

INSPECTION REPORT

BLEAKHOUSE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Oldbury

West Midlands

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 103934

Headteacher: Mrs B Dearden

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Hooper
15334

Dates of inspection: 14th – 17th October 2002

Inspection number: 246327

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bleakhouse Road Oldbury West Midlands
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Barry Clarke
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15334	Julie Hooper	Registered inspector	Science Art and Design Religious education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? – The school's results and pupils' achievements. – Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well are pupils taught? English as an additional language. Equality of opportunity. What should the school do to improve further?
11437	Tony Anderson	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30398	Chris Scola	Team inspector	English Geography History Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
17686	George Simpson	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Information and communication technology Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Special educational needs.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is an average sized primary school catering for boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 11. Most of the pupils who attend the school are from the immediate area. Currently, there are 237 pupils on roll, which is slightly less than at the last inspection; they are in eight classes, two in each year group. The pupils enter school with a wide range of differing experiences, and their attainment on entry varies greatly from year to year. Tests indicate that the attainment of the pupils in the current Year 3 classes when they entered the school, was below that expected for pupils of their age. The school has identified 26 per cent of pupils as having special educational needs, which is in line with the national figures; a lower than average proportion of pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. All but seven pupils speak English as their first language, and very few pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. Twenty seven per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, and this is well above the national figure. The number of pupils who leave and join the school other than at the normal times in the last year is broadly average. Although five teachers left and five joined the school in the past two years, the current teaching staff have been in post for over a year. The school has gained many national and local awards over the last three years, which include Investors in People, Basic Skills Quality Mark, a gold award in the Sandwell Healthy Schools Award, Quality In Study Support Award and the Positive About Disabled People Award.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Bleakhouse Junior School is a good and, consequently, a popular school. It provides a safe and friendly environment that strongly supports learning and is totally inclusive so that all pupils are treated as individuals with their own rights. Teaching overall is good and sometimes very good. The school has received the Schools' Achievement Award for the last two years because the standards achieved by the pupils when they leave the school in English, mathematics and science have shown good improvement. The school provides very well for the pupils' personal development so that very good relationships exist between pupils and with staff. Pupils enjoy being at school, are very well behaved and eager to learn. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and has the full support of the staff and governors in the aim of raising standards. She is committed to creating a team spirit within the school where all members of staff feel valued. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good and this has a significant impact on the pupils' learning and has contributed to the improving standards over the last two years in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils leave the school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide excellent leadership so that the whole school community is committed to raising standards.
- The very good provision for the pupils' moral and social development promotes high standards of personal development, strong relationships, very good behaviour, and the very positive values and attitudes pupils have towards their learning.
- The school looks after its pupils very well and provides a secure learning environment.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing throughout the school.
- Accommodation; in order to provide adequate storage for resources and improve the quality of the school field.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in November 1997, the school has fully addressed the key issues for improvement and is continually working to refine them. Standards in mathematics, information and communication technology and scientific investigative work have improved throughout the school. Very effective and thorough procedures are now in place to assess the pupils' learning so that appropriate individual work can be planned for them. The overall curriculum provision is better and schemes of work for subjects are being reviewed to identify areas where pupils' literacy, numeracy and problem solving skills can be developed. The excellent leadership in the school has

led to many other improvements, for example, the quality of teaching, the pupils' behaviour, personal development and their attitudes to their work. Links with parents have improved. The school has successfully introduced Performance Management and the professional development of staff is excellent. Since the last inspection the school has made significant improvements and is well placed to develop further.

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	D	E	D
Mathematics	C	E	C	B
Science	D	E	E	D

Key

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

Since the last inspection standards have risen steadily and the trend of improvement from 1997 to 2002 was above the national trend. However, there has been a dip over the past two years in the school's average point scores in English and science. The table shows that, since 2000, the standards attained by the pupils at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science have been variable and generally below the national average, apart from English and mathematics in 2000 and mathematics in 2002, when standards were average. The standards in 2002 in mathematics were above those of pupils from similar schools, but were below in English and science. The school has set challenging and realistic targets for raising standards further in 2003.

In the 2002 English tests, standards in reading were average but in writing they were well below average. The school has put in place measures to improve writing across the school. The impact of this is seen in the present Year 6 where inspection evidence confirms that the standards in English, although still below average, have risen due to the school's initiatives to improve writing. The standards found in mathematics are average and similar to those in the 2002 tests. The standards in science have risen and the Year 6 pupils are now attaining average standards mainly due to a much greater amount of investigative work being provided for them.

Planning, displays and examples of pupils' work suggest that in all other subjects most pupils are working at levels appropriate to their age groups. However, not all pupils present their work tidily, and too few pupils consistently write in a neat joined-up style.

Art work by Year 6 pupils of above average standards was observed in displays. Many Year 6 pupils attain high standards in swimming. In assemblies and choir practice most pupils sing tunefully with good diction. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in their work and in the acquisition of spoken and written English.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most of the pupils show very good attitudes to school and their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The pupils behave very well in lessons and at play; they are both courteous and friendly.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between the pupils and with adults are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory

The pupils contribute greatly to the purposeful and orderly atmosphere in the school. They are keen to learn and work hard to achieve the targets set for them.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good

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

The quality of teaching observed was good overall and some very good and excellent teaching was observed. It has improved since the last inspection. The teaching of English and mathematics is generally good. The pupils learn effectively because areas for development, such as writing, have been carefully identified and focused upon and standards are improving because the pupils have benefited from this greater emphasis on teaching writing as they move through the school. Most lessons are planned with a clear focus on what the pupils are going to learn. The teachers' subject knowledge is good and, in general, they have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. Most use skilful questioning techniques to test out the pupils' previous learning, before introducing new facts and ideas. The teachers use assessment information effectively to help plan future lessons. This means that tasks are matched well to the pupils' needs and enable them to learn effectively. The teachers also provide very well for those pupils with special educational needs, who are fully included in all activities. Class discipline is very good and the pupils listen attentively and respond thoughtfully to well-focused questions, which enhance and extend their learning. Resources are readily available and are used effectively to enhance the pupils' learning. However, on the very few occasions when the provision of resources was not well thought out, the pace of learning was slow. The classroom support staff make a very valuable contribution to the pupils' learning and are well informed about the next steps in the pupils' learning. Voluntary helpers also provide very good help for teachers.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. Very good use is made of assessment data to plan a curriculum which is relevant to the needs of all pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The pupils with special educational needs are given good support which enables them to access the whole curriculum.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision and support is good and the very few pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in the acquisition of spoken and written English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, especially for the pupils' moral and social development. The very effective provision emphasises positive relationships between the pupils and the adults who facilitate their learning.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school knows its pupils well and provides a caring environment in which the pupils are looked after well.

The school provides a wide range of activities outside school. The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide excellent leadership.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are very supportive and well informed about the school's developments. They have effective systems to monitor the work of the school and fulfil their statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has developed a wide range of procedures to track data and monitor systems to evaluate and improve its performance.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used well. Financial resources are used prudently to meet the set targets for school improvements.

The headteacher and the staff work together as a very effective team so that a very positive ethos pervades the school. The budget is operated in such a way as to achieve best value. The teachers in their roles of subject coordinators, are making a very effective input into monitoring and evaluating the curriculum and teaching and the impact it has on pupils' learning. The accommodation, although clean and well maintained, is unsatisfactory, but the school does well to overcome the limitations it imposes on the curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• Their children are expected to work hard and they make good progress.• Most felt comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.• The teaching and management of the school is good.• The school helps their children become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The range of activities outside lessons• The information they get about how their children are getting on.

The inspection team supports the parents' positive comments. However, the team disagrees with the concerns. The school offers parents three opportunities a year for formal discussions about their children's progress and written reports are very good. In addition, the school has an 'open door' approach so parents can make an appointment to see the teacher or headteacher about their child's progress or discuss problems they may have at any time. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The standards attained by many pupils in English, mathematics and science when they enter the school are below average. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that the majority of pupils as they move through the school often make good progress over time. They generally achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Most pupils who are capable of attaining nationally expected standards do so, and those pupils with the potential for higher attainment go on to attain above average levels.
2. Standards, overall, since the last inspection have improved. The 11 year olds' performance in the national tests since 1997 has been above the national trend indicating good improvement although, in general, results have been at or below the national average. Nevertheless, the trend for improvement is likely to continue.
3. Standards in English and science based on the average point scores in the National Curriculum tests in 2002 were well below average. When compared with similar schools, standards were below average in both subjects. In English standards in reading are average but in writing they are well below average. The school has recognised this and has introduced a number of initiatives over the last three years and the standards in the current Year 6 are higher than in previous years because the pupils have benefited from the emphasis of improving writing when they were younger. In science, a much higher percentage of pupils than in 2001 attained the expected Level 4. Although this was in line with the national average, too few attained the higher Level 5. The school has improved the quality of the science curriculum since the last inspection and pupils do more investigative work, so standards are showing improvement as pupils benefit from this as they move through the school.
4. In mathematics, in 2002, the 11-year-old pupils attained average standards with a high proportion attaining the higher Level 5. When compared with similar schools the standards were above average.
5. The school has set challenging and realistic targets for raising standards further in 2003. The inspection evidence confirms that the Year 6 pupils are attaining average standards in mathematics and science. In English, standards overall are below average because of the lower than average standards in writing.
6. By the time they leave the school, the majority of pupils develop good listening skills. Many pupils lack confidence in speaking when they start school but because they make good progress in their speaking skills, most of the pupils attain average standards at the end of their time in the school. Standards in reading of the Year 6 pupils are average, although many pupils do not read a wide range of books. However, they do compare characters and analyse and discuss the plot and structure of books they have read. Most know how to use information books for research in other subjects. The standards in writing attained by the pupils at the end of Year 6, although improving, are still below average. Standards have improved because of the initiatives the school has introduced to improve the pupils' writing and, as a result, there is now evidence that the pupils make good progress as they move through the school. The pupils write for a wider range of purposes and often use their writing skills well in other subjects such as geography, history, information technology and science. Spelling and grammar are below average and handwriting is a weakness across the school. By the end of Year 6 many pupils are still unable to write in a confident, cursive style and standards of presentation are inconsistent.
7. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of number is well established, and those in Year 6 use a range of strategies to complete their calculations. Most pupils are confident about applying their skills to problems and make good progress. Although many pupils use mathematical vocabulary accurately a significant number of the pupils are hesitant when discussing their work because of their infrequent use of correct terminology. In science most pupils are knowledgeable about those aspects they have covered. The school has undertaken a great deal of work to develop and improve the pupils' scientific enquiry skills so that most pupils carry out experiments in a scientific manner, make predictions and have an appropriate understanding for their age of a fair test. This has resulted in raising the standards to average levels in Year 6.

8. The school has successfully updated the provision for information and communication technology, which is being used well to support other subjects. Standards have improved since the last inspection and the Year 6 pupils reach the expected standards for their age. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the agreed syllabus. In all other subjects the standards the pupils attain are average as at the last inspection. There were some very good examples of art work on display produced by Year 6 pupils, and many Year 6 pupils attain high standards in swimming. In assemblies and choir practice most pupils sing tunefully with good diction.
9. The pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in all aspects of their work. Those pupils with special educational needs also make good progress and they are well supported to access work designed to fulfil the requirements of their individual education plans.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and, as at the time of the last inspection, they are a strength of the school. The pupils are interested in their work and keen to learn. They enjoy reading and sustain their concentration during lessons for considerable lengths of time. They work well in groups and pairs, for instance discussing in a music lesson the types of music they know, helping each other to spell words and, in an English lesson, the Year 5 pupils were devising a game and while playing it, sensibly discussing its purpose.
11. Relationships between the pupils, and the staff and pupils, are very good. An atmosphere of mutual respect permeates the school. The pupils appreciate the views of others in class lessons and listen attentively to each other and their teachers. They are polite, friendly and confident with adults and happily talk about their work.
12. The pupils' behaviour in class, in assemblies and around the school is very good. The pupils contribute greatly to the purposeful and orderly atmosphere in the school. Nearly all pupils know they should walk on the left in the corridors to avoid collisions and do so sensibly. The space in some classrooms is cramped, but because of the sensible attitudes of the pupils this does not cause a problem. The pupils were often observed moving chairs so that others could walk by. The pupils usually play amicably together at breaktimes and should there be problems, there is a very good 'Buddy' system in place whereby selected Year 6 pupils act as mediators to resolve them. Although in the past there have been isolated problems with individual pupils, there are very effective strategies in place for managing poor behaviour.
13. Those pupils with special educational needs, like others in the school, are keen to learn and they form good relationships with one another and the adults who support them in lessons. The pupils with behavioural difficulties respond well to praise and clearly understand the code of conduct in the classroom. When the pupils are given duties they carry them out conscientiously. Those pupils chosen by their classmates to be on the School Council take responsibility for decision-making and monitoring the outcomes. As the pupils progress through the school they take on more responsibilities. Older pupils help younger ones in the playground, act as prefects and monitors, answer the telephone at break times, ring the bell, run the tuck shop and help with many other school routines. They express how proud they are to be chosen for these tasks and are well aware that if they do not fulfil the role successfully they will lose the responsibility.
14. The overall attendance at the school is satisfactory and is in line with the national average. The incidence of unauthorised absence is very low and is well below the national average. There is a little evidence of some pupils being late, but lessons start promptly and in accordance with the school timetable.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching observed was good overall and this was borne out in the scrutiny of the pupils' work. Three-quarters of the teaching was good or better and nearly a third was very good or better with three lessons being excellent. Two unsatisfactory lessons were observed. The teachers are very conscientious and work hard to plan interesting lessons which challenge the pupils and promote their learning effectively

16. All lessons are planned with a clear focus on what the pupils are going to learn. The teachers nearly always involve the pupils in their own learning by telling them what they are going to learn at the beginning of the lesson, and, at the end, by asking them to demonstrate that they have achieved this. Most revise and consolidate the pupils' previous learning before introducing new facts and ideas. For example, in a science lesson, the pupils in Year 4 showed clearly, through their answers and discussion, that they clearly understood the properties of solids and liquids. As the lesson progressed they were using and developing their scientific vocabulary well, for example, in predicting the possible results of their experiment. They worked through their experiment with enthusiasm, discussing their work and working well in their groups. At the end of the lesson one pupil from each group relayed their results, relating back to their original predictions, showing that learning had clearly taken place. This, as in other lessons observed, also contributed greatly to the development of the pupils' speaking and listening skills.
17. The teaching of English and mathematics is good and frequently very good, and the pupils learn effectively because areas for development, such as writing, have been carefully identified and focused upon. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The teachers' subject knowledge is good and, in general, they have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. This was clearly observed in a mathematics lesson, when the teacher used her expertise well to challenge the pupils to give of their very best, promoting learning extremely effectively. In this lesson, as in many other lessons observed, the pace of learning was brisk as the teacher made good use of timed targets to motivate the pupils. The basic skills of reading, spelling and number work are taught well, but the teaching of handwriting throughout the school is inconsistent. In addition, the teachers do not always provide good examples of writing for the pupils to model when they write on the board.
18. The teachers frequently use skilful questioning techniques to extend the pupils' thinking and learning. For example, in a good religious education lesson, the teacher was ensuring that the pupils understood how important a good harvest is to people around the world. During the introduction she carefully drew out from the pupils the reasons why bananas do not grow in our country. She continued this effective questioning to stimulate thought and learning and to develop the pupils' understanding of a parable. By the end of the lesson most of the pupils knew what a parable was and some could explain the message in the 'Parable of the Sower'. In this lesson very good links were made with other subjects, for example geography. In addition, the pupils used and practised their literacy skills effectively in the written task in this lesson.
19. The teachers use assessment information well to help plan future lessons. This means that the work is, in general, well matched to the pupils' needs and this enables them to learn effectively. In addition, the pupils in each year group are grouped according to their ability for literacy and numeracy lessons. This allows them to learn at a rate appropriate to their prior attainment and has contributed to the significant number of pupils reaching standards above the expected level 4 in mathematics in the national tests in 2002. The teachers also provide very well for the pupils with special educational needs, who are fully included in all activities, and, as a result, these pupils make at least good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Marking is satisfactory. The teachers frequently offer words of praise to encourage the pupils but too few teachers make comments that help the pupils move on in their learning. Homework is used well to support the pupils' learning.
20. Class discipline is nearly always good and the relationships the teachers have with the pupils are productive. Nearly all of the pupils listen attentively and respond well to their teachers and each other and this enhances and extends their learning. They are keen to answer questions and make comments and the teachers value the answers and responses the pupils make. They praise the pupils appropriately and often give rewards, which raises the pupils' self-esteem and promotes their learning well.
21. Resources for the pupils to use in their lessons are nearly always well prepared and readily available for them to use. However, in a minority of lessons observed, the teachers did not think through the practical aspects of their lessons well, so that the resources they presented to the pupils were inappropriate and so the pupils wasted time.
22. The pupils with special educational needs are well taught. Early identification and intervention results in individual education plans that are designed to maximise each pupil's achievement. These drive the good progress that each pupil makes. Support staff make a very valuable contribution to the pupils' learning,

especially those who need extra help. They are very well briefed by the teachers as to what the pupils are learning and how they should make their input. Voluntary helpers also provide very good help for teachers.

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

23. The school provides a good curriculum, which is well balanced and broadly based. It includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and meets the statutory requirements for all subjects. The school has given a high priority to the teaching of literacy and numeracy, but, whilst this has begun to raise standards in mathematics and reading, writing standards are still below average. A key issue from the last inspection was to raise standards in mathematics, investigating and experimenting in science, and information and communication technology. The school has successfully achieved this by developing very good planning procedures, so that learning objectives are clearly identified. Lessons now have a sharper focus, which enables the pupils to receive an education that meets their individual needs. The teachers share the learning objectives with their pupils, who, consequently, gain a good awareness of their own learning and progress. The school has also improved its schemes of work and the pupils now encounter many planned opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and problem solving skills in all subjects of the curriculum.
24. Sufficient time is spent on each subject and the distribution of subjects over the year is well balanced. A relatively low allocation to information and communication technology is compensated for by a well-organised programme, which provides all pupils with equal and regular access and includes lunchtime workshops. The school has recognised a need to improve standards in writing and has rightly allocated extra time to devote to this. Lesson time is well used and movement between classes is quick and efficient.
25. The school is successfully implementing both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Planning is very good in all subjects. The school has adopted many of the nationally produced guidelines, in combination with commercially produced schemes. These are adapted to meet the school's needs and are thoroughly and sensitively applied. Long-term plans are regularly reviewed and amendments made in the light of the pupils' performance. Teams of teachers, in consultation with subject co-ordinators, produce medium and short-term plans. Teachers' plans and the composition of teaching groups are influenced by the analysis of assessment data gathered both on a daily basis and through regular testing. The teachers assess the pupils' progress towards learning targets, and amend plans and teaching groups accordingly. As a result, teaching groups are flexible and change according to need, for the appropriate length of time. Plans are monitored every week by the headteacher and her deputy. This regular and effective monitoring of teaching and learning ensures that all pupils have a curriculum appropriate to both their needs and the requirements of the National Curriculum.
26. The provision for the pupils who have special educational needs is good. Procedures are securely in place and conform to the requirements of the Code of Practice. The co-ordinator and all staff write very effective individual education plans for each pupil, which identify clearly what they need to learn. These targets are shared with the pupils and their parents. The pupils are very well supported by classroom support practitioners, who work in the classroom and also withdraw pupils for individual tuition. The pupils get full access to the curriculum and make good progress.
27. Extra curricular provision is very good. The school's work in this field has been recognised by achieving the Quality in Study Support Award, the first primary school to do so. The award not only recognises the quality of provision, but also requires ongoing monitoring of standards. The range of clubs includes cultural and leisure activities, such as choirs, dance and drama. There are also study and community groups, which work together so that the pupils improve both academically and socially. Most clubs meet at lunchtimes and the school's facilities are well used, for instance, the running club using the playground and the extensive use of computer stations. However, the condition of the school field prevents some out-of-school sporting activities from taking place, such as football and athletics.
28. Activities held at the High School make a valuable contribution to enriching the curriculum, as well as aiding a smooth transition to secondary education. The school makes good use of the immediate environment to enhance the taught curriculum. Residential visits to Edgmond Hall and Ingestre Hall

provide a range of positive experiences in both the arts and the environmental sciences. The music, art and craft work resulting from the Ingestre Hall visit is of a high quality. All extra-curricular activities are popular with the pupils. The enthusiasm shown at the choir practice is typical of the pupils' commitment. The governing body's decision to reduce the number of day trips for health and safety reasons means that some educational opportunities are missed. However, the school compensates for this by inviting a range of visitors to school, who provide musical and literary experiences, among others. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. The school follows a thorough programme and has received a Healthy Schools Award in recognition of its efforts. The governors have agreed that sex education should not be dealt with as an integral part of the curriculum. Lessons on physical development and hygiene take place with parental consent.

29. Relationships with partner institutions are good. The school takes the opportunities to use the secondary schools' facilities, which has a positive impact on the quality of education provided. Links with the community are good. Visitors, including the school nurse and the road safety team, give good support to the work of the school. The school is also well supported by an active governing body, which keeps itself well informed of curriculum developments and progress.
30. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is very good overall, an improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be good. The development of the pupils' awareness for all aspects is clearly built into planning, especially collective worship, and subjects such as religious education, history and geography, underpinning the ethos of the school. An act of collective worship takes place every day with the whole school and meets statutory requirements.
31. The provision for the pupils' spiritual awareness is good. In assemblies, the pupils are frequently given the opportunity to develop insight into the values and beliefs of others. For example, in one assembly the pupils, having listened very intently to a story illustrating a third world and refugee problem, were very quietly reflecting on the story at the end and some were clearly moved by the plight of these people. Most pupils show great interest in the world around them and display sensitive attitudes to each other. In classroom discussions most pupils listen carefully to each other, and they express their thoughts and feelings confidently without fear of derision. One pupil expressing her surprise that she had been selected to be a prefect after only being in the school for a short time, was told by another that she had shown very quickly how responsible she was. The pupils are encouraged to share in each other's successes. For example, they are given the opportunity to play musical instruments to the whole school in assembly, knowing they will receive an appreciative recognition of their efforts.
32. The provision for the pupils' moral development is very good. The pupils are taught the principles of right and wrong and care of property and the school environment. The school has comprehensive personal, social and health education provision, which includes the teaching of moral and social issues. The pupils are encouraged to discuss issues or any worries they may have during circle time, designated sessions for promoting their personal, social and health education through whole class discussion. The teachers actively promote opportunities for such discussions, encouraging the pupils to develop a caring and tolerant attitude. A very good example of this was observed when the pupils in Year 4 were sharing their thoughts and ideas about trust, providing many instances of trust in their own lives at school and home. Through good example and the positive mutual respect that exists between the pupils and adults in the school, the staff constantly distinguish between what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, so that the standard of the pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good. The 'Rainbow Rules' are posted up in the corridor, and in all classes the pupils have devised their own rules. A 'Bully Box' in the corridor is a means by which any pupil who has any concern can write a personal note to the headteacher and know that it will be read and dealt with. The staff take every opportunity to build pupils' self esteem by rewarding good work and behaviour and this has an important impact on the good relationships that exist in the school.
33. Provision for the pupils' social development is also very good. There are opportunities for the pupils to work co-operatively in pairs or groups in lessons, and take responsibility for jobs in class and around the school, which the pupils undertake conscientiously. Social awareness is well promoted through the good range of out of school clubs, inter-school sporting and other activities and the residential visits Years 4 and 6 pupils take part in each year. These give all pupils the opportunity to socialise outside school and learn how to behave in the wider society. The School Council, whose members meet regularly, makes an important

contribution to the spirit of citizenship. The members consider their responsibilities to the school community and have thought about what they can contribute to the school. It has been influential in promoting issues such as improvements to the boys' toilets. Those children and other people who are less fortunate than themselves are remembered too, and the pupils frequently raise money to support them.

34. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is good, overall. Frequent opportunities are provided for the pupils to appreciate their own culture, through music, art and drama. Visiting groups in connection with history topics such as the Romans and Tudors and theatre groups provide access to a wider national culture. The pupils also participate in performance opportunities such as concerts and festivals. Through much of the curriculum, and especially geography and religious education, the pupils learn to appreciate the cultural traditions of others, and the pupils in the school from minority ethnic groups are encouraged to talk about their festivals and traditions. However, the pupils do not often make out-of-school visits to, for example, art galleries, museums and places of worship of other religions that are relatively close to the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The procedures for child protection and the pupils' welfare and for their educational support and guidance are very good. The procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are excellent. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
36. Child Protection procedures are in place and effective. The teaching staff are well supported by the classroom assistants and lunchtime supervisors and know their pupils very well. As a team, they provide a very positive level of welfare support and guidance. During the inspection there were a few examples of pupils receiving minor bumps in the playground and the lunchtime supervisors and teaching staff were quick to offer an appropriate level of care. Detailed records are maintained of all accidents, fire drills, medicinal needs and occasional risk assessments including the preparation for residential visits.
37. The present system of monitoring and promoting the pupils' attendance is very good and the school is very well assisted by the Education Welfare Officer who is a regular visitor to the school. The entries made on the respective marking sheets are consistently applied across the school and the headteacher is very proactive in her attendance monitoring of different groups of pupils in the school. The school also maintains other relevant and helpful records linked to pupils' absence, such as a late book and a 'children out of school' book. It was observed that a minority of pupils had been late on several occasions and the school works very hard to ensure that parents understand and follow their own responsibilities towards pupils' attendance. This applies particularly to holidays taken during term time which the school strongly discourages.
38. The school has developed a range of strategies for the monitoring and control of the rare examples of challenging behaviour seen at this school. The school's objective is to put the 'Bleakhouse Stamp' onto all pupils at the school with respect to attitudes, behaviour and personal development and, to this extent, the school very much welcomes the support of the majority of parents towards this initiative. The impact of this very positive provision can be seen in the significant contribution made to the consistency in the levels of pupils' behaviour observed both in the classroom and across the whole school.
39. The school acknowledges the pupil's individual achievement through the praise given to them in the classroom and, more formally, during merit and reward assemblies in which the pupils' successes are shared with the whole school. The opportunities presented by the school for the pupils to enhance their personal development through taking on responsibility for various tasks around the school, are excellent. They include the School Council, a buddy system and a very wide range of classroom, dinner hall and playground tasks and responsibilities.
40. The school has very good assessment procedures in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and these are applied consistently by all teachers. Information from tests taken by different year groups, together with an analysis of the Year 6 national assessment test results is used to identify areas for development and to set whole school targets. These tests are also used to highlight possible gender and ethnicity differences. They are the key to the high standards of teaching and learning and the good progress that the pupils are making in these subjects.

41. All of the teachers make evaluations and assessments of the pupils' learning and make very good use of these assessments to guide curricular planning and to target the work of groups and individual pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The information is also used to group the pupils according to ability in English and mathematics lessons as well as to focus on those pupils who need additional help. The teachers' planning files contain assessments of the pupils' current and predicted performance and from these the teachers identify personal learning targets for each pupil, mainly in English, mathematics and science, for each term. The targets are shared with the pupils and their parents at the consultation evenings held during the year. All of the staff have a good knowledge of the needs of the pupils and this enables work in lessons to be matched to individual as well as group needs, so that the pupils experience success and make gains in their learning. The learning support workers regularly observe and assess pupils, especially those with special educational needs, during whole class and group activities.
42. The school's assessment procedures conform to the requirements of the Code of Practice for the pupils with special educational needs. They are consistently and effectively maintained. Parents are included early in the procedure. Once a pupil is added to the register of special educational needs, her/his progress is carefully monitored. Targets are regularly reviewed and new targets are set and shared with the pupils.
43. More formal assessment in subjects other than English, mathematics and science is less well developed. However, assessment of learning is developing in other subjects, for example, through the testing of the pupils' knowledge at the end of topics or units of work.
44. The school's very good provision for the educational and personal support and guidance for the pupils has a positive effect on their learning. It is a major strength of the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. Parents' views of the school are good as are the school's links with parents. The impact of parental involvement with the school is good and the information provided to parents about the pupils' progress is very good. This is another significant improvement since the last inspection.
46. The parents' meeting with the inspectors was moderately well attended and the percentage return to the parental questionnaire was satisfactory. The vast majority of parents who completed the questionnaire are very supportive of the school and of its aims and objectives. Parents feel that their children like school and that they are making good progress. However, a small minority of parents felt that the school did not provide a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. Inspection evidence shows that the school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities
47. School academic reports provide a very good level of information to parents in terms of the general details of what their children have been studying over the past year. They also include a detailed section on possible targets for improvement, particularly in the main core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Parents are encouraged to attend the three open evenings held each year, at which their child's progress can be discussed in more detail with relevant staff. The system used by the school to prepare for and to monitor these meetings is very good and the information recorded is used to help in the planning of each child's future educational and personal development. The school also sends out regular newsletters to keep parents informed and these provide a good level of detail covering curricular topics and other relevant educational and domestic issues.
48. Parents are consulted early in the procedure to identify pupils with special educational needs. They have regular contact with the co-ordinator, who gives practical advice to parents, so that they may help at home. Parents fully appreciate the work of the co-ordinator, her team of assistants and the work of the class teachers.
49. A few parents (and grandparents) are regular visitors to the school in terms of providing classroom support, helping to listen to the pupils read and in assisting with the day-to-day work of the school. Regular homework is provided to supplement the pupils' work at the school and this includes a variety of reading books and other curricular related topics. The school operates an 'open door' policy and parents are always

welcome to discuss any particular areas of concern in relation to the progress of their child(ren). The level of parental support to the pupils both at school and at home is good. There is a good level of additional support provided to the parents of the pupils with Special Educational Needs. There are also a wide range of external visitors to the school who provide academic, medical and pastoral support to both pupils and parents as well as visitors linked to the curriculum who enhance the pupils' historical and artistic knowledge through, for example, drama and music.

50. The day-to-day partnership with parents is a significant factor in the life of this school and it has a positive impact on the pupils' personal development and achievement.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher form an excellent partnership and are very well supported by a committed and enthusiastic hardworking team of teachers and a well-informed and very supportive governing body. The good progress the school has made since the most recent inspection is evidence of the hard work put in by the staff. There has been a very clear focus on raising standards, particularly in English, mathematics, information technology and science. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented effectively, and subject policies and schemes of work have been improved and developed. The role of subject co-ordinators has become much stronger despite the fact that a large proportion of them are very recently appointed. They play a key role in evaluating and improving their curriculum area and are now in a very good position to further improve standards. The assessment procedures for English, mathematics and science are very detailed and enable the staff to monitor very accurately the progress made by the pupils. The very effective monitoring of teaching and learning has raised standards throughout the school.
52. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is very well organised and has put effective procedures in place. She communicates well within the school, so that all staff are fully aware of these procedures. She is approachable for advice, which she offers willingly. She uses outside agencies and specialist advisers regularly visit the school.
53. The governors are regular visitors to the school and have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are effective in fulfilling their responsibilities and work hard to support the school. Individual governors have responsibility for special educational needs and for curriculum subjects and they are effective in monitoring what is taking place. The governors appraise the work of the headteacher and set targets for improvement. They fulfil very effectively their role in holding the school to account for the quality of education it provides.
54. The school improvement plan is a very good document that takes account of the previous report and demonstrates a clear vision for raising standards. Achievable goals have been set, timescales are realistic and methods of monitoring progress towards the goals are clear. The pupils, parents, staff and governors have all made important contributions to the plan. Specific grants awarded to the school are used well and linked to expenditure outlined in the school improvement plan.
55. Control of the school's finances and the day-to-day management of finance are very good and have improved since the last inspection. Every month a detailed analysis of spending is carried out and any variances or staff changes that will have a financial impact are identified. A two-year budget projection is drafted in consultation with the headteacher and deputy headteacher and it is then submitted to the finance committee for consideration and again to the full governing body for approval. Best value is sought by the governors at all times when considering the purchasing of goods or services. Financial planning is related through the school improvement plan to the school's educational priorities. Curriculum co-ordinators manage their own budgets, having identified areas requiring expenditure following detailed curriculum audits. Very recently mid-day meal supervisors have also been allocated budgets to manage.
56. Increasing delegation and the implementation of a three-year financial plan to take account of a slight drop in school admission numbers account for the planned underspend. The day-to-day management of finance conducted by the school's budget officer and administration staff was found to be very effective in a recent audit by the local education authority. All recommendations in the report have been implemented.

57. Grants for specific educational purposes, such as special educational needs, are used appropriately for the purposes intended. The headteacher and governors are aware of the lack of storage space that limits the use of the hall and are planning for an information and communication technology suite. Monies allocated to upgrade and refurbish the library have been well used. Despite the somewhat cramped accommodation good use is made of the school's existing facilities. Taking into account the school's expenditure and the quality of education provided, including provision for the personal and non-academic needs of the pupils, the school gives good value for money and this is an improvement since the last inspection.
58. The match of teaching and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum is good. The school has a full complement of teaching staff and has very successfully integrated a high number of recent appointments. Excellent systems are in place for appraising the performance of all staff, including the headteacher. Individual needs, as well as those of the school, are taken into account when planning professional development and this has contributed to the effectiveness of staff. The school has received special mention by the assessor for the national 'Investors in People' award for the high quality of its work on the professional development of all staff.
59. The accommodation, although clean and well maintained, is unsatisfactory for the effective delivery of the curriculum. Many of the classrooms are small for the number of pupils and storage space is at a premium. This is particularly evident in the school hall, the perimeter of which is used to store a wide range of equipment. It was also noted during the inspection that the school hall is under-utilised. The external accommodation is limited, mainly to just a playground, because the condition of the school field prevents it from being used on a regular basis for physical education. Despite the unsatisfactory level of accommodation, the school staff work very hard to overcome the limitations of the site and to utilise what they have to maximum effect.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. In order to build on the current successes of the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should take the following actions:

Improve standards in writing throughout the school by:

(Paragraphs 4,5,6,17,18,23,24,61,64,65,84,86,87,90)

- Building on the current practice of developing the pupils' writing skills through other subjects;
- Develop a whole school policy that is used consistently by all teachers to develop and improve the pupils' handwriting skills.

Seek ways of improving the accommodation in order to provide: *(Paragraphs 12,59,76,80)*

- Appropriate and adequate storage for resources, especially those for physical education and music;
- Improve the quality of the school field, so it can be used on a regular basis to improve the provision for physical activities;
- Utilise the existing accommodation more effectively, for example, the school hall, to provide more space than in the classrooms for lessons such as music.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

45

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

38

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	11	20	10	2	0	0
Percentage	7	24	44	22	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

Y3 – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

237

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

64

Special educational needs

Y3 – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

1

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

62

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

7

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

7

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.86
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.08
National comparative data	0.4

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 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	40	20	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	28	35
	Girls	13	12	16
	Total	36	40	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (68)	67 (55)	85 (73)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	26	33
	Girls	14	13	14
	Total	41	39	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (68)	65 (79)	78 (69)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
214	1	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
6	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
11	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: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.7
Average class size	29.6

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	53

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	561,689
Total expenditure	529,190
Expenditure per pupil	2,196
Balance brought forward from previous year	44,976
Balance carried forward to next year	77,474

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	238
Number of questionnaires returned	115
Percentage of questionnaires returned	48

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	34	4	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	40	53	2	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	43	3	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	51	4	4	3
The teaching is good.	51	44	1	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	45	7	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	30	2	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	33	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	40	49	7	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	55	39	0	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	37	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	43	11	3	10

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

ENGLISH

61. Inspection evidence shows that, by the end of Year 6, standards in English are below average. However, since the inspection nearly five years ago, there has been continuous improvement. The school's assessment systems show that pupils enter the school with below average attainment, but they make good progress in English as they move through the school. The high proportion of pupils who need extra support and help with their learning make good progress. This is because the school assesses pupils' needs and provides them with appropriate work. Learning support practitioners, who work very closely with the teachers, play a major role in this. In addition, opportunities to develop literacy are incorporated into all subjects. This is an area that has improved considerably since the most recent inspection.
62. Because of their interest and enthusiasm for school and the very good relationships that exist between the pupils and their teachers, the majority of pupils develop good listening skills by the time they reach Year 6. However, many pupils write and spell as they speak. For example, they often confuse tenses when giving spoken answers. Many younger pupils are not confident speakers and tend to give one word or very incomplete answers to their teachers' questions. This means that the teachers spend a great deal of time developing the pupils' confidence and skills in speaking. For example, there are always occasions when the pupils discuss answers to a teacher's question with a partner or amongst themselves before giving it in front of the whole class. The teachers spend a great deal of time in encouraging the pupils to use correct grammar and spelling and to give confident and full answers. In literacy lessons, for example, the pupils listen to and discuss a wide range of texts. The teachers encourage the pupils to speak in front of the class and in school assemblies. Drama is increasingly being used to develop the pupils' speaking skills such as when in a very good history lesson they discussed in role the life in a Victorian school compared to working in a factory. By the time they leave Year 6, the pupils have made good progress in their speaking skills and the majority reach the expected standard.
63. When the pupils enter the school, reading standards are below average. However all pupils make good progress with their reading as they move through the school. The pupils who have difficulty with their reading make good progress because of the very effective monitoring and support they receive from their teachers and classroom assistants as well as parents who regularly come into the school to support the pupils in their reading. They also benefit from their membership of the lunchtime reading club where more able pupils support them in their reading. Parents give good support to those pupils who regularly take home their reading books. But many of the pupils who find reading particularly difficult, do not read regularly at home and this limits their progress. The more able pupils are able to discuss their preferences for various authors such as Dahl, Rowling and Tolkien. They can compare characters and analyse and discuss plot and structure. However, the range of many pupils' reading is limited. For example, the pupils who are good at reading know about classic authors from extracts of their work in group reading, but have not read such books themselves. The new library and the research work the pupils do in geography and history, such as finding out about the condition of Greek slaves or how children in Ancient Greece were educated develops the pupils' personal research skills. The school systematically teaches reference skills such as when the Year 3 pupils made good progress in using a range of books on volcanoes to find the answers to such questions as 'Why does a volcano erupt?' using the contents and index to track down their answers. There are good links with information technology as the pupils frequently use the Internet as part of their personal research.
64. Standards in writing at the end of Year 6 are below average. However, standards have improved because of all the initiatives the school has put in place and, as a result, the inspection evidence confirms that all pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Standards in the present Year 6 are higher than previous years, because the pupils have benefited from the emphasis on teaching writing when they were younger. Also the use of ability sets in all year groups enables the teachers and classroom assistants to target work very precisely to the ability of their pupils. There is now an increased emphasis on using a wider range of writing and the teachers are becoming more skilled at developing the pupils' writing in other subjects such as geography, history, information technology and science. For example, the Year 6 pupils wrote stories such as 'The Sweet dog and the Small Bad Hamsters' in the style of Jon Skieszka's 'Three

Little Pigs.’ They write journalist reports, factual descriptions of ‘How Seeds are dispersed’ in science and write poems based on ‘Skimbleshanks.’ Year 5 pupils write factual information about how sound travels and find out, as part of their personal, social and health education studies about John Lennon from research work using the Internet. In Year 4, the pupils write very precise instructions of how to follow a route or how to play ‘Snakes and Ladders’ and write character descriptions of the personality of various Tudor Kings and Queens from examination of their portraits. Year 3 pupils write play scripts of an incident at home, compare a particular setting in summer and wintertime, and write letters to Greenpeace. By the end of Year 6 many pupils use metaphors and similes in their work. They understand the importance of language to intrigue the reader and entice him to want to read a story. They write in different genres and adapt their style appropriately, such as using imperatives when composing instructional writing. They have experience of writing a range of poetry and enjoy composing rhymes. They understand how poets use personification and imagery, such as in a poem about smoking ‘A cigarette is...a boat sailing down a river of death...a dumper pouring rubbish into lungs...is like chocolate ADDICTIVE.’ Handwriting is a weakness across the school. Many pupils enter the school with poor letter formation and below average skills in handwriting. By the end of Year 6 many pupils are still unable to write in a confident cursive style. Standards of presentation are inconsistent and this is an area that the school needs to address.

65. Overall the quality of teaching is good but some very good and excellent lessons were seen during the inspection particularly in the upper juniors. All teachers plan literacy lessons very well and all teachers make good use of learning resources, use explanation and discussion very effectively and establish very good relationships with the pupils. The standard of marking is inconsistent and the teachers do not always model handwriting well. However, the best marking is positive and developmental and often links to the pupils’ personal targets. Some of the classrooms are quite cramped but the way the teachers and the teaching assistants work together with groups of differing ability is very good and has a major impact on raising standards. These teaching assistants play a major role in improving standards in reading. The very comprehensive and detailed assessment systems have helped to raise standards and are very effective at ensuring that the teachers have a good understanding of their pupils’ abilities and target work appropriately. In all classes, the pupils have individual targets that have been agreed with the teacher and these help focus the pupils’ concentration on areas of their learning that need developing.
66. The English co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of how English is taught across the school. She has worked very hard to introduce many initiatives that are raising standards of literacy across the whole school. Improvements in assessment ensure that all teachers have a very clear idea of the ability of their pupils and know what needs to be done to improve the standard of their work. The additional teaching aimed at raising standards in Year 6 and Year 4 has been very successful. The subject leader has identified and used other curriculum areas to enhance the development of literacy. She has observed lessons and given very constructive feedback, which has raised standards of teaching. Staff expertise has also increased because of a wide range of appropriate training. This training has helped the teachers to assess writing and given them a greater understanding of the teaching of literacy. The very directed way in which writing is now being taught, with the teachers clearly demonstrating writing techniques, is having a major impact on improving the pupils’ writing across the school.

MATHEMATICS

67. Standards in mathematics are average. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. The successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has helped to contribute to this rise in standards. This has brought about an improved planning system, which matches the lesson content to the needs of individual pupils. Opportunities to teach numeracy across the whole curriculum are now planned. Assessment procedures have made a good improvement and the teachers use this data very well. Information is gathered on a day-to-day basis and through a series of assessments and tests throughout the year. This information is used when devising both teaching groups and programmes of study. As a result, the composition of groups and sets is changed according to need. For example, a pupil having difficulty with measurement is moved to a group operating at a more appropriate level. When progress is recognised in this skill, the pupil is moved back to the original group. Test results are analysed to determine the level of performance by boys, by girls and by different ethnic groups. The school gains an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses overall and takes action to improve matters; for example, the current emphasis on mental mathematics is in direct response to performance analysis. A view of individual performance is also

gained by tracking every pupil's results. This is used to decide when individual pupils need extra input. This may be given within class lessons, or in 'booster' groups and is effective in raising standards. Monitoring of teaching and learning has improved, and the information is constantly used by the school in its efforts to raise standards.

68. The evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that pupils follow a very thorough programme of learning, which includes all elements of the National Curriculum, including problem solving. Skills are systematically built upon and the teachers take previous learning into account when planning lessons. A scrutiny of work and lessons indicate that the standards the pupils attain on entry to Year 3 are below average but the pupils' progress through the school is good. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress. All pupils have access to the full curriculum.
69. Basic knowledge and understanding of number work is well established with all pupils, although the quick recall of multiplication tables is only satisfactory with the more able, and generally unsatisfactory with other pupils. The oldest pupils in the school are able to describe a range of strategies when completing calculations. More able pupils know and apply strategies for making quick calculations, for example, in response to the question, 'What is 51×47 roughly?', a range of good strategies is offered. They are able to convert basic fractions to decimals and to percentages, but encounter some difficulty when, for instance, calculating $8/10$ as a percentage. Knowledge and understanding of 2D and 3D shapes is satisfactory with all pupils, and the more able pupils know that the angles of a triangle add up to 180 degrees. They correctly define an angle as a measurement of turn. They are also able to apply the appropriate formula when calculating regular perimeters and areas. The technical vocabulary of mathematics is used accurately by many pupils, for example, tally, range, mode, frequency when discussing graphs, and impossible to certain when describing probability. However, a significant number of pupils are hesitant when discussing their work, and the frequent use of mathematical vocabulary needs further reinforcement.
70. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. This is an improvement on the previous report. The teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject so that teaching is always at least satisfactory, and some examples of very good and excellent teaching was observed. The teachers plan well together, which results in lessons of a good structure and aimed at the appropriate levels of ability within the group. A lively pace is usually maintained. The pupils respond to this by being very attentive, behaving well and by remaining involved and on task during lessons. The teachers have a clear understanding of what is to be learned in each lesson, which they share with the pupils, so the pupils know what they are to do and what is expected of them. They also acquire a sense of their own learning and progress. The introductions to lessons concentrate on mental mathematics, and the teachers question well in these sessions. The pupils respond confidently, but their thought processes are sometimes too slow and their range of expression, too limited. Very good and excellent teaching in year 6 builds on previous knowledge and leads the pupils systematically to an understanding of the principles of probability. The pupils learn to use appropriate vocabulary accurately. Interesting activities engage the pupils' interest and they work enthusiastically. Information and communication technology is used when appropriate. For example, a lower ability group gathered information from fellow pupils and produced a bar graph. These pupils described adequately the process they had followed. Their mouse control was very good as they quickly searched and used menus on screen. The teachers generally use praise well and also apply the school's behaviour policy unobtrusively. Thus, a lively and friendly atmosphere is maintained, which is conducive to good learning. This leads to pupils with good self-esteem and a willingness to do their best. Sometimes, the teachers' marking does not set targets for future learning. However, the teachers do have a good knowledge of their pupils and keep a close eye on progress. The learning support practitioners and assistants give good support to the pupils with special educational needs, which allows them access to the full curriculum at an appropriate level.
71. In order to raise standards further, the school has rightly identified the need to improve mental mathematics, and has set out to achieve this. This will allow greater rigour in the introductory sessions. More opportunities for the pupils to develop their thoughts and processes orally, using appropriate language, will also accelerate learning and raise standards. However, the teachers' marking of pupils' work is not consistent and although they praise good work they do not always give points for improvement. The presentation of work is inconsistent and the school should work to improve this.

72. The subject co-ordinator has a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. She has carried out an audit of the subject and has produced a realistic action plan. This will help the school to achieve its set targets. She is supported by a very good monitoring procedure, which evaluates teaching and learning and sets targets for future development. This in turn is well supported by very good gathering and utilisation of assessment data, which informs teaching, learning and the composition of teaching groups. As a result, the pupils are taught what they need to learn at the time they need it and at an appropriate level. The future of the mathematics curriculum in the school is in good hands.

SCIENCE

73. The school has undertaken a great deal of work to improve the science curriculum and especially in developing pupils' experimental work and this is raising standards which are now broadly average. Although in the last two years the standards have been well below the national average, when compared with similar schools the results have improved. Currently, the attainment of the pupils in Year 6 in their knowledge and understanding of scientific facts and scientific enquiry is average. Although at the last inspection standards in science were judged to be average overall, a criticism was that there were too few opportunities offered to the pupils to develop their scientific enquiry skills. As a result pupils' attainment in this area of science was below average by the time the pupils left school.
74. The pupils in Year 6 have a good knowledge of common characteristics of plants and record this in detailed diagrams. They know the conditions needed for healthy plant growth. In their more recent studies they were learning about the interdependence between plants and animals as they studied food chains and most understood that all food chains start with the sun. In a good lesson observed the teacher was developing the pupils' scientific vocabulary well, so that by the end of the lesson the pupils were using words such as 'predator', 'prey', 'producer' and 'consumer' with ease. In their lessons, the Year 5 pupils were studying sound and, in particular, the different ways of changing the pitch and dynamics of a stringed instrument. Most understood that when the string was plucked it moved the air around it and that the 'box' magnified the sound. The pupils were planning an investigation on to how to change the pitch and selecting appropriate variables for their experiment using boxes and elastic bands. The pupils in Year 4 were developing an understanding of the changes that occur when solids are mixed with water. Many gave clear explanations of the properties of solids and liquids and their differences. In their experiments they were adding water to different substances such as sugar, salt and flour and finding out through observation whether their predictions as to whether the solids would dissolve or not were right.
75. Although only three lessons were observed, these, and the scrutiny of the pupils' work suggests that the quality of teaching is good, overall, and the pupils make at least good progress in their learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In the lessons observed, the teachers made the learning intentions clear at the start of the lesson and some discussed at the end whether they had achieved this, giving the pupils a good knowledge of their own learning. In the best lessons the teachers' enthusiasm for the subject and good knowledge also promoted effective learning. They had resources readily available and high expectations of behaviour and work which the pupils rose to well. In the best lessons observed the teachers also emphasised and encouraged the pupils to use correct scientific vocabulary. They wrote the key words on the board and incorporated them into displays for easy recall. The pupils with special educational needs were supported effectively by learning support practitioners and there was good use of questions and use of praise to encourage their answers. The teachers of parallel age group classes plan their lessons together, but they do not always plan for the differing abilities of the pupils in their classes. There are weaknesses in the marking of the pupils' work and although the teachers make comments of praise they do not often suggest improvements and developments to move the pupils on in their learning.
76. The co-ordinator has recently taken over the post from the deputy headteacher who was the previous co-ordinator and who did a great deal of work to improve the curriculum and teaching in order to raise standards. The policy and current scheme of work has been updated to meet the requirements of the new Curriculum 2000. The teachers also use short-term lesson plans developed by the last co-ordinator for each unit of work as models for their lessons. There are good assessment and recording procedures for the pupils throughout the school and the pupils have individual targets linked to the units of work. Although the co-ordinator has done some monitoring of pupils' work through the scrutiny of books she has not undertaken any formal monitoring of the curriculum and teaching and the impact they are having on learning through

classroom observations. However, the previous co-ordinator has done so and presented an audit of strengths and areas of improvement to the staff and governors. Resources are adequate to support the curriculum including investigative work. Although some classrooms are rather cramped for practical work the very good behaviour and sensible attitudes the pupils have to their work, prevents this from inhibiting their learning.

ART AND DESIGN

77. Standards in Year 6 are in line with national expectations for pupils of this age, a similar judgement to that at the last inspection. As very few lessons were observed it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning in the subject.
78. In one lesson observed, the pupils in Year 5 were developing their knowledge of the work of famous artists. Whilst looking at prints of the work of artists from the Pre-Raphaelite period, the pupils in groups described their thoughts about the paintings. Some of the pupils gave some interesting descriptions using a wide range of colourful vocabulary. In their own creative work some of the pupils were using oil pastels effectively to make observational drawings of plants whilst others drew their own interpretation of some of the verses from Tennyson's poem 'Lady of Shallott'. At the end of the lesson the pupils shared their work with each other, appraising and evaluating it. Although the teacher had a very good knowledge of the subject and imparted this well to the pupils, the pupils spent too much time listening and not enough time on experimenting and developing their own work. The learning support practitioner gave effective help to the pupils who were less confident, so that all the pupils were well integrated. Pupils in Year 6 had been looking at the pottery of the Ancient Greeks as part of their history studies and discovered that much of the decorations showed important features of events in the life of the people. In their art lesson they were making slab pots from clay and adding their own designs they had drawn in their sketch books to represent life in 2002. As they added their decorations many soon learnt that they would have to adapt and simplify their original designs, as most were too complicated to etch or make in relief. Most of the pupils sustained very good concentration during the lesson, continually appraising their own and each other's work. The class teacher made good teaching points to the class and individuals throughout the lesson and at the end encouraged the pupils to share their successes and describe the difficulties they had encountered. In both lessons the teachers provided very good opportunities to develop the pupils' speaking and listening skills.
79. The work done by the Year 6 pupils when they were on their residential visit is of a high quality. The pupils worked with a professional artist to make three-dimensional models on the theme of the Titanic. They are very intricate and realistic and great attention has been paid to detail in the use of a variety of materials. It is clear from the quality of the work that techniques for this type of art work have been taught well. Other work on display shows that pupils are taught various techniques and use an appropriate range of materials in their work. They also study the work of famous artists and produce work in their style.
80. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable about the subject. The policy has been reviewed in the light of Curriculum 2000. A scheme is in place to help the teachers with their planning, which is linked to history and geography topics, and this ensures that pupils' skills are developed systematically as they move through the school. Currently, there are no formal procedures for assessing the pupils' work or progress but the co-ordinator has plans to devise a skills check list linked to the planning to formalise this. Although the co-ordinator has not been in post long enough to undertake any formal monitoring of the curriculum and teaching, the previous co-ordinator has done so and presented an audit of strengths and areas for improvement to the staff and governors, developing their awareness of how to improve standards. Resources are adequate, with basic needs kept in classrooms and specialist needs, centrally. However, some classrooms are rather cramped for practical work such as art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

81. By the time the pupils leave the school standards in design and technology, including for those pupils with special educational needs, are average. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection, but there have been improvements in organisation and provision. A comprehensive scheme of work has been implemented. This is regularly reviewed and evaluated. The range of materials has been improved and the pupils experience a greater range. By Year 6, pupils produce controllable vehicles, which they enjoy

demonstrating. Design briefs for these are detailed, accurate and annotated. Discussions with some of the Year 6 pupils confirm that they understand the process of designing and making. For example, when describing how to make a table lamp, they look at examples, discuss initial ideas, produce a design, modify and improve it, make a mock-up, make the article and then evaluate the process and the product. They are aware of the need to produce well-made artefacts, which appeal to the consumer. A scrutiny of photographic evidence shows that finished articles are of a satisfactory standard.

82. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection and teaching and learning was good in one lesson, but unsatisfactory in the other. The lessons were well planned, with clear learning objectives, which were shared with the pupils. The management of the pupils was very good. The teachers used technical vocabulary, such as aesthetic, evaluate and modify, well. They provided good examples of techniques in wall displays, and drew pupils' attention to them. The pupils used these guides well. Resources were usually well organised and located for easy access. Safety procedures were emphasised and the teachers demonstrated the correct use of tools and the correct way to carry them. Things went wrong when the teachers hadn't prepared the resources well and/or they had not been tried them out before the lesson. This occurred in both lessons, but had a greater impact in one, when the paper provided for the mock-up wasn't big enough. As a result too much time was lost on sticking small sheets together. This did not set the right example to the pupils learning to prepare their own design briefs, where precision is a pre-requisite. The pupils are enthusiastic about the subject, behave well and remain on task.
83. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. She is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. She has conducted a subject audit and has written a good action plan. She is exploring ways of recording attainment and progress, and a good system is being developed. She has improved the resource provision. In order to develop the subject further, the school recognises the need to produce a system for design briefs, which will guide the pupils more systematically. They can then emphasise the need for quality in finished articles.

GEOGRAPHY

84. Two lessons were seen in geography. On the basis of these lessons, the scrutiny of the pupils' past work, the teachers' planning and discussions with the teachers and pupils, standards are average. The school has improved standards in geography since the previous inspection. The school now makes good use of many opportunities to write across the curriculum in geography and has adapted the national guidelines to support the teachers' planning. The pupils now have a better understanding of distant places because of improvements to the curriculum. The school also uses its local area well and makes good use of an extended trip in Year 4 to carry out fieldwork and compare localities.
85. All pupils make good progress in geography. The school makes good use of its local environment. For example, the pupils in the lower juniors conduct local surveys and make scale drawings showing some of the main features. They use large-scale Ordnance Survey maps to help them locate particular features such as a public house or a church with a spire. They learn about the features of rivers, the water cycle and why the Severn is such an important river. They compare the features, services and facilities of urban Oldbury with rural Edgmond. They make good links with their work in history when studying the explorations of Drake and Raleigh. They have a good understanding of scale and how maps represent features on the ground. They locate places using two figure grid references. By the end of Year 6 the pupils have improved their understanding of maps and use OS maps to plan journeys and understand how contour lines represent various shapes of high ground. They make good links with their work in history as they learn about the geography of Ancient Greece and learn how the landscape influenced the development of the city states. They have a good understanding of rivers and how these affect the landscape. They know how important the Nile was for the peoples of Ancient Egypt. They compare how lifestyles are different and similar in modern Cairo and London. They use a range of maps well and have good knowledge of the location of various countries and cities in the world.
86. Geography teaching is good, overall. The subject co-ordinator plans for the whole school. This planning for lessons is very clear about the specific skills and knowledge that will be learned. The teachers' subject knowledge is good and they make the subjects interesting and relevant by making good use of the immediate local area and by an extended visit to a very contrasting rural area for fieldwork. The subject co-ordinator

has a clear view of standards in geography and what is needed to improve them. She has monitored teaching by direct observation and standards have been analysed by looking at the pupils' work. She has ensured that appropriate resources are available to match the school's geography curriculum. She has recently rearranged the curriculum to ensure a better balance of topics and to enable the teachers more effectively to link geography work with history and literacy.

HISTORY

87. Two lessons were seen in history. On the basis of these lessons, the scrutiny of the pupils' past work, the teachers' planning and discussions with the teachers and pupils, standards in history are average. The subject is well represented in the curriculum and the pupils are given a good range of experiences to develop their understanding of the past. As a result, the pupils' written work demonstrates a lively interest in past events and a perseverance in learning about, recording and sharing their historical knowledge and understanding. Standards have been maintained since the most recent inspection.
88. The pupils make good progress through broadening their knowledge and understanding of past societies and developing their understanding of chronology. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have good factual knowledge of the way of life, traditions and beliefs of the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Tudors and Victorians as well as studying how the second World War affected peoples' daily lives. Books, artefacts and use of the Internet for research stimulate discussion and a keen interest in finding out about history. Talks by local people such as one of the pupils' grandparents, to describe his experiences during the war provide good primary sources of learning. A Roman Centurion's visit to the school had even more impact and brought history to life for the pupils. Local visits, such as to Wroxeter to study evidence of Roman occupation, help to enrich the curriculum. Good links are made to other areas of the curriculum. This applies especially in English where personal accounts based on Victorian or Egyptian lives such as 'Dear Diary' work based on the daily grind of an Egyptian alabaster carver, are used to broaden the pupils' understanding of the lives of people in the past.
89. The pupils' good progress and positive attitudes reflect the overall good quality of the teaching. Effective questioning, pace and classroom management are also features that support good progress in consolidating, developing and acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding. The very recently appointed co-ordinator has conducted a thorough audit of teaching and learning in history. She has looked at standards by taking in work from across the school and has also observed teaching. From these observations she has re-arranged the order of some of the topics for better continuity and to link in with other areas of the curriculum. She has amended and improved the planning of work across the school. She has ensured that there are the appropriate resources available to match the requirements of the history curriculum.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

90. Standards in information and communication technology, (ICT), are in line with national expectations. This is an improvement on the previous inspection and fulfils a key issue of that report. Planning has improved considerably. The use of a comprehensive scheme of work ensures that the requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met. The subject is better organised and by using lunchtimes for workshops, the pupils receive regular access. There are more computers available, and the very good use of two interactive whiteboards makes whole class teaching more effective. ICT is well used across the whole curriculum and the pupils encounter many opportunities to use their skills in researching, writing and information gathering, such as, producing graphs in mathematics, or researching the Victorians in history. The pupils also have access to the Internet, which is used effectively to enhance learning.
91. Attainment on entry to the school is below average. Word processing skills are unsatisfactory and the pupils are unable to save work. Mouse control is average, but their knowledge of technical vocabulary is unsatisfactory. Their response to the teacher questions is sometimes lethargic. By the end of their time in school, the pupils discuss the subject with enthusiasm. The more able pupils describe what they like best, such as power point presentations or mathematics programs. They can load, locate files, save work and retrieve it when required. Word processing skills are well established, as the pupils edit on screen and use icons accurately to embellish their work with underlines, letter size and style, bullet points, or bold writing. The less able pupils are able to describe the process when gathering data and producing graphs. Their

mouse control and use of icons and menus is very good. The more able pupils in Years 5 discuss the use of ICT in the wider world and are conscious of its uses in communications, banking, commerce, hospitals, the police force and household appliances. They recall adventure games they have used and also controllable models. They look forward to the challenging work in Year 6. They enjoy accessing the Internet, and can use a range of search engines to download information. They do this in school and at home for homework assignments, such as in their research on John Lennon. They have limited use of e-mail, but a technology link with a local secondary school is planned, which will address this situation. They are also able to interrogate a CD-Rom, which they do in relation to other subjects.

92. The quality of teaching and learning is generally good. The very good use of the subject guidelines ensures a continuous process. The skills are taught to the whole class and the pupils develop these skills in individual tasks completed during the week following. The teachers are confident when using the equipment and have a very positive approach to the subject. When there are problems with hardware, they are able to adjust their approach, so that they still achieve their intended targets, for example, when in a Year 3 class it was not possible to access the Clipart facility, so Wordart was used instead. The teachers systematically develop skills and use appropriate technical language well. They question well to assess the pupils' understanding and progress. They are also sensitive to their pupils' levels of ability, and adjust accordingly. Sometimes, opportunities to reinforce the use of language are missed as the teachers occasionally carry out a procedure without clarifying the process orally. The pupils are very attentive, but are mainly passive in the whole class sessions. Although a few get the opportunity to have 'hands-on' experience in the lessons, most don't. In learning about combining text and graphics in Year 3, it becomes apparent that the pupils' attainment is generally below average. Their retention of previous experiences is hesitant, for instance, they do not remember aspects of the previous week's work on editing writing. None of them could remember the name of the shift key, although most could use it. By Year 4, the retention of information is much improved and in response to energetic questioning, the pupils describe the five techniques they have recently learned, i.e., spell check, cut and paste, change font, replace and overtype. Very good teaching in Year 6 encourages the pupils to reflect on and apply their knowledge. 'I can't remember what to do next, so can anyone help me?' is a typical strategy. As a result, the pupils successfully learn the skills necessary to design multi media pages and retain the knowledge for future reference. The pupils are conscientious in completing their weekly tasks, which has a positive impact on standards. Progress by the end of their time in school, including those pupils with special educational needs, is good, which is also an improvement on the previous inspection.
93. The subject co-ordinator has a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. She is enthusiastic and well equipped to effect further improvements. A subject audit has resulted in a good action plan, which will serve the school well. A new system for recording attainment and progress is being developed. Resources are adequate, but the pupils' access to them is limited.

MUSIC

94. The standards achieved are broadly average for the pupils at age eleven. All pupils have access to the subject and achieve satisfactory standards, including the pupils with special educational needs. Standards, therefore, have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection. Improvements made include the acquisition and adaptation of a good scheme of work, which ensures a consistent approach and gives good support to the non-specialist teachers. All required elements of the National Curriculum are covered. The pupils attain a good standard of singing throughout the school, although part-singing has not yet been developed. They sing with enthusiasm, retain tunes well and employ very clear diction. All pupils use appropriate warm-up exercises and sing enthusiastically and clearly in school assemblies. The pupils in the two school choirs sing difficult songs, e.g., 'A Drop in the Ocean.' Their articulation is precise and most know the words by heart. By Year 6, the pupils are able to repeat complicated rhythms on a range of untuned percussion instruments. They are able to name a number of 20th century musical styles, and recognise a good number when they hear them, e.g., jazz, blues, calypso, reggae and heavy metal. They also identify some of the instruments used. They have been taught the correct terminology, such as timbre, structure, texture, dynamics, pitch and tempo. About half of the pupils can match the words to the correct definitions, but few are confident to use them when describing music.

95. The quality of teaching, although variable from satisfactory to excellent, is good overall. All lessons are well planned. An excellent explanation of graphic scoring, supported by well-prepared charts, resulted in the pupils in Year 3 learning quickly that graphic scoring is drawing symbols to represent sounds. Very good questioning required the pupils to justify their choices, e.g., 'It's like a sprinkling sound!' As a result, the pupils learned to operate and understand the early stages of notation and to design and interpret their own symbols. The teachers use questions very well throughout the school in order to enhance learning and deepen understanding. This included the pupils questioning each other, for example, in Year 4, to decide the difference between a tuned and an untuned instrument. This early training encouraged the pupils' involvement and engaged their interest. This was maintained in Year 5 when the pupils were asked to define programmes, which might match particular types of theme music. In this lesson, the teacher provided support by narrowing the options, when difficulties were encountered. In Year 6, progressive questions required the pupils to refine their ideas, e.g., 'Can you name this style of music?' 'How do you know what it is?' 'What makes this piece of music calypso?' The pupils gradually became more precise and needed to employ technical vocabulary in their responses. However, not all teachers develop the pupils' musical vocabulary so well. A feature of all lessons is the thorough preparation of both activities and resources, which are plentiful. This results in lessons having a good structure and maintaining a lively pace, which keeps the pupils on task. The pupils, therefore, sustain their interest and behave well throughout.
96. The co-ordinator is very secure in her knowledge and understanding of the subject. She has carried out an audit of the subject and has produced a good action plan, which includes an assessment and recording system. The monitoring of lessons has given her a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. A weakness in provision is the way lessons are sometimes split into two sessions. This can often cause the first lesson to end without arriving at a logical conclusion. The co-ordinator organises musical activities in the school and conducts two choirs. The school values the contribution music can make to children's lives, and produces its own concerts. Peripatetic music lessons take place in the school, although none took place at the time of the inspection. Some pupils played wind and brass instruments very well at the beginning of a school assembly, which added to the spiritual quality of the occasion, as their peers listened in rapt attention.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

97. The evidence from a limited number of observations, a scrutiny of the teachers' planning and conversations with the pupils and the physical education co-ordinator would indicate that physical education has a satisfactory place in the curriculum. In every area of physical education attainment is in line with national expectations and all of the pupils, including those with special needs, make good progress. Achievement in swimming is good with the vast majority of pupils being able to swim the minimum 25 metres by the time they leave the school. The curriculum includes gymnastics, dance, games, athletics and swimming.
98. In a good gymnastic lesson the older pupils showed good awareness of space during their warm-up, and confidently devised sequences of moving through space on the floor and performing various counter balances with a partner. They were ambitious in their sequences and balanced and used apparatus with confidence. Many pupils showed above average gymnastic skills such as including cartwheels and handstands in their sequences. In a Year 3 games lesson the pupils had good throwing skills but found moving into position and marking opponents difficult. However, in a very good hockey lesson, the Year 6 pupils played well as a team and made good progress in their passing and marking skills. In a lunch-time club the pupils showed a high level of skipping skills, very good co-ordination and considerable fitness! The pupils talk enthusiastically about their dance lessons and the Year 6 pupils are proud of the fact that they will represent the school in a Festival of Dance.
99. Overall the quality of teaching is good. The co-ordinator plans lessons throughout the school very thoroughly. These lessons have clear learning objectives and high expectations. The teachers manage lessons well and a high standard of behaviour is maintained. However, the space in the hall is severely limited by the storage around the hall's perimeter of apparatus, games equipment and many other objects that are unable to be stored anywhere else in the school because of very limited space. Not only does this limit the effectiveness of the hall but it is also a considerable safety hazard. Good use is made of the pupils' performance to demonstrate and develop teaching and learning points. There is a good range of extra-

curricular activities including football, basketball, the Kilometre Club, Dance and Drama club and Skipping Club.

100. The co-ordinator has introduced a structured curriculum based on national guidelines. This provides good support for the teachers and incorporates many ideas for effective delivery of the curriculum. The school makes good use of outside agencies such as one the city's Football Clubs. However, the school field is rutted and a hazard to safety which prevents it from being used on a regular basis. A residential visit extends the range of the curriculum for many of its pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

101. The standards the pupils attain by the time they leave the school are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and generally contribute well to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
102. The pupils in Year 3 were studying Islam and the duty of Muslims to pay Zakah and gaining an understanding of the value of giving. They learnt where the donations came from and to whom they go. Through a good question and answer session drawing on the pupils' own experiences and through group discussions, the teacher encouraged the pupils to give some thoughtful examples of how they could make giving meaningful. The pupils in Year 5 were learning about the creation as taught by different religions. In one lesson they were comparing two very different versions as told by the Aborigines and Chinese. Most of the pupils identified the main differences in the stories and were clear about the story they preferred. However, the teacher did not extend the pupils' thoughts and learning by asking why the majority preferred the Chinese version. In their lesson, the Year 6 pupils were learning about the importance of the harvest and through reading the 'Parable of the Sower' they understood that the parables Jesus told always gave an important message.
103. In the three lessons observed the quality of teaching varied but it was satisfactory overall. Lessons are well prepared and in one lesson the teacher made good use of a laptop computer and projector to share the text with the pupils. Because most teachers have a sensitive approach to both Christian and other religious stories, practices and teachings, the pupils are learning to give due respect to the values and beliefs of others.
104. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and frequently provides good support for the teachers in their planning and delivery of lessons. She has had opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in classes, and is planning to develop a means of assessing the pupils' knowledge and understanding against the criteria in the local education authority's agreed syllabus. Christianity is well covered by the detailed scheme of work which also embraces other important world faiths. Resources are suitable and accessible and the co-ordinator is planning to build these up with CD ROMs for research and clothes associated with other religions for the pupils to dress in to bring the religions to life.