

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **ALDER COPPICE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Sedgley, Dudley

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103869

Headteacher: Mr David Cox

Reporting inspector: Ms Margot D'Arcy  
23158

Dates of inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> June – 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2003

Inspection number: 246322

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Northway Sedgley Dudley
Postcode:	DY3 3PS
Telephone number:	01384 816610
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Neil Gibbons
Date of previous inspection:	June 2001

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23158	Margot D'Arcy	Registered Inspector	The Foundation Stage English as an additional language.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? <i>The school's results and pupils' achievements.</i> How well pupils are taught? How well the school is led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11096	Margaret Davie	Lay Inspector	Educational inclusion, including race equality	How high are standards? <i>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</i> How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
14319	Michael Brown	Team Inspector	Geography Information and communication technology Design and technology History	
23276	Margaret Mann	Team Inspector	English Art and design Music	
11528	Mike Wainwright	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
32262	Jeffrey Jones	Team Inspector	Science Religious education	

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is much larger than most primaries, catering for 463 boys and girls aged between three and eleven. All except the 63 nursery children attend full-time. There are very few from minority ethnic groups and most speak English as their first language. Those pupils whose mother tongue is not English do not need any significant extra support to help them to understand or take part in the curriculum. Pupils are taught in classes containing others of the same age. The proportion with learning difficulties (seven per cent) is below average. The range of pupils' special needs includes specific, moderate and general learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are two pupils with severe learning difficulties who have a formal statement in relation to the provision that must be made to support them. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals (four per cent) is below average. The area in which the school is situated is socially and economically advantaged. Overall, children's attainment when they begin school is above that which is expected for their age.

## **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a good and improving school. All infant pupils receive a very good start to their education and reach high standards by the end of Year 2. Past weaknesses that affected the standards achieved by junior pupils are being addressed and standards are beginning to rise; for example, they are above the national average in English and science and broadly average in mathematics. Teaching is particularly effective in the infants. Whilst there is good and sometimes very good teaching in the juniors, there is scope for this to be better in some Year 3 and 4 classes. Pupils receive a good curriculum. The school is led and managed well and provides good value for money.

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

- Nursery and reception children make very good progress in all aspects of their work.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 continue to achieve well. They make particularly good progress in English, mathematics and science and reach well above average standards in these subjects.
- All infant pupils receive very good quality learning experiences and teaching that is at least good.
- Throughout the school, standards in information and communication technology (ICT), art and design and religious education (RE) are above average.
- The school is led and managed well by the headteacher, senior managers and governors.
- There are good procedures to assess pupils' standards and progress in English, mathematics, science and ICT.
- The school respects pupils, values them as individuals and looks after them well.

### **What could be improved**

- The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4, particularly in mathematics.
- The personal development of a small number of junior pupils, specifically, their attitudes, behaviour and relationships.
- The provision for gifted and/or talented pupils.

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

## **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made satisfactory improvement since its last inspection in June 2001. Most of the weaknesses identified then have been addressed. Pupils now have better learning experiences in design and technology (DT) geography and history and the investigative aspects of mathematics and science. The good standards and progress previously noted for infant pupils are now even better. Junior pupils' standards are rising steadily, but there are still some weaknesses in teaching in the juniors that prevent standards from being as high as they might. Work has begun on enhancing the role that subject managers play in promoting good standards and provision. Whilst there has been very good improvement to the provision for infant pupils' spiritual development, more work is needed in this area in the juniors. There has been good improvement to the provision for making pupils aware of their own and other cultures.

## **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	C	B	C
mathematics	C	D	C	D
science	B	C	B	C

  

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

The table shows the good improvement that occurred in all three subjects in 2002. Whilst performance in relation to similar schools<sup>1</sup> was not as favourable, given the standards that this group of pupils achieved at the end of Year 2, they made good progress in English and satisfactory progress in mathematics and science. They also achieved the English and mathematics targets that the school had set for them, which were realistically challenging. Over time, the school's test results have risen at broadly the same rate as those nationally. Pupils currently in Year 6 have made, overall, satisfactory progress during Years 3 to 6 and are achieving above average standards in English and broadly average standards in mathematics and science. They make generally good progress in art and design, ICT and RE and achieve above average standards in these subjects. In all other subjects<sup>2</sup>, progress is mostly satisfactory and standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6.

Year 2 pupils' test results in 2002 were well above the national average, and the standards achieved by similar schools, in reading, writing and mathematics. The results in all three subjects rose significantly from those achieved the previous year. Teachers' assessments of pupils' standards in science, speaking and listening were also well above average. The pupils currently in Year 2 have maintained these very good standards. Standards are also above average and progress is at least good in other subjects except DT and music, where standards and progress are broadly average. Overall, pupils achieve well, building effectively on the standards that they have attained by the end of the reception year. Children in nursery and reception also make very good progress. By the end of the reception year, they have achieved the expected goals in all areas of learning<sup>3</sup> and many are working competently within the lower levels of the National Curriculum.

Infant pupils are achieving better than juniors. In part, this is because older junior pupils are still showing the legacy of past weaknesses. However, the main reasons are that teaching and learning experiences are better in the infants and infant pupils have higher standards in terms of their attitudes to learning, behaviour and relationships. Throughout the school, boys and girls achieve equally well. Similarly, pupils from minority ethnic groups do as well as others.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good overall. High standards of enthusiasm and interest by all infant pupils. Mostly satisfactory in the juniors, but some pupils have poor attitudes, which have a negative impact on their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall in lessons and other contexts but with similar variation as above between infant and junior pupils.
Personal development and relationships	Good overall, but varying to a similar extent as attitudes and behaviour. Junior pupils are generally keen to take on responsibilities and value having a say in how the school is run. Relationships are mostly

<sup>1</sup> Based on the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

<sup>2</sup> Design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education.

<sup>3</sup> Personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative and physical development.

	harmonious, but a minority of juniors show a lack of respect for teachers and each other.
Attendance	Good. Above the national average. Pupils are punctual.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Whilst there is good and very good teaching and learning in all departments, the quality is more consistent for infant pupils. From nursery to Year 2, a high proportion of good and better teaching is provided in all subjects and areas of learning. Whilst most of the teaching in Years 5 and 6 is at least good, there are weaknesses in some Year 3 and 4 classes. This occurs in a range of subjects and particularly in mathematics. Throughout the rest of the school, mathematics is generally taught well, with numeracy skills being promoted effectively across the curriculum. English and ICT are taught well throughout the school, which is making an effective contribution to the rising standards in these subjects. Basic literacy and ICT skills are generally promoted well in lessons in these subjects and others. The best teaching stems from teachers' good knowledge and the high expectations of pupils. Briskly paced lessons, probing questioning and interesting activities and resources keep pupils alert and involved in learning. Where teaching is not effective, the work given to pupils is often too easy and the pace of lessons is slow. Learning generally varies in direct relation to the quality of teaching pupils receive. However, there are some occasions when, in spite of good teaching, junior pupils' attitudes and behaviour prevent them and others from learning as well as they could. The marking of pupils' work in English is good, but in mathematics and science the quality varies. Pupils with learning difficulties generally progress at the same rate as others in their class. However, their learning is given a boost when they receive additional, small group or individual support from support staff.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. Very good for nursery and reception children and for pupils in Years 1 and 2. All statutory requirements are met but there is no additional provision made to further promote the progress of pupils who are gifted and/or talented.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Good individual education plans are written to help address pupils' needs and overall, these are implemented satisfactorily. Additional, good quality, adult support helps pupils tackle their work and achieve success.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very few pupils need additional support. Occasionally, support is needed to help pupils form grammatically correct sentences. This is being adequately provided for by the school's own staff.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and discuss pertinent moral issues. They have good opportunities to work and play together and there are strategies to help them value their own and others' achievements. Their knowledge and understanding of their own and other cultures are promoted well. Spiritual development is a strong aspect in all the infant classes, but is only promoted satisfactorily in the juniors.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. This is a caring school where pupils are valued and well looked after. There are effective systems to check on and promote their academic and personal progress.



A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided, but many are only open to certain pupils, for example those in Years 5 and 6. The school has a good partnership with parents who make a valuable contribution to its work.

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

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher leads and manages the school well, providing clear direction for improvement. He is well supported by a hardworking deputy and assistant headteacher. Overall, subject and other co-ordinators make a satisfactory contribution to how the school is led and managed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are a well-informed and committed team who have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They provide the school with effective support and challenge it to improve. Governors fulfil most of their legal obligations, but some policies are missing and the prospectus and governors' annual report omits some of the required information.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has a clear insight of how well it is performing in relation to other schools and what it needs to do to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Most resources, including support staff, are used well. Particularly effective use is made of ICT to aid learning, administration and communication with staff and parents.

Overall, the number of staff, quality of accommodation, sufficiency and quality of resources are good. The school is successful in ensuring that it gets the best value from the spending and other decisions it makes

#### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and behave well.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and their children make good progress.</li> <li>• The headteacher and staff are approachable.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations for their children and helps them develop maturity.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More consistency in the setting of homework for junior pupils.</li> <li>• More information about what is being taught.</li> <li>• Less selective processes for extra-curricular activities and more activities for younger pupils.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with most of parents' positive views. They find that parents are justified in wanting more information about what is being taught. Their concerns about the selective process of extra-curricular activities also have some credence. Homework provision is satisfactory overall.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children begin school with a very good range of social experiences and general knowledge. They communicate well and have good speaking and listening skills; their basic understanding of mathematics is also good. In the nursery and reception classes, all children build on their existing knowledge, skills and understanding and achieve well in all aspects of their work. By the end of the reception year, most will achieve the expected outcomes in all six areas of learning and many will be working competently within the lower levels of the National Curriculum.
2. The results of national tests taken by Year 2 pupils in 2002 were well above the national average and the standards achieved by similar schools in reading, writing and mathematics. In all three subjects, and particularly in mathematics, results rose significantly from those achieved in 2001. Teachers assessed pupils' standards in science, speaking and listening as well above average. Over time, there are no significant differences in girls' and boys' test results. Whilst girls are performing slightly better than boys in English, the difference broadly reflects the picture found nationally. Inspection evidence supports these test results. Pupils currently in Year 2 are achieving well above average standards in all aspects of English, mathematics and science. Boys and girls achieve equally well.
3. The results of national tests taken by Year 6 pupils in 2002 were above the national average in English and science and broadly in line with the national average in mathematics. These results were not as favourable when compared with similar schools, being broadly average in English and science and below average in mathematics. However, data shows that given pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2, they had made satisfactory progress in mathematics and science and good progress in English. These improved results, and the fact that the school's overall trend of improvement is now broadly in line with that being achieved nationally, where previously it had been below, reflects the improvements that have occurred in recent years. Over time, there are no significant differences in the results achieved by boys and girls in any of the subjects tested, although girls have performed slightly better in mathematics and science, which is somewhat at odds with the national picture.
4. Inspection evidence shows that the current group of Year 6 pupils have made, overall, satisfactory progress during their time in the juniors. They are achieving above average standards in English and broadly average standards in mathematics and science. Whilst pupils are capable of achieving higher standards than these, they have had to make up lost ground, stemming from past weaknesses in provision. This group of pupils are the last to have been significantly affected by these weaknesses. For example, pupils in Year 5 are achieving standards that are similar or higher to those achieved by pupils in Year 6. Whilst pupils currently in Year 6 are receiving generally good or better teaching, the behaviour and attitudes of a significant minority, mostly boys, is having a negative impact on their standards and progress and is another factor that prevents them from achieving more highly. Pupils in Year 5 are making good progress. However, some in Years 3 and 4 are not moving on as fast as they might because the work that they are given does not build sufficiently on what they already know. This is evident in a number of subjects, but particularly mathematics.

5. To help raise standards in English and mathematics, all pupils from Year 2 upward are grouped for teaching according to their attainment. Overall, this is working well, with teachers being able to plan work that meets pupils' needs.
6. Throughout the school, standards in art and design and ICT are above national expectations and pupils make good progress in these subjects. Standards in RE are also above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the ends of Years 2 and 6 but overall, progress in this subject is better during Years 1 and 2 than during Years 3 to 6. During Years 1 and 2, pupils also make at least good progress in geography, history and PE. As a result, by the end of Year 2 standards in these subjects are above national expectations. Year 1 and 2 pupils make satisfactory progress in DT and music and achieve standards that are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2. By Year 6, standards are in line with national expectations in DT, geography, history, music and PE. Overall, junior pupils' progress in these subjects and in RE is satisfactory. There are three main reasons for the difference in standards and progress between infant and junior pupils:
  - the quality of teaching is more consistent and of a better overall standard in Years 1 and 2;
  - Year 6 pupils are still showing the impact of previous weaknesses in provision, particularly in DT, geography and history where the last inspection identified curriculum weaknesses;
  - the attitudes and behaviour of some junior pupils detracts from their learning.
7. Pupils with learning difficulties generally make similar progress to that of their classmates. Whilst the standards of these pupils, including those with emotional and behavioural problems, are generally below those of others, some achieve standards that are in line with expectations for their age. The progress of pupils who are gifted and/or talented is difficult to define since no significant additional provision is made for them within general curriculum time. This is a weakness. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as others.
8. Since the last inspection, there have been good improvements to infant pupils' standards and progress and overall satisfactory improvement to those being achieved by junior pupils. However, some pupils in Years 3 and 4 are not achieving as well as they should because of weaknesses in teaching.

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

9. The good standards found by the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils' attitudes to learning are mostly good and they usually behave well. There is, however, a significant minority of junior pupils, mostly in the upper end of the school, whose attitudes are sometimes unsatisfactory and occasionally poor. This has a negative impact on their achievement and sometimes disrupts the learning of others. One pupil was excluded during the last year for unacceptable behaviour. Both attendance and punctuality are good and there is little unauthorised absence.
10. The very good attitudes of infant pupils, including children in nursery and the reception classes make a significant contribution to their learning. From their earliest days in nursery, children are enthusiastic about their work and can concentrate on activities for a long time. A good example of pupils' attitudes was seen in a Year 1 mathematics lesson where they responded very well to the interesting and challenging work and support provided by the teacher and classroom assistant and demonstrated excellent application, which helped them to learn at a very high rate.

11. Many junior pupils show a good level of interest in their work and are keen to do their best. This was demonstrated in Year 6 when pupils concentrated and learned well while conducting experiments in a science lesson. However, there is a significant minority of boys, and a very few girls, who do not take their learning seriously enough, showing little respect for their teachers and other pupils. Some of them, particularly in the lower sets are too passive in lessons, not really making an effort to work hard enough; their behaviour occasionally deteriorates to the point where learning is disrupted. For example, during a PE lesson a few pupils in Year 6 showed little interest, ignored their teacher's instructions and treated equipment with a lack of respect, throwing it in a heap instead of putting it away properly.
12. Most pupils behave well around the school. They are polite and understand the importance of following the school's 'golden rules'. Infant pupils work together really well and have harmonious relationships with one another. This was shown well in Year 2 during a science lesson when pupils worked extremely well with their partners to compile a long list of insects that they thought they would find on their walk around the grounds. Many older pupils are self-disciplined and work together successfully, but a minority is not, which detracts from their own, and sometimes others', learning. This was shown in a Year 3 PE lesson, during which a few boys demonstrated a poor sense of co-operation and fair play and resorted to calling each other rude names when they could not get on.
13. Pupils on the school council are extremely sensible and articulate their views very well. They have reasonable ideas about how they would like to improve the school environment, for example by redecorating the toilets to make them less drab. They are also quite clear that a small number of pupils sometimes make it difficult for others to learn and are not happy about this situation. The council is made up solely of girls, as no boys were elected. Whilst the majority of parents think that their children like school, a recent survey conducted by the school shows that a small, but significant number of Year 6 boys said that they did not.

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

14. The overall quality of teaching is good but varies across the school, being very good for nursery and reception children, good for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory for pupils in Years 3 to 6. During the inspection, teaching in 96 per cent of lessons was satisfactory or better, with 38 per cent being good, 26 per cent very good and two per cent excellent; three per cent was unsatisfactory and one per cent poor. With the exception of one lesson, all of the unsatisfactory teaching was seen in Years 3 and 4. Whilst the percentage of less than satisfactory teaching seen during the inspection was not particularly high, pupils' work shows that during Years 3 and 4, some are not given sufficiently challenging tasks, given what they have learned by the end of Year 2. Whilst this is not the case in all classes in these year groups, the weaknesses that exist need to be addressed urgently or the improvements that have occurred to standards in recent years will not be maintained.
15. In class lessons, the teaching of pupils with learning difficulties generally varies to the same degree as for that of others. Teachers are aware of these pupils' difficulties and make additional provision for them through modifying their work and providing extra adult support, either themselves or using classroom assistants. These assistants are effective in this role, encouraging pupils to try and ensuring that they understand their work. Pupils with statements of special educational need are very well supported, both within class and in one-to-one situations.

16. There are strengths in the teaching of nursery and reception children where virtually all of the teaching is at least good and almost seven in ten lessons are very good or excellent. This high quality teaching allows children to make very good gains in all aspects of their development. Particularly effective aspects of teaching include teachers' very good knowledge of how young children learn and their high expectations of what they can achieve. Work is very well matched to children's attainment and stage of development. Children's personal, social and emotional development, their language and communication skills and mathematical development are all promoted very effectively each day in a range of contexts. A constant range of exciting and challenging activities are thoughtfully planned to enthuse children about learning. This certainly works. In all classes, there is an industrious atmosphere, where children with smiling faces throw themselves wholeheartedly in to activities and discussions, so that one can actually see learning taking place. Nursery nurses and other assistants make a valuable contribution and are a crucial part of the teaching team. Homework is used well to support the development of literacy skills, with work being set at the right level and appropriate in quantity. Some interesting, practical and research tasks for children to complete at home are also set in a range of other areas of learning.
17. There are strengths in the teaching of pupils in Years 1 and 2. Here over three-quarters of the teaching is good or better, with a third being very good. This good standard is evident in pupils' work, showing consistency over time. Whilst there are strengths here in many aspects, teachers' high expectations and their relationships with, and management of, pupils are particularly notable. Together, these features promote effective learning. The fusion of both challenging pupils and engendering in them an eagerness to please their teachers works really well. Pupils enjoy learning because they are given interesting work that is well matched to their needs. Consequently, all, including higher attainers and those with learning difficulties achieve success. English and mathematics are taught very well, including promoting literacy and numeracy skills in a range of contexts, which has a positive impact on standards.
18. Whilst teaching for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall, there are some strengths, with over half being good or better and one in ten lessons being very good. However, all of the unsatisfactory teaching is located here, mostly in some Year 3 and 4 classes. The work of these pupils shows a significant dip in progress. There are low-level tasks set in a number of subjects, repetition of work done in Year 2 and limited recorded work. The teaching and learning in mathematics is particularly weak in these year groups. However, English is taught well throughout the juniors. Work in all classes builds on previous learning and literacy skills are promoted effectively in other subjects. There are strengths in the teaching of pupils in Years 5 and 6. Teachers here have good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils. Lessons move along at a brisk pace, with a good range of methods used and tasks provided to challenge pupils and maintain their interest. However, the rate of learning for these pupils is not always as good as one might expect, given the aforementioned qualities in teaching. This is because of some pupils' poor attitudes and behaviour. This is seen in a number of subjects and is more apparent in the lower sets. Generally, pupils in the higher sets are more motivated and have better attitudes to work.
19. Throughout the school, the teaching of art and design and ICT are good, with teachers' subject knowledge being a key feature supporting good learning in these subjects. Good quality resources that are used effectively to stimulate pupils' interest

and concentration also promote learning well. Throughout the school, support staff make a good contribution to teaching and learning.

20. Inspection findings show that, overall, homework makes a satisfactory contribution to learning. However, a significant number of parents of junior pupils expressed dissatisfaction with the homework that their children are given. Views put forward were that it was too varied in quality (in terms of the level of challenge, sometimes being very easy and then extremely difficult, and no particular difference in that given to higher attainers and others), quantity, and frequency. The school confirms that there may occasionally be variation in the setting of homework. During the inspection, it was not possible to determine the validity of all of the claims made by parents. There is clearly a need for the school to pursue these.
21. The quality of marking remains variable, as noted by the last inspection. Overall it is good in English but inconsistent between classes in mathematics and science. This aspect is still in need of improvement. The teaching for nursery and reception children and for pupils in Years 1 and 2, identified as an effective aspect of provision by the last inspection, has improved even further. Whilst there have been some improvements in the juniors, weaknesses remain. Overall, therefore, improvement in teaching since the last inspection is only just satisfactory.

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

22. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good and relevant to pupils' needs. All subjects of the National Curriculum and RE are taught. Statutory requirements are also met in relation to the provision of a daily act of collective worship, sex education and making pupils aware of the dangers of drugs. The school provides a range of additional opportunities and initiatives, such as the 'Fit to Learn' week, which embraces raising pupils' awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Indeed, the overall provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good. Each class has a designated time for PSHE, with planned activities that promote these aspects of pupils' development. There are also strengths in the curriculum for nursery and reception children and, throughout the school in English, mathematics, science, ICT and art and design. These strengths are generally reflected in pupils' good progress and higher than average standards.
23. Since the last inspection, improvements have been made. For instance, good progress has been made in increasing the number and quality of investigative opportunities in mathematics and science. The weaknesses identified by the last inspection in relation to learning experiences in DT, geography and history have been tackled satisfactorily.
24. Children in nursery and reception receive a very good and purposeful curriculum. It is planned meticulously and takes full account of the national guidance for this age group. The lessons and activities are stimulating, practical and suitable to children's age and stage of development; these promote children's progress very well. The only aspect that could be better is the provision made for outdoor learning for reception children, which is limited. Whilst this does not detract from the development of children's physical skills, the limitations are in sharp contrast to the richness of indoor learning experiences and the outdoor provision that is made for nursery children.
25. The national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy have been implemented well and are supporting improved standards and progress. Overall, learning

experiences in other subjects are used effectively to promote key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. The curriculum for ICT is stimulating, challenging, and being implemented well throughout the school.

26. In most of the provision it makes, the school ensures that all pupils benefit equally. The inappropriate behaviour of a small number of pupils in Years 3 to 6, however, occasionally results in disrupted learning for other children in their classes. Sometimes, pupils' misbehaviour is not dealt with appropriately and results in them missing out on learning experiences. For example, when they are excluded from PE as a punishment for misbehaving in another lesson.
27. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties. They are included in all the activities offered to others in their year group. Additional, good quality, adult support is provided in lessons to enable pupils to tackle their work and achieve success. Occasionally, they are withdrawn from lessons to receive very good quality teaching, either individually or in small groups, which is linked well to the targets in their individual education plans (IEPs). These are of a good standard, but are not always implemented as effectively as they could be in class lessons, particularly for those pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
28. The school has pupils who are gifted and/or talented. Whilst there is a system to identify these pupils, in general there is no specific additional provision made for them over and above what is provided for higher attainers. The exception is within the provision for extra-curricular activities, where a number of clubs are open only to pupils from these two groups. Consequently, whilst higher attainers are usually given work in lessons that is more challenging, no individual work programmes or curriculum provision is made for gifted and/or talented pupils to ensure that their unique needs are met.
29. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, with provision for 400 places for pupils to take up during the year. However, many of the clubs and activities are only for pupils in Years 5 and 6 and others are targeted specifically to gifted and/or talented pupils. With regard to the sports activities, most of these are open to all, although the most talented are often selected to take part in competitive matches. Pupils say that they understand and accept this. Activities such as choir and 'Garden Gnomes' are open to a wider age range. The curriculum is enriched further through a good range of visits to places of educational interest, including the residential visit for Year 6 pupils.
30. Some effective links with the community enhance learning experiences. Good use is made of the local environment to support work in history and geography and local residents are invited to talk to pupils about their memories, for example, of wartime. There are good links with the local church, with the vicar being a regular visitor. There are also good links with local schools, for example, through sports and exchange visits. Pupils in Year 6 make a good number of visits to the receiving high school where, for example, they engage in additional science work. High school teachers have also visited this school to teach some PE lessons. Some effective liaison is occurring to ensure sharper curriculum links between Years 6 and 7.
31. The provision for spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good and overall, has improved since the last inspection. However, whilst provision for spiritual development is a strength in all infant classes, further development is needed in the juniors, particularly in promoting behaviour, attitudes and relationships. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has good knowledge of how to develop provision.

However, whilst there is a good action plan, opportunities to monitor the effectiveness of the action taken so far have not been sufficient to detect the weaknesses that still exist. One strategy for improvement has been to ensure that lesson planning makes specific reference as to how these four elements might be promoted. However, junior teachers do not always follow these references through and too often miss opportunities to promote awe and wonder in lessons that have good potential for doing so. During the inspection, good examples of spirituality being promoted in lessons were seen in reception, where children learned to appreciate the beauty of a rose and were excited by the emergence of a butterfly from a chrysalis. In a Year 2 RE lesson, pupils were engrossed as they looked at a candle and reflected on special places and special friends. In Years 3 to 6, occasional examples were seen, such as in a Year 3 science lesson where pupils gasped when told the age of rocks.

32. Except in infant classes, where spiritual development is promoted very well across the curriculum, provision for pupils' spiritual growth and understanding takes place mainly during assemblies, class discussions, and circle time<sup>4</sup>. Assemblies extend pupils' thinking and are thoughtfully conducted. Stories are used to help pupils gain knowledge and insights into their own and others values and beliefs. This was well illustrated when a visiting Vicar emphasised care for the environment with infants and self-sacrifice with juniors. Music is used as pupils enter and leave to evoke atmosphere, but prayer and reflection are often rushed.
33. Provision for moral development is good. A high moral ethos pervades the school and staff provide good role models. Good moral attitudes are promoted from when children begin school. Opportunities are planned that allow them to consider wider moral issues. For instance, in a Year 4 literacy lesson, good use was made of a text to help pupils understand the moral dilemma associated with scientific testing on animals. In a Year 6 geography lesson, pupils considered moral issues surrounding traffic congestion. The school's 'golden rules' are displayed very prominently in classrooms; assemblies are used very effectively to celebrate pupils' achievements and good behaviour. During circle time, pupils consider moral issues such as their own behaviour and think how they could improve. A poster in the corridor reminds pupils that bullying hurts. In a classroom, a 'thinking wall' display depicts pupils' comments, such as *'I am good at being nice to my friends.'*
34. Provision for social development is good, with all staff working hard to promote this. The school council meets regularly and pupils raise a range of themes for discussion. In lessons, pupils have many opportunities to work with others. For example, when using role-play in RE or investigating in science or mathematics. There are planned opportunities for social integration, such as when Year 6 pupils read a book to pupils in Years 1 or 2. Extra curricular clubs and educational visits provide opportunities for pupils to socialise and work together. The annual residential visit gives older pupils an invaluable opportunity to experience the ups and downs of living together as a community in an unfamiliar environment.
35. Provision for cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Pupils are taught about aspects of British culture in subjects such as English and history. A suitable emphasis is also given to teaching them about cultures and beliefs in the wider world, particularly in RE and geography. For example, in geography, pupils find out about an Indian village; a study of the Indus valley helps them understand stereotyped impressions of society. Pupils' cultural awareness is also raised through educational visits and visitors. These include a visit to a Dudley mosque, links with a local Sikh temple and visits from Bhangra and African dance

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<sup>4</sup> Where pupils sit in a circle and discuss issues.



groups. These experiences have had a strong impact on pupils and help them to reflect on differing forms of inclusion and prejudice. Pupils' understanding of cultural and social differences has been fostered by the school's involvement in the Comenius Project<sup>5</sup>. In 2002, a teacher from Finland made an extended visit to the school and worked with pupils in all year groups. The project also provides links with schools in other European countries. A Comenius display in the school's library includes messages from pupils attending schools in Austria, Italy, and Portugal.

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

36. Procedures for taking care of pupils are very good. Teachers know them very well, treat them with a high degree of respect and value their opinions. The educational and personal guidance provided for pupils is good. They are very well supervised at all times and confident in the company of staff, including the headteacher to whom many chat at break times. The local vicar visits fortnightly and holds a 'chat shop' where pupils can discuss any problems they may have in private. The school's ethos provides a safe and secure environment in which many pupils are successfully being encouraged to do their best. The good communication that exists with parents ensures that problems and concerns can be dealt with speedily and effectively.
37. The headteacher is the designated person responsible for child protection and makes sure that staff are up to date with their training. Many are also trained in the administration of first aid; suitable procedures are followed to make sure that pupils are taken care of properly in the event of an accident. The building and grounds are checked regularly to ensure that the working environment is safe. There is good awareness of any potential risks that the site presents. For example, the very tall steps into the junior building have all been painted with a bright yellow stripe and are only used by pupils under the supervision of an adult. A disability audit has recently been conducted, but the nature of the site makes disabled access very difficult. Whilst pupils are educated about the dangers of drugs, the legal requirement to have a policy on this aspect is not met.
38. Procedures to ensure that pupils behave themselves are good and provide a clear framework for teachers to follow. However, whilst many make good use of this, some teachers in the juniors do not apply the procedures consistently and in these circumstances, behaviour management is much less effective. Whilst the range of rewards and sanctions support the procedures well, too many warnings are sometimes given before a sanction is imposed. Consequently, a few pupils are constantly pushing the limits. Merits and certificates of achievement are used well throughout the school to encourage pupils to behave and do their best.
39. Many good initiatives are used to help pupils to mature as they get older. They are given plenty of opportunities to help around the school, for example, by watering the flowers, delivering lunch registers or helping to keep their classrooms tidy. Year 6 prefects watch doors at lunchtime and help to set up equipment for assemblies. Monitors help with younger pupils at lunchtime and play games with them when it is too wet to go outdoors for a break. There is a good induction system for children when they start school and pupils in Year 6 benefit from an extensive exchange of information and visits to the receiving high school, supporting their confidence in this important transition.
40. Throughout the school, there is a good programme of assessments in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The progress of individual pupils in these subjects is

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<sup>5</sup> A European Union based organisation that fosters links between schools across the European community.

regularly assessed against key learning objectives. Good use is made of ICT to record test results and analyse the data from them. The information from pupils' test results in English, mathematics and science is used well overall, to track progress, set improvement targets and group pupils for teaching. The attainment and progress of significant groups, such as boys and girls, is monitored, as is pupils' individual progress. A good feature is the progress books in which pupils complete work in English, mathematics and science, to agreed criteria, at designated times during the year. These provide a useful on-going record of pupils' progress during their time in school. Assessment in subjects other than those mentioned above is less rigorous, but satisfactory overall. The school is developing some improved systems, although these are at an early stage of implementation. The assessment of nursery and reception children is of a very high standard. A range of very good assessments are regularly conducted in all areas of learning, with the information being used very well to support children's progress by, for example, modifying work for individuals and groups.

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

41. Overall, parents hold favourable views of the school. There was a fairly high response to the inspection questionnaire. Information from these, and views expressed at the pre-inspection meeting with the Registered inspector, shows that most parents are generally happy about what the school is providing to ensure their children's academic and personal development. There is awareness, however, that pupils in the upper end of the school should be doing better. A significant minority of parents felt that they were not told enough about what their children were learning. Similarly, whilst parents know that the school council is instrumental in deciding which charities should benefit from the money raised by children, they could not cite many examples of how their children's attitudes and values were being developed. A minority expressed the view that they were not informed enough about how the school develops standards in this area. Overall, these concerns are justified. Inspectors find that the school could provide more information for parents about the curriculum. The school is currently working on improving the way this information is shared with parents.
42. Overall, good efforts are made to ensure that parents get a range of information about school life; for example, newsletters are posted on the school website for ease of access. The annual written reports on pupils' progress are generally good. They identify strengths and weaknesses and what children need to do to improve or move on to the next steps in learning. However, some of the targets are not clearly focused on raising attainment; statements such as, *'build on the success she has achieved in literacy'* do not give parents a good idea about what they can do to help. The prospectus and governors' annual report are both informative, but missing some of the required information. For example, the prospectus does not tell parents whether the school is affiliated or not with a particular religion and some of the data included in the governors' report is not up to date.
43. Parents are valued and the school has taken steps to canvass their views on some aspects of its work. For instance, a questionnaire was sent out to assess parental satisfaction with school reports and these have been changed as a result of concerns that they were too impersonal. Seeking parents' views in this way is good practice. However, no general questionnaire is sent out to establish parental views on a wide range of school provision. Consequently, some of the comments received by the registered inspector came as a surprise to the school. In particular, the strong feeling

of dissatisfaction over what parents feel is unequal access to extra-curricular activities and the inconsistency with which they feel homework is set.

44. Parents are invited to many school functions and support them very enthusiastically. The achievement assembly for the younger pupils, to which they have an open invitation, was very well attended during the inspection. This very high level of support from many parents, grandparents and younger siblings helped to create a warm, family atmosphere and really encouraged those who were performing to do their best. A small number of parents and grandparents regularly help out in school and many more are happy to help on one-off occasions or with specific tasks, such as making costumes for school productions. Many parents are keen to support their children's learning at home, helping them to practice reading, spelling and multiplication tables; this has a good impact on children's achievements. The parents' association organises a good number of events, both for fundraising purposes and to provide social occasions for the enjoyment of the school community. The annual summer fair is particularly well supported and has raised significant funds to purchase extra resources for the pupils' benefit, such as electric pianos.

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

45. The quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher, senior managers and governors is good. There is a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a shared vision for improvement. The headteacher has ensured that the role of the leadership team (headteacher, deputy and assistant headteacher) has developed well since the last inspection. Together, they provide strong educational direction. The regular checks that are made on the quality of teaching by the headteacher and leadership team have highlighted where improvements are required; this is reflected well in the priority to raise standards in mathematics, particularly in the juniors.
46. Most of the key issues identified by the last inspection have been addressed and improvements to other aspects of provision have occurred at the same time. However, there is still a need to improve the consistency of teaching for junior pupils if they are to achieve the standards of which they are capable by the end of Year 6. Whilst provision for cultural development has improved considerably, that for spiritual development requires further improvement in the juniors. Good training is being provided for subject co-ordinators, whose roles are currently being developed in line with the recommendation made about this by the last inspection. Improvements can already be seen in some key subjects, such as English, mathematics, ICT and RE. Co-ordinators for these subjects and some others have also had opportunities to observe colleagues teaching and make checks on aspects such as teachers' lesson planning and pupils' work. Developing the role of these middle managers, rightly, remains one of the school's priorities.
47. Governors are a committed and well-informed team. They clearly articulate the school's strengths and demonstrate an informed insight about where standards and provision could be improved. Governors are effectively involved in shaping the school's direction and receive comprehensive and accurate information from the headteacher and co-ordinators to support them in this. They constantly question and challenge the school's management in their endeavour to ensure that the improvements made in recent years are maintained and all pupils receive the best possible opportunities.

48. The school works hard to ensure that it gets the best value from the spending and other decisions it makes. For example, parents' and pupils' views have been sought on some aspects of school life and the school has analysed assessment results to make comparisons between its performance and that of other schools. The quality of financial management is very good; additional funding, such as that for staff training and pupils with learning difficulties, is used well. The school's improvement plan is comprehensive and provides useful support for the management of change and school improvement.
49. There are a good number of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers and support staff. The checks that are made on teaching are linked well with the school's policy on the performance management of teachers and lead to individual and whole staff targets and training. Within the last few years, training has been extensive to make up for past limitations. Overall, this has led to improved subject knowledge among teachers. Administrative staff are highly efficient in supporting day-to-day administration to assist in the smooth running of the school. They provide a warm and welcoming first contact for parents and visitors.
50. The school's good quality resources are used well to support teaching and learning in a range of subjects. There are particular strengths in ICT; there is a very good number of computers in the suite and in classrooms, allowing very good access for pupils. The school also makes very good use of ICT to provide accurate information; for example, about finance, assessment and attendance; for registration; to aid curriculum planning; and to communicate with staff and parents.
51. The accommodation is of a good standard. It provides a pleasant and safe learning environment, which is well maintained by the site supervisor and cleaning staff. There are two, good-sized, halls that are used well for PE, assemblies and dining. However, the hall in the infant building has to be used as a thoroughfare, which sometimes distracts pupils during PE lessons; noise from the adjacent kitchen also, occasionally, disturbs special occasions such as assemblies. The playing field and four playgrounds provide excellent opportunities for pupils to take part in games and to spread out during break times. Pupils regularly visit the well-stocked libraries and computer suite to support reading and research skills. The entrance foyer gives parents easy access to the friendly office staff and contains a good range of leaflets, which give them useful tips about how to help their children.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. The school should now:

- (1) Improve the quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4, paying particular attention to teaching and learning in mathematics, so that it builds effectively on what pupils have learned in the infants.  
(Main paragraphs 4; 14; 18; 21; 81)
- (2) Improve the overall standards of attitudes, behaviour and relationships for junior pupils, through more effective provision for their personal development, including spiritual development, and more consistent use of the school's behaviour management strategies.  
(Main paragraphs 9; 11-13; 18; 31; 38 and in various subject sections in part D of the commentary)
- (3) Improve the provision that is made within the day-to-day curriculum for pupils who are gifted and/or talented so that their specific, and individual, needs are met.  
(Main paragraph 28)

In addition to the key issues above, governors should consider the following, less important, issues for inclusion in their action plan:

- Improve the consistency of marking (paragraph 21)
- Provide more information for parents about what is being taught; pursue their dissatisfaction over homework and extra-curricular activities and canvass their views on a wider range of issues (paragraphs 41-43).
- Ensure that all of the legally required policies are in place and that the prospectus and governors' annual report contain all of the legally required information. (42)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	88
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	23	33	26	3	1	0
Percentage	2	26	38	30	3	1	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR- Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	32	431
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	18

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	30

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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	31	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	30	30
	Girls	29	29	29
	Total	60	59	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (90)	98 (94)	98 (97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
31 Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	28	31
	Girls	29	29	29
	Total	59	57	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (94)	95 (97)	100 (91)
	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	43	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	36	33	40
	Girls	29	23	29
	Total	65	56	69
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (79)	75 (71)	92 (95)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
33 Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	33	34	33
	Girls	24	23	29
	Total	57	57	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (80)	77 (77)	84 (80)
	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	323	2	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	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	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	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)	17.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	31

### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	208

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6

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)	1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Financial information**

Financial year	2002/03
	£
Total income	870,133
Total expenditure	868,576
Expenditure per pupil	1,796
Balance brought forward from previous year	24,532
Balance carried forward to next year	1,557

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate: 52%

Number of questionnaires sent out	522
Number of questionnaires returned	272

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	38	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	49	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	52	4	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	51	14	4	1
The teaching is good.	47	46	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	49	17	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	32	7	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	43	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	40	46	13	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	54	38	5	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	47	5	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	38	17	7	8

## **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**

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

53. Teaching is very effective and constantly promotes children's very good progress. By the end of reception, standards are well above expectations. Children thoroughly enjoy school. They show confidence in a range of situations and skills of independence are well developed. This is because all staff engender supportive relationships with children, giving them scope to explore new situations in a safe, but challenging environment where their efforts are valued and praised. Children really like their teachers and try hard to please them, behaving very well and showing pride in what they do. Good behaviour and manners are constantly promoted. Adults provide good role models, treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect.
54. Children's keenness to learn is promoted very well by teachers' lively presentations and explanations, which are complemented by stimulating resources and a wide range of exciting activities. Consequently, children listen attentively to teachers and concentrate for long periods when working on tasks. Nursery children show a very good level of maturity, sustaining interest well, for example, when listening to stories or working practically. They have learned to take turns, share equipment and play together, for instance in the class shop or outdoors in the class fire station. Routines are well known and adhered to. For example, nursery children register their names on arrival, move confidently to their teaching groups, chat happily to adults and enjoy helping out by tidying away equipment at the end of sessions. These skills are built upon in the reception classes. These children show good maturity in a range of situations, such as attending assemblies with older pupils and eating lunch with them. They competently dress and undress for PE and carry out a range of tasks independently, such as printing the stories that they have written at the computer. Whilst personal development is constantly promoted, some particularly effective examples were seen. These included, children reflecting on the role of fathers whilst listening to quiet music and watching a candle; and learning to understand the beauty and needs of living creatures as they cared for the chrysalis in their classroom.

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

55. Teaching is very effective, with teachers constantly promoting language and literacy skills in all areas of the curriculum. As a result, standards are much higher than expected by the end of the reception year. Children have very good communication skills. From the earliest days in nursery, they listen well, participate enthusiastically in stories and rhymes and frequently choose to browse through books. Children talk clearly. Most speak in complete, and sometimes complex sentences, showing much confidence and using a very good range of vocabulary. The teaching of reading and writing is very good. Nursery children's secure knowledge of letter sounds was evident as they were guided by their teacher to look at the initial and other letters in words that described the weather. As a result, they were able to, for example, determine the difference between *sunny* and *snowy* and make the right choice to go on their weather chart. Many nursery children hold pencils correctly and make very good attempts at forming letters, which overall, are well orientated and consistent in size. Pretend play areas contain lots of equipment to promote reading and writing skills. Novel ideas, such as letters and messages from 'The Bears', who visit when

the children are not in school, provoke great excitement and lots of return letters from the children.

56. In an excellent lesson in reception, the teacher used a large text effectively with the whole class to promote a variety of reading and writing skills. For instance, some words were covered so that children had to think about the meaning and context when predicting what they might be. Questioning ensured that children of different attainment were included and challenged. The questions urged children to think about the characters and what they might be feeling or going to say. The very good points that were made about a range of punctuation helped the children to read expressively. The story writing session that followed included a range of interesting and challenging activities matched to children's needs. The group with the teacher learned how to plan a story, thinking about how it might start, develop and end. Higher attainers produced exceptionally good pieces of independent writing on computers, whilst lower attainers were helped to use pictures, words and short phrases to sequence a story that they had listened to on an audiotape.

### **Mathematical development**

57. Teaching is very good resulting in children reaching standards that are well above expectations by the end of the reception year. A wide range of games, activities and imaginative teaching methods support children's mathematical development. Many nursery children count accurately to 20 and beyond. They correctly name numerals to ten and show good understanding of the quantity represented by each numeral. During the inspection, work of this nature was being promoted very well in a range of practical tasks, some of which were linked very effectively to work on money. For example, children were putting the right number of one-penny coins against a numeric amount. A nursery nurse who worked with small groups in the class shop reinforced this work very well. Children learn early addition and subtraction skills in real and interesting situations that make learning fun.
58. Reception children are gaining very good skills in counting on and back to 100 from different starting points. They are very familiar with the 100 square and have been successfully taught strategies to use this to help answer calculations. For instance, they know that the vertical numbers go up in tens, so they know that adding 11 is a simple move downwards and one move across to the right. Children have gained a good understanding of the ideas of addition and subtraction. Many, including lower attainers, think up and accurately record calculations of this nature, such as  $20 - 19$ . Well-organised teaching of numeracy lessons provides a brisk, stimulating oral/mental starter for the whole class, then group activities that are thoughtfully matched to children's needs. During the inspection, higher attainers' skills were being extended very well as they worked in pairs using small 100-squares and individual whiteboards to calculate and record their answers. Children were highly motivated and worked out answers to questions such as  $73 + 9$  and  $69 + 11$ , helping their partner and explaining their strategies to the teacher and classmates. Lower attainers were gaining a good understanding of number order as they worked with a nursery nurse on a large floor number line, jumping on and back for given amounts.
59. In both the nursery and reception, work in other areas of learning is exploited well to promote mathematical development. For instance, activities in sand and water, and cooking, reinforce children's understanding of measures. Their efforts to produce symmetrical structures using construction toys and in artwork help them gain knowledge of pattern and shape. Puzzles and games, and the way that teachers capitalise upon the many incidental happenings throughout the day, such as

deducing the number of children absent during registration, constantly reinforce learning in this area. Mathematical vocabulary is promoted very well through teachers' effective use of questioning, such as "How many altogether?" "How many more/less?" and "Which is bigger/smaller?"

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

60. Teaching in this area is very good, resulting in standards being well above expectations by the end of the reception year. In nursery and reception, a very good range of experiences is planned to promote early scientific skills. Children are helped to understand the process of change, for example, through growing seeds and bulbs, and learn that plants need light and water to grow. Reception children watched and described the changes that occurred as their chrysalis turned to butterflies and used photographs in reference books to match the butterflies' markings to identify the species. Through their topic on 'movement', reception children have learned about different sources of energy. One recalled the recent journey on a steam train to explain how fire heats water to make the train move. They explore a variety of moving toys to discover how they move and what powers them to do so. They sorted these into groups, identifying pushes and pulls and some that were powered by both forces. Recording these findings in the form of Venn diagrams, practically and then on paper, also provided very good support for children's mathematical development.
61. Nursery children develop early geographical skills as they go on an environmental walk around the locality and park. They notice the different plants, wildlife, shops and other landmarks. Discussions about these are supported very well by the large, colourful photographs that were taken by adults to stimulate children's memory of what they saw. For example, they remember various vehicles, the doctor's surgery, the post-box, pub and florists. All adults explain the services provided by these very well. For instance, when writing letters and postcards, children are reminded of the need for an address and that the stamp pays for the letter to be delivered. Stimulated by their visit to the Severn Valley Railway, reception children recalled the sequence of events during the day and remembered key landmarks such as the castle, bridge and a statue of a soldier. Their plans of what they saw showed very good development of early mapping skills, identifying roads, trees and buildings. One group, recalling their trip on the venicular railway explained how things looked smaller from high up.
62. Early historical skills are promoted very well, as children think about how they have changed since they were babies, including the different toys that they play with then and now. Important events, such as birthdays, christenings and holidays, are discussed, with the language of time frequently reinforced in these. All children develop very good technological skills. For instance, children make models using reclaimed materials and construction equipment, exploring different ways to join things. Nursery children's model town is a good example of work in this area. Reception children's ICT skills are very well developed. They are given lots of opportunities to use computers in lessons in a range of areas and further extend skills in specific ICT lessons in the suite. Here they are gaining very good skills in logging onto the computers and accessing the relevant programs, using drop-down menus to select exactly what they want. Their skills in using the keyboard to locate letters are very advanced for their age. They control the mouse very well to make things happen, save and print their work. Children show delight when their instructions to a floor robot make it move in the direction that they want. Through well-chosen stories, role-play, music and RE lessons, children make very good progress in learning about their own and other cultures.

## **Physical development**

63. Teaching and provision in this area is good overall. By the end of the reception year, children achieve standards that are well above those expected. In outdoor play, nursery children manoeuvre wheeled toys along a designated pathway showing good control and co-ordination, awareness of direction and use of space. As well as challenging the children to be adventurous, staff provide very good support to help them gain confidence. They interact very well with the children, purposefully intervening in their games and playing with them to promote physical and creative skills, social and language development. The stimulating outdoor environment really captures children's interest and imagination; they play happily in the house, peddle bicycles enthusiastically, and manoeuvre prams and cars around the track with growing skill. The 'fire-fighters' are always on hand to rush out of their stations and extinguish a fire! During designated PE lessons, the children learn how to control their bodies' movements and explore how they can move creatively.
64. During PE lessons, reception children show good awareness of space and others when travelling around the hall in various ways. For instance, they run, jump, hop, slide and skip, avoiding each other well and ultimately combine a number of these movements to produce a simple sequence. This work, linked to the theme of pathways, helps the children to develop a good sense of direction and promotes mathematical understanding of shape and space. For example, children created zigzag, curved and straight pathways, changing direction and levels to make their movements more interesting. Children learn that exercise is healthy for them and, after appropriate warm-up exercises, their attention is drawn to the difference in their heart rate. All children develop skills in handling and manipulating small equipment and tools correctly showing rapidly developing dexterity.
65. Nursery children have virtually constant access to a stimulating outdoor area that supports their physical development and their very good progress in other areas such as creative and personal, social and emotional development. Whilst learning experiences for reception children in all of these areas are very good, they are not enriched to the same extent outdoors.

## **Creative development**

66. In both nursery and reception, a wide range of activities provides children with excellent opportunities to develop creativity. Children enjoy a rich curriculum, having countless opportunities to explore, use their imagination and express and respond to a variety of stimuli. Teaching and learning are very good and standards are well above expectations by the end of the reception year. Pretend play in a variety of forms is ongoing, sparking children's imagination as they improvise different scenarios.
67. Children's artwork is of a particularly good standard. They produce interesting collages that show imagination in the way they have selected and placed materials, for instance, those produced by nursery children using leaves, twigs and grasses. Children's paintings and observational drawings show good use of the paper space and the development of the artistic element of form, with human images including quite a lot of detail. Children explore pattern, and different textures of paint and methods of application. For instance, reception children experiment with applying paint with rollers and notice how the colours change when they mix. They dip string in paint and are amazed at the individual patterns they can produce. They experiment with clay and other modelling material to produce three-dimensional work.

68. Singing and performing skills are well developed. Children get good opportunities to explore the sounds made by instruments and to sing regularly. Nursery children, stimulated by large photographs of their walk around the locality, thought of the sounds that they heard and explored instruments to think of ways to represent them. They also used their voices to represent the sound of the wind blowing through the trees. These children correctly name a range of instruments such as the rain-stick, castanets, tambour and maracas, and know how they are played. Reception children have good opportunities to listen to and evaluate different types of music. They identify fast and slow pieces and say how these make them feel. For instance, one child said he felt as though he was floating. Children move their bodies rhythmically whilst listening, changing how they move in response to the tempo. They remember vividly how they 'used their pens' to represent the music of the 'Flight of the Bumble Bee'. Children have a good repertoire of songs, which they sing well, keeping in tune with the musical accompaniment and in time with each other.

## ENGLISH

69. By the end of Year 2, standards are well above average and by the end of Year 6 they are above average. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.
70. Pupils of all ages have good listening and speaking skills; most listen well to each other in class discussions, and when working in pairs and groups. Teachers speak clearly to pupils and extend their vocabulary consistently. By the end of Year 2, pupils suggest a wide range of words when looking for synonyms, including words such as 'barbaric'. All infant pupils sustain good concentration when listening to stories and rhymes and join in enthusiastically. Speaking and listening skills are also developed through role-play. For example, a lower attaining Year 6 group posed questions when their teacher was in the 'hot seat'. Showing careful listening and their good understanding of the text, they enquired, "*What do you prefer to be called?*" and "*Why do you always get the blame?*" Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations of their contributions to discussions. Throughout the school, pupils show confidence in articulating their ideas and are supported well by teachers and other staff. For instance, Year 5 pupils demonstrated clarity of thought and maturity when discussing a leaflet about smoking. They showed good understanding of the use of rhetorical questions and biased language.
71. Throughout the school, most pupils show enthusiasm for books. The standard of reading at the end of Year 2 is very high. Year 2 pupils read a range of texts fluently and have a very good knowledge of many authors. They talk with ease about writers, such as Jeanne Willis and the Ahlbergs. One pupil, nonchalantly, mentioned that, "*Nick McNaughton is an illustrator as well as an author!*" By Year 6, higher and middle attainers are fluent and expressive readers. They are familiar with a wide range of authors, poets and their styles. They discuss writers such as J.K. Rowling and Michael Morpurgo and show good insight into the characters, devices and plots of stories. For example, when reading 'Kensuke's Kingdom', pupils established how the author had built up suspense. They referred to relevant and effective phrases, such as 'it was a stand off' and competently explained why. The relatively few lower attainers have an equal interest in prose and poetry and readily volunteer to read aloud. They reach average levels of attainment and are given good, individual support. Pupils have well-developed library skills and make effective use of the books and ICT based sources for research.

72. By Year 2, pupils write independently and enthusiastically. They write for a range of purposes, including book reviews, character studies, reports and letters. The ideas and reasons expressed in their work show insight and maturity, as, for example, when writing a letter as Mr. Fox, requesting that *'houses should not be built in this neighbourhood!'* Their story writing is graphic, with well-constructed sentences showing a good knowledge of grammar and punctuation. As one six-year-old wrote, *'Rachel was an 'intelagent' and beautiful young princess. She always had a nap every afternoon.'* Pupils use various dictionaries and thesauri with confidence and skill. These support their good spelling and creative use of vocabulary. Work in Years 1 and 2 is neat and well presented, with good handwriting that is joined by Year 2.
73. By Year 6, most pupils write fluently, at length and in a variety of forms. For example, they make good use of descriptive vocabulary to enliven their persuasive writing. They plan written work carefully and have gained a range of effective strategies to start stories in ways that capture a reader's interest through setting the scene and presenting the characters. For example, they use a character grid to record notes to compare and contrast characters in preparation for writing a journal. Due attention is given to poetry. Pupils study different poets such as Edward Lear and Benjamin Zephaniah and their forms of verse. There are many examples of pupils' poems throughout the school. For instance, Year 3 pupils' clerihews about famous people show their understanding of rhyming couplets. Year 5 write Haiku poems such as:

The SATs are here.  
I'm nervous, out of my head.  
Time to work my best!"

74. Grammar and punctuation are mainly correct, but the presentation of work is not of a consistent quality in all classes. There are examples of cramped and untidy handwriting in the work of a significant minority in most junior classes.
75. Throughout the school, teaching is mostly good; in Years 1 and 2 it is very good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, which helps them to plan challenging lessons. Teachers share the objectives of lessons with pupils so they know what is required of them. Questions are probing, ensuring pupils' understanding and extending their thinking skills. For example, in Year 1, pupils are asked, *'How can I present my information?'* and *'How can I check my spellings?'* In Year 6, pupils are challenged with, *"What pictures come into your head?"* and *"Why do you think that?"* In most lessons, work is usually well matched to pupils' needs but occasionally tasks are not challenging enough for higher attainers. Marking is mainly rigorous and many teachers write relevant, sometimes lengthy, constructive comments
76. Literacy is promoted well across the curriculum, particularly in RE, science, history and geography, where there are good opportunities for extended writing in different forms. For example, in history, Year 4 pupils write letters from the viewpoint of evacuees, whilst, in geography, Year 2 pupils write extensively about the climate and wildlife in St. Lucia. Information and communication technology is used regularly to support learning, for example, to promote research skills and for drafting and editing work.
77. The subject is led and managed effectively by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. Very good assessment procedures ensure that pupils are tested regularly. The information from this is analysed and used well to set individual and school targets. Resources



are plentiful and of a high quality, including two well-stocked libraries.

## **MATHEMATICS**

78. Standards by the end of Year 2 are well above average. By the end of Year 6 they are broadly in line with the national average. Since the last inspection, this reflects improvement in the infants and maintenance of standards in the juniors. The school has successfully addressed the criticism made by the last inspection about the quality of provision for mathematical investigation. Overall, this aspect is now being taught well and is resulting in higher standards in Years 1, 2 and 5. Whilst the current Year 6 group are learning well, their standards have been adversely affected by previous weaknesses in provision. However, given their earlier levels of attainment, they have made satisfactory progress during their time in the juniors. In most year groups pupils are learning well and making at least good progress. However, in some Year 3 and 4 classes, progress is unsatisfactory. This is because teachers' expectations are not high enough and work does not build sufficiently on what pupils have already learned.
79. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 build very successfully on earlier knowledge and skills. Pupils are very competent in their handling of number. Higher attainers divide numbers with remainders and apply their knowledge of number confidently to problems of money or fractions. Most identify the properties of both two and three-dimensional shapes and also identify patterns in groups of numbers. The very good progress of lower attainers is evident in their recorded work. They add and subtract two-digit numbers, solve missing number sentences and draw graphs from tallies. Pupils know their own learning through, for example, their individual lists of *'Things for me to get better at'*.
80. Year 6 pupils are provided with challenging tasks and high standards are expected of them. For example, they are required to write down what their task is and then work out and write their findings clearly. Higher attainers explore algebraic formulae and arrive at rules. Pupils understand and exemplify mode, median and range. They write a plan for an investigation, from the collection of data through to recording findings. Although lower attainers show areas of difficulty, such as understanding negative numbers, they competently use formulae to calculate the volume of three-dimensional shapes and areas of two-dimensional shapes.
81. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 1 and 2. In the junior classes the quality of both is satisfactory overall. However, whilst there is some very good teaching in Years 5 and 6, some in Years 3 and 4 is unsatisfactory. For instance, whilst some Year 4 pupils showed a good understanding of the difference between reflection and translation of symmetry during oral work, the recording tasks that they were given were set at a much lower level of challenge. The same work was given to all pupils. When higher attainers had completed one colouring exercise their extension task was to colour another. Consequently some become bored and talked. Pupils' books show that in some Year 3 and 4 classes there is an insufficient amount of recorded work for the year. In some, work is also poorly presented. This contrasts greatly with the generally well-presented work of pupils in other year groups that reflects both teachers' and pupils' pride and high expectations.
82. Most teachers understand and implement the national numeracy strategy effectively. However, there are occasions when this is applied too inflexibly, with teachers focusing too much on teaching to the lesson plan rather than assessing how well pupils are learning and adapting the lesson accordingly. The best lessons begin with lively oral/mental starters. This was seen in a Year 4 class when pupils competed with

the teacher at a mental game of mathematical 'ping-pong'. In another lesson, a Year 6 class was challenged extremely effectively so that their knowledge of multiplication tables, factors, prime and square numbers was well reinforced. In both cases, pupils concentrated very hard, rising very well to the rapid pace and challenge provided. Most teachers pay good attention to promoting mathematical vocabulary and this aspect of pupils' understanding is good. Understanding is also well promoted when pupils are challenged to provide explanations about how they have tackled work or arrived at answers. This was seen in a very good Year 1 lesson where pupils had to discuss answers with a partner before telling the teacher that her's were sometimes 'wrong'. There was a busy buzz of excitement throughout this lesson, with the interesting and varied methods used resulting in pupils' keen attention, very good behaviour and effective learning. The classroom support assistant worked very well to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties were fully involved and made the same very good progress as others.

83. Numeracy skills are generally promoted well across the curriculum. For example, in music when Year 1 pupils use 'more' and 'less' when counting beats; in science when Year 6 pupils use scales and balances efficiently and find the average scores in results; in geography when pupils learn about scale and in DT when pupils measure and think about the strength of different shaped structures. Some good use of ICT was seen, when two Year 4 pupils tested their understanding of symmetry. Graphic representation and the use of spreadsheets in ICT also support the development of numeracy skills. Throughout the school, marking is variable. In most classes it praises and encourages pupils but in some cases there is insufficient guidance for pupils to know how they can improve
84. The leadership and management provided by the relatively new co-ordinator are good. Action taken has resulted in improvement to teaching and standards overall, but there is still a need to improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4. Good emphasis has been placed on the investigative aspect of the subject, with some specific teacher training and purchase of resources to support this. Good systems are in place for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress. Very good use is made of this information for grouping pupils within each year, planning of work within groups and for selecting pupils for short-term booster groups. The co-ordinator also provides a very good teaching role model for colleagues.

## SCIENCE

85. By the end of Year 2, standards are well above average and by the end of Year 6 they are broadly average. The difference in standards achieved by infant and junior pupils is due to two factors:
- the current group of Year 6 pupils are still showing the impact of previous gaps in their learning;
  - the overall quality of teaching is better in Years 1 and 2 than it is in Years 3 to 6.
86. Since the last inspection, standards at the end of Year 2 have improved and those achieved by Year 6 pupils remain fairly similar. However, throughout the school, good progress has been made in improving investigative work, with pupils planning, predicting, investigating, observing, explaining and reaching conclusions. For

instance, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils investigating the hardness of different types of rocks by rubbing them together for 30 seconds predicted the likely outcomes. They ensured that the results were accurately recorded and when asked if the timing was important, replied, “*Yes, because then it is a fair test.*” Year 6 pupils have investigated parallel circuits, habitats, chromatology and the growth of plants. They are aware of the principles of fair testing, believe making predictions helps their scientific thinking and understand the need to use accurate measures to record results.

87. During Years 1 and 2, pupils make very good progress. Whilst progress during Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall, it varies in different year groups. During Years 3 and 4, overall progress is slower than might be expected given pupils’ standards at the end of Year 2. This is linked to the quality of teaching, although this too varies between classes in these two year groups. During Year 5, progress is good and standards here are generally higher than in Year 6. Whilst there is some very good teaching in Year 6, some pupils’ attitudes and behaviour hinder their learning.
88. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good. All aspects of investigative work are taught well, with particularly good work on habitats and sorting materials. Teachers have good subject knowledge, plan imaginative tasks, ask questions that extend pupils’ thinking and make good use of resources. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils were asked to sort and group materials using their own criteria. They identified differences, made comparisons and shared information. Similarly, in a successful Year 2 lesson, pupils were required to make predictions about what they would find in different habitats. They made good use of reference materials in this work, including using the Internet at home. Pupils report their findings well and record results accurately.
89. By the end of Year 6, pupils show understanding about how the human body moves, know that not all metals are attracted to a magnet, and recognise the relationship between the orbits of the earth and moon. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall, but varies from very good to unsatisfactory. The best lessons are typified by teachers’ high expectations, for example, through the provision of well-planned and challenging investigations, good questioning and a brisk pace. Teaching and learning are also better when teachers modify tasks and questions to pupils’ different levels of attainment. These features were seen in a Year 5 lesson, where good questioning prompted pupils to identify the parts of a flowering plant. When asked about photosynthesis a pupil replied, *‘the leaves absorb the sunlight and change it into food.’* Teaching is ineffective when the work pupils are given is too easy and the pace of the lesson is slow.
90. Throughout the school, teachers ensure that there are clear learning objectives for all lessons, which help pupils focus on key knowledge, skills, and understanding. Teaching and planning is suitably matched to the needs of pupils with learning difficulties but higher attainers are not always sufficiently challenged, particularly in the juniors. Pupils are given good opportunities to record their work scientifically and in a range of ways that often support their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers manage behaviour well and most pupils have good attitudes towards science. Pupils work well in small groups, listening to others and sharing equipment sensibly. There are good displays in all classrooms to support the topic being studied. The marking of pupils’ work in both the infants and juniors varies considerably ranging from informative comments to work that is unmarked or marked superficially.
91. Leadership is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are well supported by the science policy and curriculum planning. However, insufficient attention is given to making checks on the quality of teaching and learning, with the result that differences in

progress between various year groups have not been picked up. There are good systems to assess pupils' attainment at the end of units of work and the end of the school year. Management of the subject is generally good. This has resulted in the provision of good resources to support teaching and learning and the planning of a good curriculum.

## ART AND DESIGN

92. Pupils achieve well and by the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are above average. A good curriculum is planned for all pupils, enabling them to experience work in two and three dimensions and learn about artists and designers from a range of times, traditions and cultures.
93. The school environment is enhanced by pupils' work and also many reproductions of work by famous artists such as Picasso, Monet, Cézanne and Edward Hopper. These, and displays of pottery, all support pupils' learning and aesthetic development. All pupils, from the earliest stages, evaluate their work and make good suggestions for improvement.
94. By Year 2, pupils have developed good observational skills. For example, Year 1 pupils concentrate carefully on the techniques of Picasso before making a collage or drawing of a sculpture. They are developing good research skills to support their work. Year 2 pupils study photographs of buildings, noting the pitch of roofs and the type of stone or brick before producing their own creditable mural of a town. Pupils show great enthusiasm and care when selecting materials and colours. This is evident in the effective Year 2 'Sunrise, Sunset' pictures, where pupils have used watercolours to depict light and shade. In lessons, pupils work collaboratively in different sized groups, discussing and evaluating their work well. For example, one pupil said, *"I think crinkly paper will be best for this roof"* and proceeded to make it very effectively.
95. By Year 6, drawing skills are well developed. These are evident in the observational drawings of buildings and in pupils' good knowledge of tone and shading. For example, Year 6 pupils, having practised shading to produced different effects from the lightest grey to black, carefully produce a set of geometrical shapes arranged as 'still life'. The results are good, reflecting pupils' pride in their work and their clear insight of perspective.
96. Teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and work is displayed effectively, with numerous colourful collages, friezes, and paintings around the school, many of which are linked to work in other subjects. Examples include the well-presented collage of a Viking ship and the character portraits of 'Beauty and the Beast'. A good innovation is the exchange of work between the infant and junior buildings. Very good examples of Year 2 pupils' observational drawings of flowers are displayed in the junior building, whilst a large, poignant frieze of a train carrying evacuees, incorporating photographs of children's sad faces, is displayed in the infants' hall. Effective use is made of ICT to help pupils conduct research and to explore shape, colour and pattern with art software. Sketchbooks are used satisfactorily to help pupils plan, practise and improve their work.
97. The co-ordinator is new, but clear about the development of the subject to raise standards further. Whilst appropriate assessment is already built into the planning, a simple and more streamlined procedure is planned and ready to be implemented.

Resources are good. Pupils have benefited from the annual creative arts week when they explored pottery, sculpture and painting, led by teachers with expertise in these areas. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (DT)**

98. All pupils make satisfactory progress. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are broadly in line with national expectations.
99. In Year 1, pupils draw good plans to communicate their ideas about making model playground equipment. They engage busily in tasks to assemble, join and combine materials to produce their models, and explain the difficulties they encounter when fixing them together. Pupils evaluate their work thoughtfully showing good understanding of the limitations of their designs and construction techniques. During Year 2, these skills are consolidated. For instance, pupils designed a winding mechanism to make their illustrations for the rhyme *Incy Wincy Spider* move. They followed instructions correctly and demonstrated satisfactory skills in using scissors and joining different materials, such as modelling clay and cord. When they designed and made copies of Joseph's coat, they drew very clear and detailed plans and examined carefully a range of materials. They used a template accurately to make a pattern and were adept at cutting and sticking different fabrics, which they decorated tastefully in a variety of colours. Pupils evaluated the end products critically and wrote thoughtfully about how they might improve them.
100. Pupils in Year 6 drew on their mathematical understanding when designing and constructing a model bridge from tubes of paper. Higher attainers drew very clear plans and elevations that showed the dimensions and structure of the model and wrote clear explanations of their methods of construction. All pupils made detailed lists of the materials required and the tools to be used. Pupils understand how to design for strength by rolling the paper and using triangular sections for reinforcement. They talked enthusiastically about designing and constructing a controllable vehicle, explaining how they tested and graded different types of wheels for suitability. Pupils drew clearly labelled sketches showing components, such as the axles and wheels, and higher attainers drew a net as a preliminary stage in making the bodywork. Effective use was made of scientific knowledge when pupils experimented with electric circuits for the lights and the motor. Pupils' critical evaluations of their work include ideas about how they would change things to make improvements.
101. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with examples of good teaching. In a good lesson, the teacher reviewed how pupils had applied their technical skills and selected some to explain how they might improve their work, prompting and challenging them in the process. They were given very good support and advice and were also encouraged to think through design problems for themselves and to come to their own solutions. Good questioning and discussion at the end of the lesson helped pupils to learn skills of critical evaluation, leading to good ideas about how to improve their work.
102. Learning experiences have improved since the last inspection. Two recently appointed co-ordinators lead and manage the subject satisfactorily. There have been some checks on teachers' planning and pupils' work, but no monitoring of teaching to

ensure that the improved planning is being implemented effectively. Resources are good.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

103. The weaknesses in the curriculum that were pointed up by the last inspection have been dealt with satisfactorily. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are now making good progress and attaining standards that are above national expectations by the end of Year 2. During Years 3 to 6, progress is satisfactory overall, resulting in standards that are broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. The difference in standards achieved at age seven and eleven reflect the legacy of the aforementioned weaknesses.
104. During Year 1, pupils develop skills of geographical enquiry, such as observing, recording and asking questions. They recognise key features of the school and its surroundings. Pupils learn about maps and keys when they draw and colour a map of the classroom and extend these skills when they visit the local shops and draw maps of their route. They write the school address correctly and draw their route from home to school. Pupils make good use of aerial photographs to identify features of the local area, learning about plan views at the same time. Most pupils show awareness of places beyond their own locality and the modes of transport needed to reach them. By the end of Year 2, pupils produce well drawn and labelled maps of imaginary islands and correctly use two-figure grid references to locate places on them. Most pupils are very knowledgeable about the physical and human features of St Lucia and discuss them in detail. They name and mark the island correctly on an outline map of the world and explain clearly its position in relation to the continents. Pupils use geographical vocabulary, such as volcano, crater and waterfall correctly. They accurately name and locate important places on the island and understand about sustainable development such as conservation of the rain forest. Higher attainers make good use of photographs to examine the weather, landscape and human aspects, such as tourism, trade and agriculture.
105. By the end of Year 6, pupils draw upon their geographical skills and knowledge to seek solutions to a local problem of traffic congestion. They collected data efficiently when they designed and used a questionnaire and tally chart, and used the computer to record the information effectively in graph form. In discussing how to tackle the problem, pupils showed generally, good understanding and came up with some creative solutions whilst weighing up considerations such as public opinion and building restrictions. Pupils have visited a local river, measured its depth and drawn its profile. They show good understanding of river processes, and can explain fully the meaning of terms such as erosion, deposition and meander.
106. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good overall, with examples of very good teaching. In response, pupils in these year groups progress and attain well. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall, but varies from good to unsatisfactory. Where teaching was ineffective, the pace of the lesson was slow and explanations were uninteresting, failing to capture and sustain pupils' interest. Expectations of what pupils could do were not challenging enough to allow them to build on what they already knew. The setting of some low level tasks and weak behaviour management resulted in pupils spending far too much time chatting and misbehaving. These features clearly give rise to unsatisfactory learning. There are occasions, however, when despite good teaching, pupils do not learn as well as they might. This was seen in a Year 6 lesson where poor attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of

pupils detracted from their own and others' learning. In the best lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge results in well-informed class discussions and questioning. This was seen in a Year 2 lesson about St Lucia. Expectations of pupils were high; for example pupils were challenged to use of maps and photographs of St Lucia to enable them to understand about its geographical features. Work was matched well to pupils' different attainment, with helpful prompt sheets to support the range of tasks. An innovative role-play activity ensured an effective conclusion to the lesson.

107. Some good use of lessons is made to promote literacy and numeracy skills. For instance, numeracy skills are extended when pupils conduct traffic surveys and collect data about their different ways of travelling to school and then represent the information in graphs. Literacy skills are promoted when pupils take notes and write persuasive action plans or descriptions on postcards about the weather and holiday activities on imaginary visits to Florida, France and Spain.
108. There have been a number of changes in co-ordination since the last inspection; the present co-ordinator has only been appointed recently. The subject is being managed satisfactorily, with good resources to support teaching and learning. However, there are some weaknesses in leadership; whilst planning is better, checks on how well the subject is being taught or on how well pupils are learning are not regular or rigorous and there has been no staff training.

## **HISTORY**

109. The weaknesses in the curriculum noted by the last inspection have been dealt with satisfactorily. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 now make good progress and attain standards that are above national expectations by the end of Year 2. During Years 3 to 6, progress is satisfactory, with standards by the end of Year 6 being broadly in line with national expectations. As in geography, the difference in standards achieved at age seven and eleven is mainly due to the lack of depth in learning experiences in previous years. However, the quality of teaching in the juniors is not always satisfactory. Pupils' books show that they are sometimes set unchallenging work that does not build sufficiently on what they have learned in the infants.
110. During Years 1 and 2, pupils learn that things change over time. Following a talk by a visiting speaker and a class discussion based on a relevant reference book, pupils made good drawings to show the differences between seaside holidays today and in the past. They examined thoroughly photographs of the clothes worn by adults and children on seaside holidays in the past and explained clearly how they differ from those worn today. Most pupils know about the beach activities children enjoyed in the past and compare them with their own holiday experiences. After a recent visit, pupils wrote good descriptions of the appearance and functions of different parts of a castle, making effective use of key vocabulary such as 'keep' and 'tower'. They made good use of photographs to supplement their observations and higher attainers used reference books and the Internet capably to find out more information. Pupils also write graphic accounts of significant events in history such as the Great Fire of London describing, in detail, its impact, how it started and spread.
111. By Year 6, most pupils draw a time-line to place Ancient Greece correctly in its historical context. They make good drawings to illustrate different styles of Greek architecture. Pupils write sentences using the Greek alphabet and produce detailed descriptions of many aspects of Ancient Greece, such as the beliefs and myths, the architecture, the philosophers, inventors and writers. Pupils have gained sound

understanding of different eras, such as life in the times of the Romans, Anglo Saxons, Tudors and Victorians.

112. The quality of teaching is good in the Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6, with some examples of good teaching. In a good lesson, the teacher made effective use of a world map and good questioning to demonstrate the changes in transport since the 1940s. Particular reference was made to the differences between pupils' own holiday experiences and those of their grandparents. Through well-managed discussion and good explanations, pupils came to understand how and why these changes had occurred. Good provision was made for pupils of differing attainment who all progressed well in their learning. Where teaching is less effective, teachers' expectations of pupils' attainment are low and work is not marked thoroughly.
113. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Some staff training has occurred. There have been some checks on standards of teaching and learning but these have not been rigorous enough to detect weaknesses in teaching and learning. The subject is well resourced and pupils' experiences are enriched by a variety of visits to places of historical interest.

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

114. All pupils make good progress. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are above national expectations.
115. Year 2 pupils are confident in using the keyboard and controlling the mouse. They log on to computers; open and close programs correctly; retrieve, save and print their work. Pupils make effective use of CD-ROM encyclopaedia to find information. Higher attainers show good word processing skills, for instance, to write a story, and use these skills effectively to amend and improve their work. Pupils use art programs to create pictures, using on-screen buttons confidently to erase, change colours and create different effects. They use the mouse to draw lines and to airbrush parts of their pictures. After recording information from a survey on a tally chart, pupils successfully enter it into a computer database and then show the information graphically. With some assistance, pupils can give a sequence of instructions to a programmable toy to make it move across the floor.
116. By Year 6, pupils are adept at using a range of ICT programs and equipment. For instance, they use an art program to produce well-executed pictures in the style of Monet. Most correctly follow a sequence of written instructions to operate an electronic mail system and use this to send messages to pupils in another class. Their competent use of a computer address book shows good understanding of how this form of organisation works. Pupils are good at applying their computer skills across the curriculum. For example, they use word processing extensively in English; they make a 'virtual' tour of a castle in history; they make effective use of the Internet to research information in a range of subjects. Other junior pupils are learning well. For example, Year 4 demonstrate skills in drawing regular shapes by using the 'repeat' command to operate an on-screen pointer. They also develop a sequence of events to enable a computer to control a set of traffic lights.
117. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are confident in demonstrating computer skills and plan very well to incorporate ICT into class lessons. In the best lessons, they explain the learning objectives clearly to the class, make good use of



questioning to revise previous learning and provide interesting work that is well matched to pupils' attainment. During lessons in the suite, teachers make effective use of the large monitor to demonstrate skills. They maintain a good overview of the work of all pupils, intervening and challenging them well. Lessons conclude with a clear review of what pupils have learned and the challenges that they encountered.

118. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and has done much to develop the curriculum and use of ICT within the school. Pupils' standards and progress are monitored effectively by observing lessons, conducting regular assessments, checking displays and compiling a comprehensive portfolio of completed work. There has been a good level of staff training, from both the co-ordinator and outside consultants, which has improved teachers' subject knowledge and confidence. The school is very well resourced. Computers have Internet access and pupils use them extensively in classrooms and shared areas, such as the library, as well as in the ICT suite. Use of the suite has been carefully thought through, being well timetabled for all classes.

## **MUSIC**

119. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall and good in performing skills.
120. By Year 2, pupils have had good experiences in singing, listening, performing and composing. They are learning to listen to and repeat rhythms, paying attention to the tempo and differentiating between loud and quiet sounds. They sing enthusiastically, but tend to shout on occasions, particularly when the music is fast. Pupils co-operate well in pairs and groups and work hard when discussing which instruments they should use to represent particular sounds as, for example, in Year 1, when exploring different sounds to represent weather. Good links with literacy were made when pupils suggested words such as scary, happy and sad to describe the sounds that they made. Year 2 pupils are developing a good sense of pitch and are beginning to follow a simple 'score' of symbols to play sound sequences. They enjoy listening to each other perform and do so confidently.
121. By Year 6, most pupils have developed skills in tuneful singing and differentiate between pulse and rhythm. This was demonstrated well in a Year 4 lesson when one group clapped the pattern of the words of the song Bobby Shaftoe whilst the other group kept the pulse going as they sang. Musical vocabulary is growing and pupils show good understanding of the terms dynamics, ostinato, timbre and tempo. Pupils use a wide range of un-tuned percussion instruments to compose a musical accompaniment and play well together as an ensemble. They express their likes and dislikes of sounds and evaluate each other's performances. In lessons and assemblies, all participate enthusiastically in the singing and their sense of timing is good. However, singing lacks precision because little attention is given to promoting skills of phrasing, breathing, diction and dynamics.
122. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Curriculum planning gives good guidance for non-specialist musicians and many teachers are becoming confident in their teaching of the subject. Teachers show great enthusiasm for the subject and are keen to further their skills. Lessons are generally well planned. Teachers are keen and prepare resources well. However, they sometimes lack the subject knowledge to move the pupils on to achieve more. For example, many pupils quickly understand a new idea and are ready to take the next step but, in following the planning

conscientiously, teachers tend to stay on the same task for too long, with unnecessary reinforcement. Lessons are not planned sufficiently well to meet the needs of higher attainers.

123. Assessments occur at the end of units of work. The school has streamlined these well to fit their requirements. Checks have been made on the quality of teaching and learning in a few lessons and further monitoring of this type is planned. Information and communication technology is not yet used to enhance pupils' skills in composition.
124. Pupils' personal development is enhanced through opportunities for performing publicly, such as when they sing for the senior citizens at Christmas and take part in a special concert at Dudley Castle. They take part enthusiastically in rehearsing for concerts and extra curricular activities such as the choir, the dynamic 'Razz-m'Taz' club and the performance assemblies. Pupils really enjoy these performances. On these occasions, the singing is precise, lively and exhilarating. A Year 2 recorder club enhances musical development, but whilst over 30 pupils have instrumental lessons, there are no planned opportunities for them to play together. Pupils listen to a wide range of music from around the world, which supports listening and appraisal skills and cultural development. The annual creative arts' week and visits from groups such as an African children's choir also enrich learning experiences and make a valuable contribution to spiritual, social and cultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)**

125. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above national expectations and by the end of Year 6 they are broadly in line with what is expected. The difference in standards is linked to two factors:
  - teaching is better in Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6, particularly the way that pupils' behaviour is managed; and
  - the attitudes and behaviour of Year 1 and 2 pupils are distinctly better than those of junior pupils.

Whilst some of the older pupils are accomplished in different sports, they are not so adept in understanding and applying values and skills of co-operation, fair play and respect for others, which hinders their learning. Assessment records show that standards in swimming are above the level seen in most schools, with 86 per cent of the current Year 6 being able to swim the 25 metres. Many swim well beyond this and also possess life saving and survival awards.

126. In gymnastics, Year 2 pupils show good co-ordination, seen when they bend knees and stretch arms rhythmically. In dance they move well with 'floating' movements, although some find it more difficult to respond to the beat of livelier music. Pupils work well with partners. In games, their skills in throwing and catching are good and a small number are very successful in basic tennis skills. Year 6 pupils were only seen in games lessons. When they apply themselves they show average skills of batting and bowling in Kwik cricket. However, the behaviour and attitudes of too many, particularly in one class, disrupt learning so they do not achieve as well as they could.

127. Teaching and learning in the infants are good and in the juniors both are satisfactory overall. Lessons seen in Year 2 showed effective teaching, stemming from good management and organisation, high expectations and high regard for pupils' safety. A dance lesson had a good balance between the teacher guiding pupils and giving time for them to investigate and be creative. In gymnastics, they worked very well in small groups, planning their own apparatus layout and then practising sequences of movements and balances. Pupils behaved excellently and applied endeavour to enthusiasm, resulting in very good learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and a pupil very new to the school were fully included.
128. Whilst teaching in the juniors is satisfactory overall, in too many lessons there is a lack of fully effective management. Pupils spend far too much time shouting and generally misbehaving instead of applying themselves to improving their skills. In one Year 6 lesson, many showed a total lack of respect for the teacher, their classmates and the equipment. There were elements of this behaviour in all junior classes seen during the inspection. Whilst teachers plan carefully, with attention to progression in activities, including practising skills, there is very little reflection by teachers or pupils on the basics needed to develop good technique. Consequently insufficient improvement takes place. Pupils unable to participate actively in lessons for various reasons are sometimes left to their own devices rather than being given something productive to do. Some, therefore, misbehave and disrupt lessons.
129. The new co-ordinator has already begun to fulfil her role by improving the planning and drawing attention to assessment opportunities.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)**

130. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Good teaching in Years 1 and 2 results in these pupils making good progress. During Years 3 to 6, teaching is satisfactory overall, allowing pupils to build satisfactorily on previous learning.
131. Year 2 pupils have studied aspects of the Christian, Islamic, and Jewish faiths and have a good understanding of the differences in these religious traditions and their respective places of worship. Pupils identify different parts of a church, including the altar and font, and recognise the use made of the communion cup. They show awareness of the value of prayer in different faiths; for example, a Year 2 pupil wrote: *Muslims use prayer mats with pretty patterns on to show respect to Allah, their god.* The importance of the Torah and the Tallith to the Jewish faith is understood. Pupils consider the festivals and special events in the religions that they study, including Christmas and Easter. The work in Years 1 and 2 is underpinned by a sense of belonging and concern for the needs of others. In a lesson emphasising special places and thoughts, pupils showed the ability to reflect calmly, quietly, and with consideration for the feelings of their fellow pupils.
132. By the end of Year 6, pupils have gained a good understanding of the major beliefs, symbols and observances of Christians, Muslims, and Jews. They have been introduced to beliefs and traditions linked with Buddhism and Sikhism. In their writing, they describe the importance of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur to the Jewish religion and reflect on how this links with their own beliefs. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils learned how the posture of Muslims during prayer reflects humbleness and respect. Pupils consider the needs of people in deprived communities in other countries. Christian values and beliefs are explored in relation to pupils' feelings and emotions.

For example, in a Year 6 lesson, a visiting priest used biblical references to Jesus and St. Paul to illustrate to the pupils how the decisions that they make will “control their destiny.”

133. Lessons are well planned and include a variety of teaching styles to maintain pupils' attention and interest. In the best lessons, these elements are enhanced by teachers' good subject knowledge, resulting in clear and interesting explanations and challenging questioning. For example, in a Year 2 lesson about the Jewish faith, the teacher's very good use of religious artefacts, confident questioning and explanations drew out important religious ideas. This enabled pupils to ask pertinent questions and strengthened their understanding. Teachers make some effective links with other subjects. For instance, there are good opportunities for pupils to engage in extended writing, speaking and listening activities, drama, artwork and ICT.
134. The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. Lesson planning is checked and discussed with class teachers and there are checks on displays to determine the quality of pupils' work. Since there have not been any opportunities for the co-ordinator to observe colleagues to monitor teaching and learning in lessons, the difference in rates of progress between infant and junior pupils has not been detected. Currently, only informal assessments of pupils' standards are made, but the school is developing this area. Resources are good. The subject makes an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.