. The headteacher discourages in-term holidays but recognises that sometimes they are unavoidable. There are special awards for pupils who have particularly good attendance records.

49 Teachers, classroom assistants, lunchtime supervisors and the administration team know their pupils well. They are kind, supportive and respect them. Therefore, although there are no formal systems for monitoring pupils' personal development, teachers and classroom assistants are very much aware of their pupils' physical and emotional needs and take them into account when they are working with them. In very good lessons, such as a Year 3 English session about playscripts, teachers and classroom assistants adapted their teaching and communication styles to meet the different needs of individual and small groups of pupils. They advised them, 'pointed them in the right direction' and, where appropriate, encouraged them to experiment.

50 There is a comprehensive reward system, which is used successfully to encourage pupils to behave and do their best. Reminders of Newfield Park's ways of doing things are posted all over the school. No one is left in any doubt as to how they should behave in the classroom, corridors, the rest of the building and out in the playgrounds. Achievements such as good attendance and 'trying really hard' are recognised and valued just as much as academic excellence and success in sport and competitions outside school. Class and whole-school awards for achievement are displayed throughout the school and many classes have their own special award such as one Year 2 class's 'star of the day'. The overall result is a school with a calm, studious and happy atmosphere.

51 The school provides good educational support and guidance for all its pupils. Learning experiences are as fully inclusive as possible. Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. There are effective arrangements for identifying and supporting individual needs. The school works closely with external specialist agencies, as the need arises. The admission arrangements for disabled pupils are the same as for all pupils and their needs are met, according to their individual requirements. They are well supported and there are good working relationships between staff, parents and external support staff. All pupils with disabilities are included in the daily activities with other pupils. The governors are currently working on an accessibility plan.

52 The school has very good procedures for identifying and assessing pupils with special educational needs and providing them with specific support. It uses all available information to set and review appropriate targets for pupils with special educational needs and track their progress. Support is directed effectively to those who need it. The very good support provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator to teachers and teaching assistants is instrumental in the progress that pupils make towards their targets. Teaching assistants ensure that all pupils take a full and active part in lessons. They monitor pupils' progress in each lesson in which they have a supporting role and provide a written report. The information gained is used to plan for individual pupil learning. The school works closely with external specialist agencies, as the need arises. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of their own learning but, as for other pupils in the school, a more active involvement in

monitoring their own progress against their individual targets would further motivate them to succeed.

53 Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Regular monitoring by the school ensures that all pupils for whom English is an additional language receive appropriate provision and support. Where necessary, children are provided with additional support from external agencies. One young pupil who did not speak any English when he joined the school in September is now able to actively participate in all activities and work alongside higher attaining pupils.

54 At the last inspection a key issue was judged to be the development of a consistent system for assessing pupils' attainment and its use in planning work to match the needs of all pupils. Recently a comprehensive range of assessment procedures and tracking systems has been introduced. Formal and informal assessments are undertaken at regular times in English and mathematics, the results of which are recorded by individual teachers. These are used when deciding how pupils should be grouped so that work can be more closely matched to their individual needs. As these systems are newly implemented they have not yet had time to have a significant impact on standards. Teachers are still reviewing how effective they are in providing useful information. End of year assessment results have been used for the first time to set group targets in mathematics and English. These are popular with teachers and pupils as they focus attention on specific short-term goals. They increasingly help teachers plan work more appropriately for each ability group. They provide an incentive to pupils to work hard and give them a sense of achievement when a particular target has been attained. Teachers new to the school say that the records passed to them have been very helpful in knowing how to group pupils and what level they are at. A computer system for recording results of the national test answers identifies which questions pupils have had most difficulty with. This information can be used to modify teaching. However, it is complex and not all teachers are yet clear how to interpret it. A progress tracking system has also been introduced using information from the end of year assessments in English and mathematics. This is simple and easy to interpret. This is the first year of implementation, which forms a baseline for future monitoring. In time it will be a very useful tool in assessing whether individual pupils are making sufficient progress.

55 There are whole school systems for recording skills and knowledge acquired in science, ICT, history, geography, music and art. These are appropriate, easy to use and will provide an ongoing record of progress when they have been in place for longer. Procedures for assessing and recording achievement in religious education, design and technology and physical education are not yet in place. In reception and Years 1 and 2, teachers keep very detailed diagnostic records on individual pupils' achievements, difficulties and progress.

56 The last inspection had assessment as a key issue. There has been satisfactory progress since then in tackling this key issue but there is more work still to be done. Because the systems are new it is too early to judge how effective they are in providing teachers with useful information to make teaching more relevant and so raise standards, especially in English and mathematics.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

57 Newfield Park Primary's relationships with parents, which were judged by the previous inspection team to be satisfactory, are now good. The pre-inspection questionnaire and discussions with parents and staff reveal that parents are pleased to be able to send their children to Newfield. They believe that their children are taught and cared for by a team of teachers and helpers who work hard to ensure that their children learn and make

progress. They have confidence in the headteacher and believe that the school is well managed. The overwhelming majority of parents support the home-school agreement.

58 Official documents such as the governors' annual report and the prospectus are very well produced. They provide a wide range of information about all aspects of life at Newfield. They are backed up by regular newsletters dealing with day-to-day aspects of school life, such as pupils' achievements, events and attendance rates. A steady stream of letters keeps parents informed on the arrangements for specific events such as class and year trips.

59 The arrangements for introducing new pupils and parents to school are good. Parents and children make several visits to the school, and in the term before they start in reception, the children spend time in the school getting to know the place, their teachers and older pupils. Older would-be pupils and their parents are given ample opportunity to look around the school and get a feel for the 'Newfield Park way' before they start.

60 Parents are kept in touch with their children's progress through termly consultation meetings with teachers. There is nearly 100 per cent attendance at these and special arrangements are made for those parents who are unable to attend. There are also 'drop-in days' when parents can visit and see the school at work. The end of year reports are satisfactory. They provide information about a pupil's progress across the curriculum, comments about the pupil's personal development, a contribution from the pupil and space for parents to write their comments. They do not, however, contain any information about what pupils need to do in order to improve. The headteacher is aware of this shortcoming and plans, which include consultation with parents, are in hand to improve things. A recent innovation, which is proving popular with parents, is the way that termly targets are stuck on the covers of their children's English, mathematics and science exercise books. It has helped them become much more aware of what their children are learning. Care is taken to ensure that parents for whom English is an additional language feel fully informed about the life and work of the school and their children's progress and welfare.

61 Many parents listen to their children read and help them with their homework. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have homework diaries which their parents and teachers use to keep in touch with each other. The parents of some Year 6 pupils are concerned by the amount of homework, which their children are required to do, but they and the majority agree that it very effectively prepares their children for secondary school.

62 Newfield Park's headteacher, governors and staff are keen to involve parents as much as possible in the life and work of the school. Parents therefore are always welcome in the school. Parents appreciate this and feel that the headteacher and all the staff are very approachable. The school seeks out parents' views on communication, how much pupils like their school, behaviour, improvements etc. Last term, for example, a comprehensive questionnaire-based survey was carried out.

63 Some parents are on Newfield Park's staff. Others voluntarily come regularly into school to help in classrooms and listen to readers. Many others help with one-off events such as the supervision of school trips and big occasions such as Christmas fairs, summer celebrations and major musical and dramatic productions. There is a very active parent teacher association, which organises socials, trips and fund-raising events throughout the year. In the last school year it has raised about £3000 for school funds.

64 The school works closely with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. It keeps them well informed about their child's progress. Parents have received full information about the new Code of Practice. Pupils' progress is enhanced as a result of the good

partnership between home and school. Parents are encouraged to meet with class teachers and with the co-ordinator for special educational needs when necessary. They know that they can share their concerns with the school and seek guidance at any time. Parents of pupils with a statement of special educational needs are fully involved in the review process.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

65 Overall leadership and management are good. As the previous report did not make clear judgements in this area it is difficult to judge improvement since then. However, it appears that overall leadership and management are stronger now than at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher has been in post for two years and has a very clear vision for the future of the school which she shares with the staff and governors. She took over at a time when staff morale was low and has overseen several staff changes since then. She has built up the confidence of staff and works very well with the deputy and governors to provide strong leadership. During the two years that the head has been in post she has identified the main issues to be tackled to aid school improvement and developed a good range of management policies and procedures to enable that improvement to take place. However, not all new staff have been trained in the new procedures, particularly those related to monitoring how well the school is doing. Consequently, although the policies and procedures are now in place, they have not been fully implemented and are not therefore fully effective in helping all staff to identify what the school does well and what it could do better. The head and deputy have taken a very active role in monitoring how effective teaching and learning are, in analysing the results of the annual tests for seven and eleven year olds and in sharing their findings with the governors and staff. Some subject co-ordinators have had less experience in these aspects of their roles. Consequently, while they manage their subjects satisfactorily overall, they have not been as effective as they could be in monitoring teaching, learning and standards. The head has taken steps to acquire this kind of experience herself. Consequently she has the confidence and the training to monitor teaching and learning effectively and to feed back her findings to the staff. She also has plans to devolve some of this responsibility to co-ordinators and to provide them with opportunities to gain the experience and expertise they need. The headteacher and the deputy complement each other and work very well together as a team.

66 The school governors fulfil their roles very effectively. They are very committed to raising standards and, in their own words, making Newfield Park “an A* school”. They have a clear understanding of the need to compare the school’s performance and know how to analyse and interpret the range of information provided about their school and how its performance compares with schools nationally and with similar schools. The governors have a clear committee structure with properly delegated powers to ensure that they work efficiently and effectively. They make regular visits to the school, both formal and informal, to ensure that they know from their own experience what is going on and how well the school is doing. The governors have all the policies in place that they are required to have, including those on race equality and equal opportunities.

67 The school improvement plan is effective in highlighting the priorities for development. It is developed in consultation with staff, parents and governors and is underpinned by a clear set of school aims and objectives. These focus appropriately on high attainment and achievement in a secure and caring atmosphere.

68 The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. They are significant factors in the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator is ably supported by a special educational needs teacher, nine well-trained teaching assistants and external specialist agencies. The requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs are fully met and the specific grant is used effectively

for its correct purpose. The governor with oversight for this area is well informed and liaises regularly with the co-ordinator. The school works closely with the secondary schools to which pupils transfer, in order to ensure the smooth transition of all pupils, including those with special educational needs.

69 The governors, headteacher and staff actively promote the inclusion and academic development and achievement of all pupils. Resources are checked for bias, and there has been considerable expenditure on resources to improve boys' reading and writing. Pupils feel that they are valued, and that they have an active part to play in the ongoing development of the school.

70 The school ensures that all pupils for whom English is an additional language feel welcome and secure. Every effort is made to fully integrate them into the life of the school and pride is taken in their success in learning English.

71 Financial planning and management are good. The school identifies its priorities for improvement and sets the budget accordingly. The governors are very clear that 'value for money' means that spending helps them to raise standards in school and judge the effectiveness of their spending decisions in that light. They have a clear understanding of the principles of best value which require them to challenge the need for each spending decision in the first place, to seek competitive prices for goods and services, to consult widely and to compare the schools' performance with similar schools. The day-to-day financial management is undertaken very efficiently by the office staff who play a major role in ensuring the smooth running of the school. Given the overall budget and the standards achieved, the school now provides good value for money.

72 There are sufficient appropriately qualified teachers, who between them have a wide range of experience and expertise, to deliver the curriculum. They are supported by teams of well-trained and enthusiastic teaching assistants, lunchtime supervisors, administrators and an on-site caretaker. All teachers have job descriptions. There is a performance management system in place and teachers have personal development plans which help them keep up to date with the latest educational developments, both generally and in their specialist areas. The learning support assistants, who make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, are included in staff briefings and receive regular training and support. One of them, for example, has recently gained a National Vocational Qualification level 3 in Child Care. The systems for inducting new staff, including newly qualified teachers, into school are good. They include good formal and informal support from the senior management team and fellow teachers. Newly qualified teachers have the nationally specified amount of non-contact time for lesson preparation. They attend the local education authority's training programme.

73 The school is on an impressively large and well-maintained site. There are well-kept sports fields, large, basic playgrounds, planted areas and a delightful Millennium Garden which pupils are able to use during the warmer and drier parts of the year. The external condition of the buildings, which date from the late 1960s, is generally good but in some places it is marred by decaying woodwork. There are also some problems with flat roofs, which, in spite of local repairs, tend to leak and stain ceilings, which have recently been replaced or redecorated. Apart from this particular problem the interior quality of the school is very good. The shabbiness, which the previous inspection team commented on, has gone. The entrance hall is bright and welcoming and everywhere has been redecorated in cheerful colours. New partition walls have been put up so that better use can be made of the available space. All junior classes have now been carpeted and several infant classes recarpeted. The two temporary classrooms are in good condition.

74 Resources for teaching and learning are good in all subjects except ICT where they are very good. They are used effectively to promote learning across the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75 In order to raise standards and improve pupils' progress further the school should:

Ensure the systematic and rigorous monitoring of all aspects of teaching, learning and pupils' progress by: (*paragraphs 6, 54-55, 65, 96-97, 107, 116, 121, 135, 149*)

- making regular use of the developing systems for checking how well the school is doing;
- training all staff to use the systems effectively.

Use the information from monitoring and evaluation to make teaching and learning more consistently good by: (*paragraphs 7, 11, 13, 15, 23-24, 27, 29, 30, 43, 94, 99, 102, 104-105, 107-109, 114, 128, 130, 132, 134, 142, 144, 148, 152*)

- identifying the strongest teaching and learning as models to raise the overall quality and consistency throughout the school;
- increasing the amount of practical work, particularly in mathematics and science;
- giving pupils more responsibility for planning, organising and evaluating their own learning;
- developing more sophisticated ways of providing work well matched to groups of different abilities and aptitudes;
- making more consistent use of assessment procedures;
- providing opportunities for staff to observe high quality teaching within and beyond the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	78
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	15	30	32	0	0	0
Percentage	1	19	38	41	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	350
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	18

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	40

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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
	2002	33	26	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	31	30
	Girls	25	26	26
	Total	57	57	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (90)	97 (96)	95 (94)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	28	32
	Girls	25	22	25
	Total	55	50	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (88)	85 (90)	97 (94)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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
	2002	31	29	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	27	31
	Girls	25	19	27
	Total	51	46	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (90)	77 (78)	97 (97)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	20	30
	Girls	15	12	24
	Total	33	32	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (87)	73 (86)	90 (95)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	326	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, 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)	19
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR-Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	140

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	773955
Total expenditure	769484
Expenditure per pupil	2019
Balance brought forward from previous year	28568
Balance carried forward to next year	33039

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	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

Number of questionnaires sent out	350
Number of questionnaires returned	96

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	35	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	50	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	58	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	53	10	5	1
The teaching is good.	49	48	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	48	7	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	32	2	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	34	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	45	44	7	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	55	40	2	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	49	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	45	12	1	7

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

76 Children are admitted to the reception classes in September if their fifth birthdays are before March and in January if their birthdays are later in the year. Children in the present reception class have had various pre-school experiences, including playgroup, nursery, or childminder, or no previous experience. Children enter with different levels of attainment that on average are a little below that expected for their age. This is particularly so in personal and social development, creative development, fine manipulative skills and aspects of pre-reading and early mathematical skills. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress so that by the end of reception most of them are reaching the national targets for this age group.

77 Provision for children in reception is good with some very good features. The quality of provision has been maintained since the last inspection. At the time of the inspection there was one class of 21 full-time children. A similar number of children are due to start school in January. These children attend two afternoon sessions each week to introduce them to the environment and adults as well as to the children already in school so that their full-time entry is as easy as possible. This also gives the younger children more reception class experience.

78 Staffing, accommodation and resources are good. For most of the time there are two adults present in the unit. From January, when the extra class is admitted, there will be three adults, two teachers and a qualified and very experienced nursery nurse. The accommodation is spacious, bright and airy. It is very welcoming for young children. Although at the time of the inspection there was no designated outdoor play area, this poses little disadvantage because there is a large open-plan area beyond the classroom with space for large toys, home corner and climbing frame with slide. Children use wheeled toys, tricycles and scooters in the hall. In the better weather children spend time in the Millennium Garden that has grassed and safe surface play areas and several attractive wooden structures, such as a train, that are large enough for a number of children to climb on. Other large toys and equipment are taken to this area. There are suitable facilities for growing plants. A new designated hard play area adjoining the classroom is due to be installed during the next few weeks; this will enhance what is already good provision.

79 Teaching in all areas of learning at the time of the inspection was always good and sometimes very good. The teacher, who is also the Foundation Stage manager, is trained in the education of young children. She is skilled, knowledgeable and reflective. She has good organisational skills and is clear thinking. Her planning of the curriculum is very good so that activities are relevant to the children's age and stage of development and build carefully on what they already know and can do. Management of the children is very good, so that a calm, happy atmosphere prevails at all times. There is very good teaching of basic pre- and early reading and mathematics skills. Children learn well through carefully thought out activities that they enjoy and that are meaningful to them. All the activities have a specific planned outcome. For instance, when the week's theme was 'sharing and being happy', each free choice activity involved some aspect of this – in the sand tray, children were asked to use their hands to smooth it and draw a happy face, hand puppets were used to create a conversation about being happy and construction kits to make people with happy faces. Good use is made of the detailed assessment and monitoring procedures to plan for the specific needs of individual children. The teacher has good advanced preparations in place for the new national baseline assessments due in the forthcoming year.

80 A good feature is the target for the week that is shared with the children on Monday morning and reviewed on Friday. An early target is for children to recognise their own name. A chart records those who have achieved it so children know how well they are learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

81 Children enter reception with very different pre-school experiences. At first, although many of them may be used to leaving their parents or carers, they are unused to being part of a large group or the routines of school. A lot of time and effort is spent in encouraging children to become independent, take turns, share and co-operate in the day-to-day routines expected of them. In the few weeks since entry most children have acquired very good habits so they listen to each other and their teacher during story and circle times (sessions when children sit in a circle and talk about issues that are important to them). They share equipment and use it sensibly. They stay with an activity for a reasonable length of time and concentrate well on more formal tasks. Most children show impressive determination to achieve success in the tasks set. One little boy, who finds learning difficult, spent about 15 minutes concentrating with determination to copy his name and was delighted with his first success, his achievement enhanced by recognition during circle time. The practice of setting a target for the week and recording achievement on a class chart is good as children know how well they are doing and strive hard to meet the goal. A few children still find it difficult to wait their turn to speak and sometimes need reminding to take care with their work. Children take care of their own personal and hygiene needs. They dress and undress themselves with minimal adult help. Through stories and circle time, children begin to understand their own feelings and respect those of others. Their behaviour is very good. When moving to the hall for physical education lessons, they do so very quietly so as not to disturb other classes. They sit quietly and listen well during whole school and infant assemblies. Overall provision is very good and children make very good progress.

Communication, language and literacy

82 Children entering reception are generally below the expected level for their age in speaking and listening, early reading and writing skills. Children have good opportunities to talk to the whole class about events at home. They learn to listen well because stories and books are shared with them each day. Children enjoy anticipating what might happen on the next page. They handle books with care and most know that print carries meaning. Only the most able few recognise that words are separate collections of letters. One or two children begin to acquire a limited sight vocabulary and use sounds to help them recognise words. They have attractive books to take home to share with parents and carers. Spare moments are used well to join in singing and action rhymes that children obviously enjoy. Many incidental opportunities are taken to reinforce understanding that print carries meaning and to recognise some common words around the classroom. Children have their name cards fixed to their table place so they quickly become familiar with it and also begin to recognise their friends' names. About half the class copy their name correctly and a few write it independently. They learn to recognise the initial sound and letter shape of their name; more able children start to recognise other sounds and letters. Good opportunities are provided to practise letter formation through writing, painting and other materials, such as sand and malleable materials. Whilst the less able children find letter and sound recognition difficult, more able children begin to write their own captions to pictures by writing the first letter of a word and perhaps also the last letter and by copying from captions on displays in the room. This is the beginning of independent writing. Good emphasis is placed on correct letter formation, although opportunities to practise this are sometimes missed. Stories, poems and rhymes are carefully chosen to link in with the current theme. For instance with the home corner as a bakery, there is a collage frieze of the action/counting rhyme 'Five Currant Buns in a Baker's Shop' and the story book 'Teddy Bear Baker'. Evidence from children's record

files and teachers' records from the previous year show that children make good progress during the year to achieve the expected standard by the end of the year. Children in the current reception class had already made good progress during their first half term in school.

Mathematical development

83 Children begin reception at very different stages of development. A few able children count well beyond ten and accurately count out objects to at least five; a few do not know the meaning of any numbers or recognise the number or quantity 'one'. During carpet time the teacher skilfully targets questions to individual children so they develop their number recognition and counting skills at their own level. Table tasks are equally well designed for different ability levels so more able children begin to say which number comes after, before or between a particular number or numbers, know one more or one less and order numbers to 10 accurately, whereas the least able can recognise the number one and show one finger with fair confidence. Many incidental opportunities are used to join in number rhymes and counting activities. Children are introduced to very early measuring terms, such as long, short, heavy and light, and the names of basic plane shapes. Good use was made of real coins to help more able children recognise their names and values and practise paying and giving change to 10p. The role-play corner had been made into Mr Bear's Bakery with cakes and buns made by the children from salt dough and painted in creative time. Children used pennies to purchase items. The nursery nurse supervised so children chose the correct coins to pay the stated price. Teaching, learning and progress are good.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

84 Children come to school with a range of pre-school experiences. The topics chosen are wide ranging so children observe and record in paint and models what they see around them; later they include their own written captions. A lively collage frieze of autumn included hedgehogs made by the children; they had also learned about the habits of hedgehogs and had been introduced to new vocabulary such as 'nocturnal'. Evidence from planning and the previous year shows good coverage of the world around them through nature walks and stories, the past through their own eyes and those of their family, exploring different materials and how things work. In a lesson during the inspection children were introduced to magnets. One boy was thrilled when his magnet opened a filing cabinet drawer and pulled a tricycle along. This is an illustration of the good quality resources available to children. The class has a weekly session in the school's computer suite so children all have good planned opportunities to use simple programmes and develop mouse and early keyboard skills. During the inspection they were introduced to a new painting program. About half the class logged on independently. Children were asked to create a happy picture, linked to the week's theme. All children achieved a picture; about half showed good mouse control to achieve their intended outcome, including a lovely picture of a smiling brown bear in a field and a happy face with good detail, the least able child needed adult help to produce his picture. Teaching, learning and progress are good.

Creative development

85 Very good opportunities are planned for children to explore a range of media and materials. Some tasks are determined by adults so children learn to use equipment correctly and discover what different materials can be used for. On other occasions children are free to explore the materials for themselves and decide what they want to work with and what the outcome will be. This is good provision to encourage children to use their own imagination and express their own ideas. Other good opportunities are planned, such as the use of puppets to make up stories, the role-play areas in the classroom and open-plan area.

Children enjoy singing songs and rhymes and have planned opportunities to respond to music and create their own using percussion instruments. Provision and teaching are good.

Physical development

86 Children begin reception with appropriate skills using their whole body for climbing and moving about. They are less skilled in using their hands and fingers for writing, cutting and manipulating small objects. In the hall, lessons are very well planned. The space is large enough to plan three activities – using the large climbing frame, small skills apparatus and creating a track for the wheeled toys. Children are encouraged to climb higher, crawl along a horizontal ladder and climb up and down a fixed rope. All children have gained confidence since the beginning of term. Most children pedal round cones with confidence, but they find it more difficult using scooters. Small apparatus includes using stilts, skipping with ropes and aiming bean-bags into hoops. All activities are carefully planned to develop skills and confidence. In one lesson, for example, children showed their good awareness of space, moving in different ways, running, walking, hopping, skipping and jumping without bumping, and responding to signals. Children know they must warm up their bodies before exercising and are aware of changes to their bodies when they are active. They exceed expectations for their age. Very good discipline has been established in the hall so children know how to be sensible and safe. Good opportunities are available to practise manipulation using pencils, paint-brushes, scissors and simple tools. They make appropriate progress, and most reach expected levels by the end of reception.

ENGLISH

87 Overall standards in English are above average at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be above average in reading, and in speaking and listening, and average in writing at seven and at eleven. Overall, therefore, standards have been largely maintained since the last inspection. Although standards of the current seven year olds are slightly lower than those of the group that took the 2002 national tests, the school has evidence to show that the present group entered with a lower level of skills than has been typical in recent years. These pupils have therefore made steady progress through the infants. Standards in Year 6 are currently above average and this is an improvement on the results of the 2002 test results for eleven year olds. The pupils in this year-group who took the national tests for seven year olds in 1999 achieved above average results at that time. They have therefore made sound progress through the juniors.

88 Achievement is satisfactory throughout the school. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress; pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress, as a result of the focused support that they are given. Standards in Year 6 are rising, as a result of the more challenging tasks given to more able pupils.

89 Standards in reading exceed those expected in Year 2 and in Year 6. The regular use of a structured reading scheme aids the progressive development of pupils' skills. In addition, the effective use of guided reading and the study of texts in the literacy hour have helped pupils to progress well in reading. Pupils read to adults on a regular basis and this is noted in their reading diaries. The majority of pupils read regularly at home and many pupils belong to local libraries. Due to the school's early emphasis on phonics, most pupils use phonic cues to read new words and understand their meaning.

90 By the age of eleven, the majority of pupils read fluently, with good expression. They use meaning to predict, offer opinions about books and authors that they like or dislike,

make comparisons with other books that they have read and show understanding of non-fiction texts. Pupils are introduced to a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction texts, including poetry and playscripts. Most pupils competently retrieve and collate information from a range of sources, including books, CD-ROMs and the Internet. However, the lack of a spacious library inhibits the teaching of library classification and higher order skills. Higher attaining pupils use inference and deduction. They are becoming proficient in scanning for information. Average attaining pupils use essential points and relevant information to support their views. Lower attaining pupils understand the main points in a text and locate information.

91 A key issue at the last inspection was to raise standards in writing. This issue has been successfully addressed. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors, on a two-day visit in 2001, identified independent and extended writing as a focus for development, with more opportunities to write for specific purposes, across the curriculum. In addition, they identified the need for greater attention to be given to improving pupils' handwriting and presentation. The school acted upon the advice given and this initiative, together with the shared commitment of all staff, has been instrumental in raising standards in writing across the school. Year 6 pupils, for example, wrote some interesting reports for an AA guide, on Halesowen as a tourist attraction. They strove hard to use a wide variety of superlatives, in order to 'sell' the town, describing the parish church as "historical, impressive and peaceful" and the Clent Hills as "scenic, mysterious and lush".

92 The National Literacy Strategy is implemented well. Investment in good quality resources has helped teachers in their literacy lessons. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and pupils in the early stages of learning English is very good and they make good progress as result of receiving additional support in the literacy hour. Early literacy support is provided in Year 1, additional literacy support in Years 3 and 4 and further literacy support in Year 5; booster groups operate in Year 6; this is very beneficial to pupils who need extra support to raise their levels of attainment. Higher attaining pupils are supported in a small group, during the literacy hour in Year 6. Access to after-school Challenge Clubs are offered to identified, targeted groups of pupils in order to support them and to raise standards. Learning objectives are shared with pupils at the start of each lesson and opportunities are provided for pupils to assess what they have learned. Work sampling and lesson observations during the inspection indicate an improvement in writing in all classes.

93 The attainment of pupils in speaking and listening matches the standards expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Most pupils listen attentively. They converse well on a one-to-one basis with adults and each other. In all subjects, they are encouraged to take an active part in discussions. The good use of questioning by most teachers encourages pupils to listen well and respond to questions and discussions. There are planned opportunities for the development of literacy skills during whole class discussions and paired and grouped activities in most subjects. In the best lessons, there is a strong emphasis on the use of subject-specific vocabulary.

94 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall. The strengths of most teaching are effective planning, which takes into account the learning needs of all abilities within the group, the good management of pupils and the good use of time, support staff and resources. The strength of learning is the intellectual effort which most pupils apply to their work. In the best lessons observed, teachers' good subject knowledge and their sound teaching of the basic skills led to the progressive development of pupils' understanding, knowledge and skills. Effective teaching methods engaged pupils' interest, attention and concentration. Pupils were encouraged to express themselves creatively and to challenge themselves to achieve their best. In lessons judged to be satisfactory and in much of the

work in pupils' books, work is prescriptive and pupils have limited involvement in their own learning. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good, leading to good pupil progress. Marking is often good and helps pupils to know how to make further progress. Homework is used satisfactorily to extend the work in the lesson. ICT is limited mainly to word processing.

95 The quality and range of learning opportunities are good. Displays are of a high quality. Several poems on display demonstrate vivid use of language. For example, a group poem by Year 4 pupils begins:

*It was Bonfire Night
The whispering darkness was shattered
By vast explosions
Evolving into thunderbolts
Shuddering in the sky.
Tingling sparks obliterated
The pitch-black canvas
Painting luminous pictures...*

96 There are satisfactory procedures in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and using assessment to guide curriculum planning. There is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. Through the appreciation of the writings of others and the expression of their own thoughts and feelings in writing, pupils' spiritual development is supported. Group and paired work and class discussion aid their social development. The study of texts from a broad range of countries and cultures enhances pupils' cultural development. More able pupils benefit from the opportunity to attend an after-school English Club.

97 The subject is managed well. The subject leader has a clear commitment to raising standards and recognises that English is one of the keys to further improvement across the curriculum. Resources are good, enabling all aspects of the literacy strategy to be covered fully. In order to raise standards further and improve pupils' progress, the school should facilitate the monitoring of teaching and learning by the subject leader, ensure the full involvement of all staff in the assessment and tracking of the progress of individual pupils, give pupils more responsibility for planning, organising and evaluating their own learning and make greater use of ICT.

MATHEMATICS

98 Standards are currently average in Year 2. At the time of the last inspection they were above average but the school has evidence to show that the present group entered with a lower level of skills than has been typical in recent years. These pupils have therefore made steady progress through the infants. Standards in Year 6 are currently above average and this is an improvement since the last inspection when they were average. The pupils in this year-group who took the national tests for seven year olds in 1999 achieved above average results at that time. They have therefore made sound progress through the juniors.

99 The school has satisfactorily addressed the underachievement of the more able pupils, criticised in the last report. There are after-school clubs for the more able and the 'High Fives Club' involves a teacher from the high school. The pupils themselves acknowledge that this has helped and challenged them to achieve better progress. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 are organised in two ability sets¹ and in Year 6 there are three sets. In Year

¹ Classes in which pupils are grouped according to their ability

2, the lower attaining pupils from the two classes form a third very small group and are taught separately. These arrangements are enabling teachers to plan work that is better suited to the ability of the pupils rather than having to cater for a wide range of needs. However, within sets, there is still a range of capability but evidence from lessons and from books shows that, very often, all pupils tackle the same work. Teachers do not always plan work for the different needs of pupils within the sets. It is not enough to say that the more able “will be expected to work at a faster pace”. What they actually need is more challenging work. There is therefore room for further improvement so that all pupils can make better progress. In a Year 4 lower ability set, the teacher did plan a variety of activities for the pupils to meet their particular needs. The more capable pupils found $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ of numbers above 20, another group worked with numbers below 20 and the least able, working with apparatus, identified what fraction of a whole was being shown by the teaching assistant.

100 The setting arrangements, especially those in Years 2 and 6, enable the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to make good progress, mainly because they are taught well in small groups. In other year-groups these pupils are effectively supported by skilled teaching assistants who enable them to cope with the work. In Year 3, for example, an assistant helps a group to complete a tally chart that records how many times each number on a die appears as it is repeatedly thrown. Pupils who do not use English as their first language also make good progress because of the support they receive. A pupil who has recently arrived in the infants, for instance, is now working in the higher attaining group.

101 Pupils in Year 6 present their work very neatly. This expectation for high quality work is not consistent across the school but all pupils have target sheets which give them guidance on what they have to do to improve. Some are not as familiar with these targets as might be expected. In conversation with Year 6 pupils, one said, “I think I’m working at level 4b but it might be 4a.” The more able pupils in this year-group work with numbers to one million and understand the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. They draw angles accurately using a protractor and identify the properties of a triangular prism. Average pupils work confidently with the four rules of number² and are beginning to understand how to find the area of compound shapes that can be split into rectangles. The lower attaining pupils know what each digit is worth in numbers up to 1000. They create block graphs from given data but they are not yet confidently using division to solve problems. Pupils overall are adept at calculating problems mentally, such as 30×40 or $(3+4) + (5 \times 6)$. Real-life problems are regularly presented for solution, for example in a homework task, “How many shoes are made in 35 hours if 15 are made in one hour?” Homework is properly set to support work in school and teachers mark it regularly. Marking of work generally across the school is thorough and supportive. Teachers often try to point out to pupils how they can improve.

102 Teachers rely heavily on worksheets in the infants. Too many pupils are still reversing their numerals. Nevertheless, the more able understand the value of each digit in numbers to 99. They estimate and measure real objects up to 30cm but find it difficult to subtract 9p from an amount of money. The average pupils identify the missing numbers on a 100-square but do not always double numbers up to 10 accurately. They answer questions correctly about a block graph showing favourite fruits. The less able pupils work confidently with numbers to 10 and recognise common three-dimensional shapes, but there is some confusion in completing number sentences such as $3 + ? = 10$. The answer given is ‘13’.

² Addition, subtraction, multiplication and division

103 The National Numeracy Strategy is now well embedded in the school and is being used effectively to plan lessons. Work in other lessons gives pupils suitable opportunities to practise their numeracy skills. In a geography lesson in Year 5, for example, co-ordinates were used to identify places on a map of Halesowen. Computers are also beginning support work. Again in Year 5, pupils entered a formula for calculating the perimeter of a square or rectangle and were able to receive the answer when specific measurements were typed in. However, ICT is not yet being used regularly enough to support work in mathematics across the school.

104 Teaching overall is satisfactory though some good lessons were seen, particularly in Years 4 and 6. Here, teachers tended to deliver lessons at a brisk pace and conveyed their own enthusiasm to the pupils. They explained what they wanted the pupils to learn in the lesson and gave very clear instructions about the activities. In the satisfactory lessons, these instructions were often too prescriptive, with the result that teachers talked for too long and did not give enough time for activities. In Year 5, the teacher talked for 45 minutes. In Year 3, the teacher carefully explained the task in the textbook but then went through the answers before the pupils started work. Some teachers are reluctant to let pupils exercise their own initiative in these activity sessions and sort out their own difficulties. Too many rely on the textbook for exercises rather than planning practical activities to reinforce learning. In a more able Year 3 pupil's exercise book, there were three correctly completed pages of 'sums' that required one to be added or subtracted from a two-digit number. This is holding back progress. Where pupils are encouraged to use apparatus or to play a mathematical game, they learn more quickly because their interest is engaged. Throughout the school, pupils respond positively to mathematics. A forest of hands went up in an assembly when the teacher asked, "Who likes numeracy?" Enjoyment was obvious in a good Year 2 lesson where the teaching assistant had two piles of cards, one red and the other blue. Each card had a digit from 0 to 10 and pupils had to pick a card from each pile, knowing that the red card represented a 'ten' and the blue card a 'unit'. In having to say aloud the number, their understanding of place value was tested and the assistant was able to assess which pupils were having difficulty.

105 Assessment systems are satisfactory. They are used to sort pupils into sets and identify those who would benefit from being in a booster group later in the year. However, the tracking of an individual pupil's progress is only just becoming possible now that data from end-of-year tests is being entered on to a computer program. Similarly, an analysis of the recent national tests for eleven year olds has identified right and wrong answers. However, the results have not yet been collated to identify general areas of weakness that teachers can address in their lessons this year. The co-ordinator is experienced and has identified appropriate priorities for action this year. However, she still does not monitor lessons regularly enough to know all the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. This was noted in the last report. Resources are good and are readily available in classrooms and in a central storage area.

SCIENCE

106 Standards in science were judged to be average for seven year olds and above average for eleven year olds at the time of the last inspection. Since then standards for seven year olds have remained about average and eleven year olds have performed above or well above average when compared to schools nationally and similar schools. Current standards are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. In both cases standards in practical skills are lower than in pupils' knowledge and understanding.

107 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 know that light comes from a range of sources, such as the sun and torches, and that it can be reflected by shiny surfaces. They know that many

household appliances use electricity and that forces can be used to twist, squash and bend materials to change their shape. Pupils know the names of parts of plants such as leaves, stems and roots. However, pupils do not often go beyond the basic knowledge, though many are capable of understanding more advanced ideas by the time they leave Year 2. More generally, all pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to carry out tests and experiments themselves that develop practical skills in observing, measuring and considering results. In short, there is too much talking and writing and not enough doing in science lessons. This is reflected in the school's own assessment of pupils' practical skills in these year groups. The school needs to review its approach to teaching and learning in science in Years 1 and 2, on a lesson-by-lesson basis, in order to establish a more practical, experimental approach.

108 A similar criticism can be made of some work carried out in Years 3 to 6. Some topics in some year groups are taught in a non-practical way that emphasises knowledge but largely ignores practical, investigational aspects of science. For example, in Year 3 a topic on teeth does not provide pupils with opportunities to carry out simulations of tooth decay or survey pupils about brushing habits or types of toothpaste used. In Years 3 and 4 the topics covered are the same in parallel classes, but the approach varies, and in one class in each year group opportunities for practical work are exploited more successfully than in the other. This suggests that teachers need to plan together more closely so that the best practice is shared, and pupils' experiences are more consistent within different classes. However, progress overall throughout Years 3 to 6 is good in science. Some topics are taught very well. For instance, in Year 6 pupils investigate how certain foodstuffs burn, recognising that often high calorie items such as crisps burn very well whilst others like fresh banana do not. In Year 5 pupils investigate temperature change and the effect of insulation on loss of heat. They use micro electronic probes to measure the temperature, linking science with ICT. The overall development of practical skills is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make the same progress as other pupils as a result of the good support they receive.

109 Teaching in science is satisfactory overall, though there are examples of very good teaching in several classes. Sometimes, teaching does provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to experiment, investigate and explore. In the best teaching these opportunities are provided and pupils respond enthusiastically and learn very well. For instance, in one lesson in Year 4, pupils mixed salt, sand, sugar and water and then set about separating the mixtures using filtration and evaporation. The session lasted most of the afternoon, allowing pupils to experiment and record simultaneously and to follow through their ideas and plan the next step of their enquiry. In another lesson in Year 6 pupils looked at the growth of mould on decaying food such as bread. Pupils used projection microscopes attached to laptop computers. The images were memorable and pupils stored and manipulated them, developing ICT skills in the context of science. Teaching here was very good, allowing pupils to choose their own methods of recording their findings and explanations. The resulting written work was of a high standard and pupils demonstrated both independence and confidence in carrying out the tasks. However, in too many lessons the teaching is not as exciting and is much prescribed by the teacher so that pupils do not get the chance to show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning.

110 The co-ordinator for science demonstrates an awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in provision in the subject. Assessment strategies are in place and systems to monitor the curriculum, though these need to be more rigorous and regular, in order to iron out some of the shortcomings and inconsistencies in some topics.

ART AND DESIGN

111 The attainment of pupils in art and design at the ages of seven and eleven is above the standard expected. This represents good improvement since the last inspection, when attainment matched national expectations. The progression of skills is apparent in painting, printing, collage and observational drawing, but is less evident in other aspects, such as three-dimensional clay work. The improvement in teaching and learning since the last inspection, from satisfactory to good, has been influential in raising standards. All pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are enabled to make good progress commensurate with that of their peers, through focused support and the use of visual images which surmount language and academic difficulties. The value placed on pupil achievement and high standards of work is reflected in the high quality of the work on display.

112 By the age of seven, pupils have the opportunity to use a variety of media, such as pastels, paint, textiles and clay, and to develop a wide range of techniques. Their varied landscapes demonstrate their proficiency in mixing hot and cold colours and creating different shades and are influenced by their studies of pictures by Turner, Renoir, Monet, Constable and Lowry. Their understanding of texture is developed through a study of Picasso's paintings. During the inspection, pupils in Year 1 demonstrated creative effort as they developed their skills in printing, exploring visual elements of colour and pattern. Following a discussion on the work of Jackson Pollock and research on the Internet, pupils in Year 2 confidently discussed the style, mood and colours of his paintings and expended considerable creative effort, as they developed the idea of 'Taking a line for a walk', having regard to his techniques. Good use is made of the computer program *Colour Magic*, for example in creating firework pictures.

113 Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6. Sketchbooks are increasingly used as a visual resource. Paintings are developed from initial sketches. ICT is used to research the work of great artists, such as Holbein and Hilliard in Year 3, Calder and Warhol in Year 4 and Dali, Lowry, Picasso and Moore in Years 5 and 6. There is a clear development in pupils' understanding of tone, form, pattern and texture. Pupils refine their skills in mixed media drawing, fine brushwork, perspective, printing techniques, collage, sculpture and ceramics. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 successfully mixed a series of shades within a chosen colour and applied them to a prepared painting, aiming to achieve the effect of a figure moving at speed, the shapes creating the drag effect. High quality displays include glass painting and an interactive display of the history of Clarice Cliff's work, together with starch resist motifs drawn from her work.

114 Teaching and learning are good, overall. Teaching was good in the two lessons observed in Year 1 and 2 and very good in the lesson observed in Year 6. The quality of pupils' work over time shows that teaching and learning are good throughout the school. In the lessons observed, teachers' good subject knowledge and planning was instrumental in the good progress made by all pupils. Basic skills were taught well, leading to the progressive development of pupils' understanding, knowledge and skills. Teachers' high expectations inspired pupils to apply creative effort to their work. Effective teaching methods engaged their interest, attention and concentration. Pupils were clear about what they had to do and thoughtful in the assessment of their work and the work of others. They revealed a sound knowledge of their own learning and showed respect for the ideas and work of others. Ongoing assessment was used constructively to facilitate learning. Pupils were managed well, enabling constructive use to be made of time, resources and support staff. Pupils enjoyed freedom to experiment and express their own ideas. Their good attitudes, behaviour and relationships led to good learning for all pupils.

115 The quality and range of learning opportunities are good. An enriched curriculum is in place and is extended in the art club. The art policy and scheme of work are high quality documents which offer the guidance needed for teachers to deliver a rich, broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, which ensures that pupils build effectively upon their prior learning. The quality of displays reflects the active participation of all staff and demonstrates the value that is placed on pupils' work. There is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. Through the appreciation of works of art and the expression of their own feelings in art, pupils' spiritual development is enhanced. Their social development is promoted through group and paired work, research on the computer and appraisal of each other's work. Art makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development through the study of Egyptian, Aztec and Greek style jewellery, Egyptian portraits, circle patterns and amulets, and Indian art in Years 3 and 4, and Greek pottery and Celtic and Viking designs in jewellery in Years 5 and 6. Pupils' literacy development is enhanced through discussion and research and they use their mathematical knowledge of shapes in creating patterns.

116 The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and using assessment to inform curriculum planning are satisfactory. The curriculum is enriched through visits and opportunities to work with visiting artists. An ambitious arts week is planned for the summer term. The subject leader monitors pupils' work, but has not yet had the opportunity to fulfil her role by monitoring teaching and learning in the classroom.

117 The subject is managed well. The subject leader is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and has a clear sense of educational direction. She promotes high standards and regularly updates her own expertise, using the knowledge gained for the benefit of the school. The subject is well resourced, enabling pupils to develop their techniques and skills, without restriction. The accommodation is good, except for the lack of water in the mobile classroom. Planned areas for development are realistic. They include the increased monitoring of standards, the assessment and retention of samples of work and a planned arts week to raise further the profile of art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

118 Insufficient evidence was available to make secure judgements on standards, attitudes or teaching. Only two lessons were observed in Years 3 to 6 and none in Years 1 and 2. Few products and little designing were available for scrutiny as the subject had not yet been timetabled for many classes.

119 From the evidence that was available and talking to pupils it would appear that standards are at least satisfactory and that pupils make appropriate progress in designing, making and evaluating products. The school has maintained this position since the last inspection.

120 Teaching in the two lessons seen was good. They were well planned, providing pupils with opportunities to try out mechanisms and structures and use tools and materials sensibly and safely. The teachers' planning shows that all aspects of the subject are covered satisfactorily. The subject appears to contribute well to mathematics through the use of measuring skills. Little use is made of ICT in the present scheme of work. The few examples of designing available show that pupils learn to make appropriate annotated plans.

121 The previous co-ordinator is no longer at the school. A supply teacher who is enthusiastic and committed is looking after the position. She has plans to review the scheme of work and introduce an assessment scheme which monitors and records pupils' skills development. The school has a good range and quantity of materials for the current scheme

of work. There are sufficient tools. The resources are well organised so that teachers can easily retrieve what they need.

GEOGRAPHY

122 Standards in geography are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be above average and progress was good so there has been a slight decline since then.

123 Throughout the school, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Fieldwork is good, and pupils of all age groups undertake studies in and around the immediate locality. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a reasonable understanding of location from studies of their own environment and they use geographical language correctly. In the spring term pupils debate the advantages and disadvantage of building a new road. Their observational and questioning skills increase as they broaden their studies from the immediate vicinity to the wider locality.

124 Pupils in Year 1 have conducted field study visits in the vicinity of the school. They have considered the pattern of physical characteristics of the roadway adjoining the school ground, for example the positions of houses, street lights and buildings. In a lesson observed, one pupil excitedly recalled a friend's visit, made to the college shop at the far end of Whittingham Road. They consolidate their understanding of the key features of town and countryside by deciding in which category to place models of blocks of flats, shops and cattle. Pupils in Year 2 study aerial photographs of the locality, developing their observational skills as they identify familiar buildings and features. They use resources effectively to identify and offer reasons for the differences between their local area and the seaside town of Tenby. In their books they use simple maps on which to mark the locations of the countries and cities within the British Isles and to identify continents.

125 In Years 3 to 6 the range of written work is extended satisfactorily. Pupils learn about the impact of climates and the effects of other environmental issues on lifestyles. They consider settlements and the human and physical features that attract settlers. They develop map-related skills as they study world climates, contrasting desert areas with Antarctic conditions. There are good links with history and literacy.

126 Pupils in Years 3 and 4 analyse evidence and identify similarities and differences between life in Halesowen and life in an Indian village. In Year 4 pupils watching a programme about life in an Indian village took notes and recorded the differences between their own lives in Halesowen and the everyday village life experienced by a family living in an Indian village. During discussion pupils further developed this concept of similarities and differences as they talked about the differences within Indian society. Map-work in pupils' books shows a developing use of simple grid references and keys to locate cities, identify the size of populations and contrast climates and weather.

127 In Years 5 and 6 pupils study the reasons why people choose to live in certain places. Good research skills enabled them to discover how physical features such as rivers, and mountains determined the development of urban and rural settings. In Year 5 pupils were observed using a map of the local area to locate features according to simple grid references identified by a letter and a digit. By the end of the lesson pupils showed an awareness of the different features of Halesowen but were not entirely sure that such features might be typical of a town. In Year 6, as they developed their awareness of human settlement, links to English and history were forged through the study of derivation and meaning of place names. Learning about settlements enhanced their understanding of

environments and improved fieldwork skills. A residential visit to Astley Burf in Worcestershire allowed time and opportunities for pupils to study a wider geographical locality.

128 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons the good use of resources such as photographs, models and videos, excites the pupils' interest and holds their attention. The teachers' good questioning techniques make the pupils think hard and work out answers for themselves. Teachers use geographical language and expect pupils to use subject vocabulary accurately. However, a general weakness is the timing of activities. Overlong activity sessions, where all pupils work on the same task regardless of ability or aptitude, result in a number of pupils losing their initial enthusiasm. This also limits opportunities for the more able pupils to evaluate their own learning and extend their thinking.

129 All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, enjoy their work in geography and make satisfactory progress. The main differences in the quality of work produced by pupils are related more to literacy skills and presentation than to levels of geographical understanding.

130 The co-ordinator, who is new to the school, manages the subject satisfactorily and has a grasp of what needs to be done to improve teaching and learning in geography. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is planned to ensure that pupils build upon their learning of mapping and fieldwork skills. An action plan sets out appropriate priorities to improve standards in geography. Geographical skills are assessed at the end of the year. However, information gained from this and teachers' daily assessments is not used effectively to increase pupils' progress. This was a concern at the time of the previous inspection. Resources, including the school grounds, are good. Good use is made of the local area and field trips enhance provision, bringing relevance to pupils' learning.

HISTORY

131 Throughout the school pupils attain above average standards, demonstrating the high standards noted at the time of the last inspection. Pupils achieve well and gain a sound knowledge of chronology. The teacher brings relevance to pupils' understanding of history when pupils learn that evidence from the past comes from different sources which need to be interpreted in different ways. In Years 1 and 2 pupils sequence events and learn to use common words and phrases relating to the passing of time. They retrace their own lives and look back on changes. This helps them to gain insights into the passage of time and changes in ways of life in Britain generally. By the age of seven they distinguish clearly between the past and the present and understand that different events happened in different periods of time. In Year 1 pupils compare a memory with the present time. They know that Remembrance Day was last week, grandma's memories go back about 80 years but Guy Fawkes lived almost 400 years ago. They understand time periods related to stories they have heard and know, for example that Grace Darling lived before grandma but after Guy Fawkes. Year 2 pupils build on the idea of continuing time, placing personal experiences in order from past to present. They understand that 'beyond living memory' means that no one in the school was alive when the events took place. They know that information is gained by observation and asking questions. As pupils watched a video portraying life in a Victorian school, they gasped when a child was caned and queried the significance of 'using the offices'.

132 In Years 3 to 6 pupils learn about important episodes and developments in Britain's past history, from Roman to modern times. They investigate local history and learn about the past from a range of sources of information. Younger pupils learn about the ancient

Egyptians and the time of the Tudors in British history. Older pupils study ancient Greece, investigate reasons why peoples settle in particular areas and learn about more recent British history in a study of 'Britain at War'. Pupils in Year 6 were observed as they used a time-line to identify the time of the first Roman invasion and the time that Roman occupation ended. They further developed their sense of chronology when they calculated the duration of the occupation that began BC (before the birth of Christ) and ended in the years AD (time reckoned from after the birth of Christ). Their good research skills enable them to sift evidence, offer reasons why the Romans left Britain and suggest the legacy of occupation. The activity was the same for all pupils, however, and opportunities were missed for challenging more able pupils to use their initiative and extend their planning and organisational skills.

133 Literacy is well developed and used in history lessons. Pupils' writing is generally of good quality and more able pupils demonstrate mature reasoning skills. Links are also made with art, geography and numeracy. The school has a good range of books and pupils have access to the Internet so that skills for research are well supported and extended.

134 The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers ensure that all groups of pupils are included fully in activities. Lessons are carefully prepared and teachers are clear about the historical concepts they want to pupils to understand. Teachers plan topics so there is a balance of acquiring knowledge and practising skills of historic enquiry. They ensure that pupils know about significant people and events of the past. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they ask searching questions that help to extend pupils' learning. However, there are insufficient planned opportunities during lessons for pupils to use their initiative or debate and argue their viewpoints.

135 The scheme of work supports learning and the subject is well managed. Resources are good and effective use is made of visits and visitors. As a result pupils are enthusiastic and achieve well. There is a system in place to assess the development in pupils' historical skills and understanding. However, information gathered from this and other teacher assessments is not used consistently to further increase achievement in the subject. While the co-ordinator monitors teaching and learning, the measures are not sufficiently rigorous to improve standards. These were concerns at the time of the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

136 At the time of the last inspection standards in ICT were judged above average, though its use across the curriculum was in need of development. Current standards in year 2 and 6 are about average, though in year 6 in particular there are significant strengths and some pupils may well improve enough to reach above average standards before the end of the year. In Year 5 pupils are well placed to reach above average standards by the time they leave Year 6 if their current rate of progress continues.

137 ICT is taught as a distinct subject with each class in turn having at least one session in the computer suite each week. The curriculum is well planned so that all pupils visit appropriate topics to develop the skills identified in the National Curriculum. Since the last inspection, teachers link ICT with a much wider range of work in other subjects. Good links are forged with science in several year groups. In Year 3 pupils build up a data base of information on the features of different animals, such as the number of legs and their feeding habits. This information is then used to classify and identify animals. In Year 5 pupils use probes to measure the change in temperature as water cools in their work on insulation. In Year 6 pupils use projection microscopes to look at mould on bread and store the images on files in lap-top computers. In other subjects too, ICT is used creatively. In religious education, pupils write creation stories from different faiths developing their word

processing skills and pupils use desk-top publishing to create their own newspapers. In Year 3 pupils create graphs using information on the length of their legs. In Year 4 pupils merge pictures and text in their work in history on ancient Egypt. There is less evidence of computers being used in mathematics. At present few classes use the computer suite in literacy and numeracy sessions on a regular basis. The development of a programme to encourage teachers to use these facilities for one session each week could be a good way of promoting and formalising the use of ICT in these lessons. This would also make better use of this excellent facility.

138 Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, developing basic skills. For instance, in Year 2 pupils use computers to create pictures in the style of famous artists such as Piet Mondrian. They learn to use various icons, manipulate a mouse and select from menus. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is also satisfactory overall, though there is evidence of accelerated progress in Year 5 where there is some specialist teaching by the subject co-ordinator. Teaching is satisfactory overall and good at the top end of the school where teachers have very good knowledge of the subject and are confident in using equipment such as the interactive whiteboard. In other year-groups teachers have a sound understanding of how to help pupils to learn, but occasionally ignore the need to enforce changeovers when pupils are working in pairs, so that all pupils get a chance to develop their own skills rather than acting as a spectator for most of the lesson. This missed opportunity was evident in two lessons observed during the inspection. Teachers also missed the opportunity to use the interactive whiteboard as a teaching aid and instead used a computer monitor, with pupils crowded quite uncomfortably on the floor.

139 Systems for assessing pupils' attainment in ICT have improved and they include a system for pupils to evaluate their own competence, which is good practice. The school is also considering adopting the local education authority's accreditation scheme.

140 Overall the provision for ICT is good. The written guidance is clear and supportive for teachers. The resources are very good, though the main computer suite and the smaller computer suite downstairs could be used more regularly and effectively. There are some strong elements of provision. The use of the suite at lunchtimes by older pupils is good. During the inspection Year 6 pupils created a multi-media presentation of their week on a residential trip. The school has a day working with a local firm on how to control machinery and models using computers, and the school is effective in making its pupils enthusiastic about ICT and confident in using it in a range of situations.

MUSIC

141 Standards are above average throughout the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection when they were said to be average, with strengths in composing and performing. All elements of music are strong now although some opportunities are missed to develop pupils' skills at evaluating and appraising their work and that of others so that improvements can be made. The school has a high reputation locally for the quality of its music and the subject contributes significantly to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. There is an impressive 'Band' that performs during local and school events, for example at Christmas. It comprises some 40 pupils with a good range of instruments including strings, brass, woodwind, keyboards and percussion. They play tunefully and robustly, coping very well with complex rhythmical compositions. Some recorder players are entered for public examinations and achieve well. There is no choir at present but singing in assemblies is of a good standard, sometimes accompanied by a small group of instrumentalists. Pupils sing in tune with good diction and proper attention to the mood of the song, varying their tone appropriately.

142 The improvement since the last inspection is due to the high profile that music has in the school and to the very positive attitudes of the pupils. Many of them say that music is their favourite subject. The main credit, however, has to go to the part-time specialist teacher who, at present, teaches every class. She delivered some very good lessons during the inspection, though teaching overall was judged good. She has excellent subject knowledge and is confident to let pupils exercise their own initiative when she sends them into groups to make music. Pupils in Year 6 acknowledge this. "We have boundaries but we can experiment freely and this helps us learn," says one. These pupils have been composing music for 'Spot the Dot Blues'. Each group's composition is different. One group chooses a drone to accompany the tune; another employs two saxophones to create a tune in two-parts, accompanied by a cabasa playing the pulse; a third group chooses to use tuned instruments exclusively. Detailed graphic scores are created that record these compositions and tunes are written accurately using staves and conventional notation.

143 Progress throughout the school is good. Pupils acquire a good repertoire of songs. From an early age they are taught the correct names for a wide range of instruments and are shown how to play them correctly. A Year 2 pupil plays a xylophone particularly well, showing control and accuracy. The music recorded on tape for this year-group demonstrates compositions that combine layers of sound using different instruments to illustrate a 'Junglescape'. Year 3 pupils sing confidently in two parts and compose an ostinato³ that incorporates quavers, crotchets and semi-breves. Those in Year 4 use the pentatonic scale⁴ for their compositions and listen to contemporary music from Steve Reich to inspire them. Similarly, Year 5 pupils, who have already created 'War' compositions, listen attentively to *Venus* from Holst's *Planet Suite*. They have time to reflect on the mood created and this helps them in their subsequent compositions to evoke 'Peace'.

144 Lessons proceed at a swift pace and are well planned to include a variety of activities – singing, listening, composing and performing. All pupils are fully involved and have regular opportunities to be creative and experimental. They co-operate well and pupils with special educational needs are indistinguishable from their classmates and make the same good progress as everyone else. The teacher makes personal notes about individuals as she works with different groups, noting strengths and weaknesses. This enables her to complete satisfactory assessment records that indicate each pupil's achievement against a list of learning objectives. The co-ordinator is always willing to help colleagues and leads the subject very well. Resources are good but some instruments are reaching the end of their useful life. Resources that would enable greater use of ICT are not available, although the teacher makes very good use of a cassette recorder to record pupils' compositions and singing. Music lessons take place in a classroom that is away from all others and this is a good facility.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

145 Standards in physical education are average at Year 2 and Year 6. It was only possible to see a small number of lessons during the inspection as wet weather caused the cancellation of some outdoor games sessions. Lessons were seen in gymnastics and games. School records show that standards of swimming are good with most pupils exceeding the expected levels by the time they leave. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

146 By the time they are seven pupils attain average standards in gymnastics. They make long or curled shapes and move around the hall with great energy, taking care to avoid other pupils. They understand why they need to warm up at the start of the lesson.

³ A repetitive rhythm used in accompaniments

⁴ A five-note scale using, for example, the notes C, D, F, G, A

Pupils make interesting and creative balances and work well in pairs. They develop a very simple sequence of balances but the quality is only average despite some pupils showing signs of being able to do better. They clearly enjoy their tasks and do as the teacher asks quickly and fairly quietly.

147 By the time they are eleven pupils work on developing a range of balances and transferring these from the floor to the apparatus. Pupils put out the apparatus with a minimum of fuss and work well together in doing so. However, the quality of the work is only satisfactory. Most pupils could, with some well-targeted coaching comments, achieve more. At Year 5 pupils show average skills overall in games. They control balls of various types with hands, feet and sticks and work well together when asked to. Some show signs of being able to do rather more than asked but the nature of the lesson prevents them from doing so.

148 Teaching overall is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned with a clear idea of what pupils will do. Teachers are very aware of the need to promote health and safety and remind pupils of the need to warm up before lessons. They control pupils well but in doing so prevent them from taking responsibility for planning, organising and evaluating their own learning. Activities are prescribed by the teacher rather than devised by the pupils. There is no real encouragement for pupils to set themselves targets to achieve or beat. While pupils are asked to comment on each other's work there is little evidence of them evaluating their own. Teachers tend to keep talking throughout the lesson, with well-intentioned but very general comments about how pupils might improve their performance. As these comments are constant and not targeted at individuals, pupils do not refine their work to the extent they could, so that the overall quality of their work, while satisfactory, is not elevated beyond that level. Consequently pupils learn the skills the teachers want them to but are not encouraged to excel through focused well-targeted questions and feedback on their individual performance.

149 Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. While the co-ordinator checks the teachers' planning for lessons there are few opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Assessment procedures are inadequate. The school is well resourced with plenty of equipment, a good-sized hall and plenty of grassed areas. It also makes effective use of after-school clubs and activities to enhance pupils' learning in physical education. To raise the quality of physical education the school should improve the monitoring of standards, teaching and learning, and of assessment, and raise the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good by encouraging teachers to use a wider range of methods and to give pupils more responsibility for their own learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

150 Attainment by the age of seven and eleven is good in relation to the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils study the beliefs and practices of Christianity, Judaism and Islam with some reference to other world faiths. Progress through the school is good. By the age of eleven pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the faiths studied. There was little opportunity to observe lessons in Key Stage 1. Teaching is generally good throughout the school. Overall there has been an improvement since the last inspection.

151 Lessons for younger pupils are mostly oral. Listening to pupils, it is apparent that they have a good knowledge of New Testament stories. Pupils learn to appreciate God's creation through listening to stories and observing the world around them. This leads to an understanding of the need to care for the environment. They understand what it means to be a friend and why friendship is important to each of them. Pupils learn about different festivals during the year. They learn about special people, stories and places of worship. In

a very good lesson in Year 2, pupils were very interested in the five special objects their teacher produced from her 'special box'. The personal items encouraged pupils to appreciate that ordinary objects can hold special memories for their owners. Pupils then thought about and drew pictures of things that were special for them. As they had heard about Guru Nanak's birthday in assembly that day, the teacher had chosen five objects as an introduction to teaching about the five special things, the five Ks, of Sikhism the following week. These were imaginative teaching strategies to enthuse and hold pupils' attention so that they learned well.

152 Most lessons for older pupils are also good, with some very good and excellent teaching seen. Lessons are well planned; teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject so that by the age of eleven, most pupils have a clear understanding of which stories and practices reflect the beliefs and lifestyle of each of the main faiths studied. Pupils listen well in lessons. They have good opportunities to think about and discuss their ideas. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils described how they perceive God. Through a series of short tasks the teacher skilfully led pupils to appreciate that different faiths perceive God in different ways. Pupils express their understanding that these are probably different expressions of a similar belief and that the way in which followers express their faith may be different but of equal value to the individual. This is a mature outlook. Occasionally lessons do not develop pupils' thinking so well. Tasks set merely require them to recall in writing and pictures what they have already learned and discussed rather than using the opportunity to develop their ideas further.

153 Many lessons contribute well to pupils' spiritual development because teachers give them a few minutes of quiet time to reflect on what they have learned and how that learning affects their own lives. This is a very worthwhile experience for pupils. Religious education lessons contribute well to all aspects of pupils' personal development. The lessons make satisfactory contributions to literacy through opportunities for speaking and listening through small group discussion and brainstorming and writing tasks. Written work in some years is not as well presented as it should be when pupils seem to take less care than in English lessons. A few teachers make satisfactory use of ICT for research but this facility is not well used.

154 The subject leader is new to the school. She has had little time to have much impact on the subject so far, but she has good plans for development of the subject. She is aware that, although the school has good resources to support learning, including books, posters, videos and artefacts in topic boxes, they need to be better organised and listed so that all teachers, especially those new to the school, know what is available. Books on the general library shelves need sorting and updating as many of them are old and outdated. Pupils have good opportunities to visit different places of Christian worship. In the past visits have been arranged to places of worship of other faiths but these have not always proved as successful as the school had hoped. Instead, good use is made of very suitable videos so pupils gain a good understanding of worship in a range of religions and how people practise their faith in their everyday life.

155 Collective worship and assembly themes contribute well to pupils' religious education. Stories from different faiths are included and special events are celebrated or remembered, such as Guru Nanak's birthday and Remembrance Day. Opportunities for quiet reflective prayer are always included.