

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

**ST MARTIN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Tipton

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 103987

Headteacher: Mr David Tromans

Reporting inspector: John Messer  
15477

Dates of inspection: 23-26 June 2003

Inspection number: 246337

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Voluntary controlled

Age range of pupils: 3-11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Lower Church Lane  
Tipton  
West Midlands

Postcode: DY4 7PG

Telephone number: 0121 5571543

Fax number: 0121 5209071

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs. A. Game

Date of previous inspection: 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<b>Team members</b>			<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
15477	John Messer	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage Curriculum Mathematics Art and design Design and technology English as an additional language	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19727	Eric Langford	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion including race equality	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents? How well does the school care for its pupils.
20951	Philip Littlejohn	Team inspector	English Information and communicatio n technology Music Physical education	

27243	Ian Tatchell	Team inspector	Science Geography History Religious education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This community primary school has 206 full-time pupils on roll who are taught in seven classes from reception to Year 6. A further 52 children attend the nursery on a part-time basis, either for the morning or afternoon sessions. Nearly a third of the pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The proportion of pupils whose mother tongue is not English is high, well over a quarter, and the proportion is especially high, well over a half, in the nursery and reception classes, where many children are at an early stage of speaking English. Most children's attainment on entry to the school is well below average and is especially low in communication, language and literacy. Around a quarter of the pupils claim their entitlement to free school meals, which is broadly in line with the national average. An average proportion of pupils is entered on the record of special educational needs and most of these have mild learning difficulties. A high proportion of pupils in Years 5 and 6 entered the school partway through this phase of their education but pupil mobility is low in the other year groups.

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

This is an improving school that provides a sound education for its pupils. Standards in most subjects are as high as might reasonably be expected although there is scope for improvement in English and mathematics, and standards are not as high as they should be in geography, music, physical education and religious education. Teaching is satisfactory overall and within this overall picture there are considerable strengths. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, though the leadership provided by the headteacher is good and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils' behaviour is very good and they have very positive attitudes to learning.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good and there is a high level of racial harmony.
- In most classes there is a high proportion of good teaching and this helps pupils in those classes to achieve well.
- Classroom assistants make a strong contribution to the quality of teaching and learning.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs and those who are at an early stage of learning to speak English is good and these pupils achieve well.
- The school has succeeded in gaining the confidence of parents, who are particularly pleased with the high quality of care provided.

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

- By the end of Year 6, whilst achievement in English and mathematics is satisfactory, standards could be higher and achievement is unsatisfactory in geography, music, physical education and religious education.
- The monitoring of curricular plans and policies to ensure that all subjects are taught according to statutory requirements and plans are evaluated to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

- Opportunities for pupils to use a library and develop research skills.
- The degree of challenge for higher attaining pupils and the early identification of gifted and talented pupils.
- Some aspects of leadership and management, so that all those with particular curricular responsibilities work together to support school improvement and raise standards throughout the school.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in 1998 there has been satisfactory improvement but within this overall picture there are wide variations. The standards that pupils attain by the end of Year 2 in English, mathematics and science have been maintained. Standards in reading have improved because the school has spent a lot of money on new books and reading is taught more systematically. The standards that pupils attain by the end of Year 6 in mathematics and science have been maintained but standards in English have declined. Across the school standards in information and communication technology have improved and in geography they have declined. The standards that pupils attain by the end of Year 6 in physical education are lower than they were and they have not improved in music and religious education which remain below average. Standards of behaviour have greatly improved, as has provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those whose mother tongue is not English. Resources and accommodation have improved.

## 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				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	D	D	E	D	well above A average above B average below average D well below E average
mathematics	E	D	C	B	
science	E	C	C	B	

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and by the end of Year 6 most attain average standards in science and mathematics and standards that are below average in English. These standards were reflected in the national test results for pupils in Year 6 in 2002 but the as yet unpublished results for 2003 indicate that standards have fallen in mathematics and science but have improved slightly in English. The group of pupils that took the tests this year is not typical; their learning has been interrupted by many changes of teacher partway through successive school years, there is a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than in other year groups and a lower proportion of higher attaining pupils. In view of this the school lowered the targets set for the previous year to more realistic levels for this particular year group. Because the school has been concentrating on improving English it managed to exceed its target but in mathematics it failed to meet the target. In recognition of improved test results in Year 6 between 2001 and 2002 the school received a 'School Achievement Award' from the Department of Education and Skills. Between 1998 and 2002 the trend in the school's performance had been broadly in line with the improving trend nationally.

Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good and by the end of Year 2 most attain average standards in reading, writing mathematics and science. The school's performance in national tests for pupils in Year 2 in reading has improved rapidly since 2001. It has also improved significantly in writing, mathematics and science but not at such a sharp rate. In 2002 the performance of pupils in Year 2 when compared with similar schools was well below average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. However, this was a significant improvement

since the previous year. The initial test and assessment results for 2003 indicates that there has been further substantial improvement in each subject.

Children achieve well in the nursery and reception classes so that by the end of the reception year most attain the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development as well as in their creative and physical development. Most do not attain the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development or knowledge and understanding of the world.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Most pupils enjoy their lessons. They are enthusiastic, eager to please and keen to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are polite and considerate. They behave well in class, on visits and in the playground. They work and play happily together.
Personal development and relationships	The very good relationships contribute to good personal development and help pupils to learn confidently in a secure and supportive learning environment. Pupils get on well with one another.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The school has worked hard to improve attendance and has met with considerable success this year.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Nursery and Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	good	good	satisfactory

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

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The teaching for pupils in the nursery and reception classes is good, as it is for pupils in Years 1 to 4; in Years 5 and 6 it is satisfactory. The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory and in science it is good. The teaching of music and physical education is unsatisfactory. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught satisfactorily although there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in practical situations. The teaching of library skills is unsatisfactory, mainly because the school has no proper library and this limits pupils' development of the broader aspects of reading, such as research skills. The relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and this helps pupils to learn confidently. The teaching for different groups, such as those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, is generally good. However, higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to enable them to achieve as well as they should. Teachers plan and prepare lessons carefully. Pupils' willing attitudes enhance the quality of their learning.

### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory. Geography, music, physical education and religious education are not taught in sufficient depth to meet legal requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Activities are modified to meet their needs and teaching assistants support them well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils are well supported. They achieve well and most make good progress in developing English speaking and literacy skills so that by the end of Year 2 they are fluent.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and for spiritual and cultural development it is satisfactory. Insufficient attention is paid to promoting an understanding of the values and beliefs of different cultures.

How well the school cares for its pupils	A very good caring environment has been established. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science but not in the other subjects.
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The school's links with parents are good and parents are given good information about their children's progress. Parents express high levels of satisfaction with the education provided for their children. There is a strong emphasis on providing for pupils' personal, social and health education. There is a warmth in the school and good care is provided for pupils with complex social and learning difficulties.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher provides firm leadership but the role of the deputy headteacher in supporting school improvement is underdeveloped and unsatisfactory. The management of the curriculum is variable; several subjects are managed well but the management of others is unsatisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governing body is ably led by the chair of governors and governors are closely associated with the school but they do not ensure that all subjects are taught according to statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. There is insufficient monitoring of standards to identify areas for improvement and to inform planning.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Time and resources are for the most part used well but the school's computerised whiteboard is underused.

Staffing is adequate overall and there is a good number of teaching assistants. The governing body have ensured that resources are adequate to support teaching and learning. Accommodation is unsatisfactory because there is no proper library and no well developed outdoor learning area for children in the nursery and reception classes. Finances are managed well and the governing body ensures that the principles of best value are applied to their decision making. However, there is insufficient consultation with pupils and parents about the quality of education and how it might be improved.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school, are well behaved and make good progress.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• The amount of homework given to pupils.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li><li>• Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best.</li><li>• The school is helping children to become mature and responsible.</li><li>• They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems and feel that the school works closely with parents.</li></ul>	
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The inspection team agrees with most of the positive views expressed by parents. Their views about the quality of teaching are rather too approving as inspection findings show that teaching overall is satisfactory, as are leadership and management. Inspectors found that the range of activities outside lessons is satisfactory and an appropriate amount of homework is set.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

*'Standards', the judgement of how well pupils are doing compared to others of the same age nationally, may be judged from national test results, or against the levels defined in the National Curriculum or the Early Learning Goals as 'expected' at certain ages. The other judgement, 'achievement', is a judgement made against pupils' starting points. The achievement judgement shows whether, in the longer term, enough progress is being made.*

1. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory but it is uneven. Pupils achieve well in the nursery and reception classes as well as in Years 1 to 4 because the teaching is good. Their achievement in Years 5 and 6 is satisfactory and reflects the satisfactory teaching they receive. The achievement of pupils in Years 5 and 6 has been uneven for several reasons. These year groups have had frequent changes of teacher partway through successive school years and the continuity of their learning has been uneven because a high proportion arrived at the school at different times during the course of successive school years. Also the current Year 6 class has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and a lower proportion than usual of higher attaining pupils. Furthermore their performance in English and mathematics has not been analysed in detail to determine precisely where there are gaps in their learning. As a result teaching has not addressed their specific learning needs. Pupils' achievement is good in Year 2 but this year group has an unusually high proportion of relatively young pupils, many of whom are still six years old and will not be seven until July or August. This constrains the standards they are able to attain.
2. By the end of the reception year, most children have attained most of the early learning goals, as specified in national guidance, in their personal, social and emotional development. They are well adjusted and have well-developed social skills. They achieve well in their physical development and meet the early learning goals in this area of learning. They move with confidence, balance on high apparatus and climb safely. Most handle tools with good control. They achieve well in their creative development, especially in their exploration of colour and texture, although expressing their ideas through songs and music is less well developed. However, they sing a good repertoire of songs from memory. Most are likely to attain the goals in this area of learning. Although they achieve well in the other areas of learning language and problem solving skills are not developed to the extent that many will attain all the goals in either communication, language and literacy or in mathematical development. Most are unlikely to attain the goals in knowledge and understanding of the world. They are curious but few ask questions about why things happen and how things work. This is linked to their limited vocabulary and language development.
3. By the end of Year 2 most pupils attain average standards in nearly all subjects. The only exception is geography, where standards are below average. The school has identified reading and writing as areas of high priority for improvement and good initiatives designed to improve standards are being implemented. Resources have been improved, especially the range and quality of reading books, and literacy skills are

taught more systematically than they were. These are having a positive impact on improving standards, especially in reading. Most pupils read simple texts fluently and have good strategies for working out how to read unfamiliar words. Their writing skills are broadly average but many demonstrate a breadth of vocabulary that is narrower than found in most schools. Overall their literacy skills are average. Pupils' skills in numeracy develop well and by the end of Year 2 they have a sound understanding of how to add and subtract simple numbers, count in twos, fives and tens, recognise patterns in number and identify the properties of common two and three-dimensional shapes. They are on course to attain average standards by the end of this school year. In science, pupils in Year 2 know about the appliances that use electricity, have a sound understanding of healthy eating as well as how exercise affects their heart rate and know that water can take the form of a liquid, a gas or a solid. They attain average standards.

4. The school's performance in national tests for pupils in Year 2 reflects inspection findings. The initial results of the latest tests show that reading results have greatly improved, although very few pupils exceeded the national target of Level 2 and attained the higher Level 3 standard. Standards also improved significantly in writing and mathematics.
5. By the end of Year 6 pupils attain average standards in most subjects but standards are below average in English, partly because of the particular circumstances of pupils currently in the Year 6 class. The literacy skills of many are poor. The performance of this year group in national tests was well below average in reading, writing and mathematics when they were in Year 2. This confirms that their achievement since then has been satisfactory. Standards are also below average in geography, music and religious education, mainly because the curriculum is not taught as planned or according to the requirements of the National Curriculum and insufficient time is devoted to teaching these subjects. Standards are below average in physical education because essential elements of the curriculum, such as swimming and dance, are not taught. Standards in the strand of the curriculum for mathematics that deals with the application of numeracy skills and the collection of data for analysis are below average because these aspects of the curriculum have been neglected. Also many pupils in Year 6 lack confidence in their mathematical abilities and are not positive in their attitudes towards the subject.
6. In the latest results of national tests for pupils in Year 6 the school improved its performance in English. Very nearly a quarter of the pupils, more than twice the proportion last year, exceeded the national target of Level 4 and attained the higher Level 5 standard. However, a third of the pupils failed to attain the national target of Level 4. Few write at length and many do not spell accurately. Their handwriting is legible, neat and well formed. There has been a particularly strong emphasis throughout the school on improving standards in reading and this was the area where the school's performance improved most. However, many still struggle with reading and lack fluency.
7. The work submitted for scrutiny indicated that pupils attain standards that are broadly average in mathematics. However, the results in the national tests for pupils in Year 6 declined sharply this year. This is partly because many pupils in Year 6 lack confidence in their mathematical skills and do not enjoy the subject. Also their learning has been severely interrupted in the past and as a result there are gaps in their knowledge and

understanding. Not enough has been done to identify these gaps and to fill them. Many are good at basic number work and add, subtract and multiply accurately although division is more problematical. They are not good at problem solving or interpreting data. Also, although their basic numeracy skills are well developed there are too few opportunities to use their skills in meaningful situations. National results for science in 2003 were lower than the previous year. This is mainly due to the particular characteristics of this particular year group. However, most have a good knowledge of basic scientific facts, such as the conditions needed for plants to grow successfully. Although most have an understanding of how to control variables to make a fair test, opportunities to practise these skills are too infrequent so opportunities are missed to consolidate and secure this understanding.

8. Pupils with special educational needs who receive support in lessons, or who have individual or group sessions with specialist teachers or teaching assistants, generally make good progress. They reach levels of attainment which are below average for their age, but which still relate well to their ability level.
9. Across the school there were no significant differences noted in the achievement of boys in relation to that of girls. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are well supported and achieve at the same rate as most pupils, as do those from the different ethnic minorities represented in the school.
10. The standards that pupils attain by the time they are ready to leave the school at the end of Year 6 remain much as they were at the time of the last inspection in most subjects, although the standards attained in English are not as high as reported in 1998, nor are they in physical education and geography. Standards in music and religious education remain below average. However there is clear evidence of improving standards in other year groups and this bodes well for the future. The work now produced by pupils from the nursery through to Year 4 is improving consistently and the skills, knowledge and understanding demonstrated by pupils in these year groups clearly show that standards by the end of Year 6 are set to rise substantially in future years.

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

11. Strong features of the school are the very good attitudes of pupils to their learning and the very good relationships and behaviour demonstrated by the great majority of pupils. This represents an area of significant improvement since the last inspection. There are very high levels of racial harmony. Personal development overall is a good and is illustrated well by the growing confidence of all pupils. A warm and welcoming family atmosphere based on consideration, care and tolerance of others permeates the whole school.
12. Pupils are keen to come to school and most quickly settle down to their work. Younger pupils settle well to routines and understand what is expected of them and play and chat with their friends very happily. Most pupils demonstrate good listening skills, which enable them to take an active part in lessons and make a valuable contribution to class and group discussions. However there are a small number of pupils who find difficulty in sitting for long periods and can become restless in lessons.

13. In general, the pupils have high levels of commitment to their work and most are highly motivated and enthusiastic learners. Many are able to sustain high levels of concentration during their lessons and collaborate well with each other in both group and paired activities. Pupils are taught very good values and attitudes including what is right and wrong. Staff are kind and caring towards all pupils and the understanding and sensitivity demonstrated by the staff have a great impact on the high moral standards which are evident in the school. Pupils are sensitive and care passionately about looking after vulnerable creatures and plant life. A measure of their developing spirituality was demonstrated in Year 2 when they watched with awe and amazement as butterflies emerged from their chrysalises, spread their freshly coloured wings and flew for the first time.
14. The very good behaviour and discipline to be seen in and around the school helps to enhance the very positive relationships between staff and pupils. The very good behaviour is largely the result of the good teaching and the consistency with which teachers monitor and effectively manage behaviour. The well-structured system of behaviour rewards and sanctions is clearly understood by pupils and has proved to be effective in supporting the development of very good behaviour.
15. A major testament to the success of the strategies for managing pupils' behaviour is the absence of exclusions. With the sole exception of one former pupil, there have been no recorded incidents of exclusions over the past three years. The effective use of Year 6 pupils as playtime buddies for the younger pupils contributes greatly to promoting a sense of responsibility.
16. An excellent culture of anti-bullying has been actively promoted within the school. This is reinforced through assemblies, time set aside for class discussions and the programme of personal, health and social education. Discussions with pupils reveal their awareness of the impact of bullying and all know the correct procedures to follow should any incidents occur. Parents and pupils do not consider bullying to be an issue in the school and agree that any incidents of inappropriate behaviour are swiftly and effectively dealt with by staff.
17. Very good relationships exist between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are a strong feature of the school, and make an important contribution to the positive learning. Pupils are sensitive to, and aware of, the needs of others and frequently give unsolicited help and support. Examples include a pupil in Year 6 who displayed concern and gave help and comfort to a pupil in Year 3 who had fallen in the playground and hurt herself. Pupils were often seen offering to help others, politely holding doors open for others to pass through, and regularly saying 'please' and 'thank you' to others in a very natural way.
18. Most pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to learning. When working individually or in a small group with the support of a teacher or support assistant they show an improved level of confidence. They persevere with challenging tasks and enjoy the sessions.
19. Pupils whose mother tongue is not English and those from ethnic minorities are well integrated. They display confidence and have good levels of self-esteem. They are at

least as eager to learn as all the others. The very good provision for social and moral development helps to ensure that all groups are friendly towards one another. However there is no deep understanding among pupils of cultural differences. Although examples of good work was seen in developing this understanding in the nursery it was not common across the school.

20. Pupils are friendly and polite to each other and are actively encouraged from an early age to consider the needs of others. Pupils collaborate well, take turns happily and willingly share. They treat property and learning resources with care. Parents are right to believe that the values and attitudes promoted by the school are consistently very good. This was illustrated well in a Year 4 numeracy lesson when a boy, actively engaged in an eight times table game, took time to explain to a struggling pupil next to him, how to work out a particular answer.
21. The range of personal development opportunities offered to pupils is good and an area that has improved since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 6 take on a range of responsibilities. These include providing support to the younger pupils in the playground and in classrooms during wet playtimes, providing help in the dining hall and during assemblies and acting as guides on parent evenings.
22. In the nursery and reception classes teachers encourage the children to use their initiative. However, opportunities are missed to encourage responsibility. In the nursery, for example, the snacks they eat are prepared for them and the nursery nurse usually clears up afterwards. In most classes teachers use a variety of effective strategies, for example, inviting pupils to be class monitors and table captains, in order to encourage pupils to volunteer to help. Most willingly accept and undertake their assigned responsibility tasks with vigour and pride.
23. Attendance for the previous year was similar to that recorded at the last inspection. However, the trend of improvement in the current year shows attendance to be in line with the national average for similar schools. Pupils enjoy coming to school and there is a very low incidence of late arrival. Punctuality is very good and lessons were seen to start on time during the inspection week.
24. The level of unauthorised absence is low at and mainly due to the unwillingness of a few parents to take the time to provide the school with reasons for their child's absence. However, a significant proportion of absence is caused by parents taking their children on family holidays during term time. A small minority of pupils take more than the ten days permitted for holidays at the discretion of the school. This absence restricts the learning opportunities of the absentees and has a negative impact on their overall achievement.

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

25. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but there are wide variations across the school. The quality of teaching ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory. Teaching for the children in the nursery and reception classes is good and it is mainly good for pupils in Years 1 and 2, although unsatisfactory teaching occurs in Year 2 when a temporary stand-in teacher takes the class. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is

satisfactory; it is very good in Year 3, good in Year 4 and satisfactory in Years 5 and 6. There is a direct link between the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement; they achieve well from the nursery through to Year 4 and satisfactorily in Years 5 and 6.

26. Nearly all of the lessons seen were at least satisfactory and in over two thirds the teaching was at least good whilst in very nearly a quarter of lessons teaching was very good and occasionally excellent. Only one unsatisfactory lesson, a music lesson taught by a temporary teacher, was seen. However, the scrutiny of pupils' work shows that there are shortcomings in the teaching, especially in Years 5 and 6. Also insufficient time is spent teaching music, geography physical education and religious education and so these subjects are not taught in sufficient depth. As a result the overall judgement about the quality of teaching and learning, satisfactory rather than good, reflects such strengths and weaknesses.
27. The teaching of English, mathematics and information and communication technology is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Across the school science is taught well, the teaching of history is satisfactory and that of music and religious education is unsatisfactory. The teaching of physical education is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Due to time-tabling and the alternating blocks of lessons in history and geography, for example, it was not possible to see enough teaching to make judgements on the quality of teaching across the school in art and design, design and technology or geography.
28. The standard of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and pupils learn effectively. They are given appropriate support within class or in carefully structured group work outside the classroom. In classes or in special groups, pupils receive additional support and work that matches their particular stages of development and this helps them to achieve well and make good progress. Teachers and support staff build very good relationships with these pupils and by gentle encouragement take every opportunity to extend their knowledge and understanding.
29. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is mostly good. It is particularly good when they receive extra support, either in class or when withdrawn from the classroom. This support is provided primarily by a teaching assistant who has developed a good understanding of how to meet the learning needs of these pupils. Although she has had no special training for this role, she is supported well by the school's co-ordinator for this provision and by visiting specialists. She works intensively with pupils in the reception class and in Year 1 so that by the time they are due to transfer into Year 2 most have a good command of English speaking and literacy skills. She maintains a watching brief on pupils in Year 2 and is prepared to support pupils in Years 3 to 6 if the need arises. She plans sessions carefully according to a well-structured learning programme. She keeps meticulous records of pupils' attainment and progress and uses her assessments well to identify any gaps in understanding. This is a big improvement since the last inspection. The teaching of these pupils in the nursery is good because the good strategies that the teacher uses to teach early communication, language and literacy skills to all children are also appropriate and effective for those pupils whose mother tongue is not English. However, the nursery teacher has had no special training in how to teach these children.

30. Basic numeracy and literacy skills are taught well. The teaching formats associated with the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies are fully embedded in teachers' practice. Although literacy and numeracy skills are taught effectively, there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in practical, purposeful ways such as, for example, measuring and weighing in cooking.
31. Although too few lessons were seen to make judgements about the quality of teaching in design and technology, one excellent lesson for pupils in Year 1 typified many of the characteristics seen in the good teaching in most year groups. The lesson was brilliantly orchestrated. First of all the classroom assistant struggled into the room carrying the teacher's shopping bags. Immediately the pupils' interest was captured. What would be in the bags? Slowly, one by one, the contents were revealed. A garment was produced. The teacher asked the name. Most of the pupils knew that it was an apron but the teacher then asked pupils to explain what it was for. This challenged their speaking skills well. The teacher completely understood that nothing should be taken for granted in terms of pupils' understanding of everyday words. Indeed it emerged that an able reader in the class whose mother tongue was not English did not know the meaning of the word 'necklace'. A wide range of fruit was unpacked including watermelons, mangoes, papaws, passion fruit, lychee, kumquats, figs, Physalis and persimmon. Each fruit was named and the texture and weight of each was explored. The teacher gave one pupil a plastic knife to cut a watermelon but it soon became obvious that the task was impossible. A problem had been posed and the pupils offered possible solutions. There were gasps of astonishment as the teacher unrolled cloths in which there was an array of kitchen knives. She carefully explained the function of each and pointed out the serrated edge of one carving knife. The word 'serrated' was clearly explained and it was agreed that the serrations would stop the knife from slipping. The teacher paid due regard to health and safety issues and warned pupils against unsupervised use of knives and unsafe cutting methods. She then helped a pupil to cut the watermelon in half. There were gasps of awe as each fruit was cut in half; awe at the colours, the texture, the pips, the juice and the stones. For many this was a completely new experience as was independently cutting and peeling fruit as well as tasting the fruits to see which combinations would blend best in the design of a fruit salad. This was excellent teaching that resulted in highly effective learning.
32. Teaching and learning were less effective in lessons where the experiences offered to pupils were confined to worksheets. These were often undemanding and did little to advance learning, and were particularly noticeable in mathematics. There are too few opportunities in many lessons for pupils to experiment and investigate. In several lessons teachers spent too long on introducing the lesson and giving instructions, leaving too little time for pupils to engage in activities.
33. Teachers set a reasonable amount of homework and this helps to consolidate knowledge and understanding. Teachers assess pupils' performance well in Years 1 to 4 and satisfactorily in Years 5 and 6. Most teachers use good questioning techniques to explore the depth of pupils' understanding and adapt questions to pupils' widely varying stages of development so that all can participate in question and answer sessions. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and the best marking gives pupils a clear understanding of how they might improve their work. In Years 5 and 6 marking is inconsistent and much of the work in the mathematics books in Year 5, for example,

was unmarked. In most classes teachers plan lessons thoroughly and lesson plans usually have clear learning objectives. At the beginning of many lessons teachers explained to the pupils exactly what new skills they expected the class would learn during the lesson. They then conduct a review session towards the end of lessons to discuss and evaluate how successful the learning has been. This helps pupils to understand how successful they have been. Where lesson objectives were imprecise, such as 'To build on previous knowledge to produce a new collage', there was uncertainty about the new skills that were to be taught. Furthermore, in lessons where the learning objectives were unclear, teachers were not sure how to evaluate the success of learning because they were not entirely sure about what indeed they expected the pupils to have learned.

34. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good. Teachers are caring of pupils' welfare and there have been several instances of particular successes where pupils arrived at the school with disturbed behaviour, low self-esteem, no understanding of spoken English and complex learning difficulties. These pupils have been nurtured by teachers and support staff and have flourished. Teachers modify tasks well so that they generally meet the learning needs of all groups of pupils. However, higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and gifted and talented pupils are not formally identified. It is clear that there is a significant proportion of pupils, many from among those who speak English as an additional language, who learn remarkably quickly and are capable of high levels of attainment but no provision is made to meet their special learning needs.
35. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection. There is now a much higher proportion of very good teaching and a much lower proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is better than it was with a greater proportion of good teaching than in 1998. At the time of the last inspection a quarter of the teaching in Years 1 and 2 was unsatisfactory due mainly to pupils' disruptive behaviour. Behaviour across the school has greatly improved and this has helped to ensure that lessons are not interrupted by any behavioural issues. The management of pupils is now very good in the nursery and reception classes and in Years 1 and 2 and overall it is good in Years 3 to 6. In Years 3 to 6 ten per cent of the lessons were unsatisfactory whereas now there is no unsatisfactory teaching in these year groups. Teachers now have better guidance on how to teach effectively and teaching is monitored and evaluated systematically. However, the monitoring and evaluation of the teaching of temporary stand-in teachers is inadequate. Resources to support teaching and learning are much better than they were and are generally used well. However, the school's computerised whiteboard is not used enough. In nearly all classes teachers show due respect for pupils and act as good role models of behaviour and values. The improved teaching and learning indicates that the school has good capacity to improve further.

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

36. The quality of the curriculum for pupils in the nursery and reception classes is good and follows national guidance for teaching the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. There is a strong emphasis on teaching language and literacy skills as this is the area where many children lag behind in their learning. Many children speak languages other

than English at home and many are at an early stage of learning to speak English so the curriculum is geared to supporting their particular needs. The Foundation Stage curriculum provides all children with a firm base for their future learning. However, the absence of an imaginatively structured outdoor learning environment restricts opportunities for children's development of physical, communication and creative skills.

37. The overall quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good, and is enriched by a number of visitors to the school as well as well-planned visits to places of interest. The school also organises special events, such as whole-school theatre visits. In this respect provision is good. However, due to the strong emphasis placed on teaching English, mathematics, science and personal development, the school has not yet established a satisfactory balance across the curriculum. The amount of time the school allocates to teaching the National Curriculum in Years 3 to 6 falls below the recommended minimum for full coverage of all the statutory National Curriculum programmes of study in all subjects. This is a similar situation to that found at the time of the last inspection. Music, physical education, religious education and geography are not given sufficient teaching time for pupils to acquire new knowledge and skills. The school is therefore not meeting the full requirements of the National Curriculum and this is unsatisfactory. In mathematics numeracy skills are developed well but there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in practical activities. There is little systematic monitoring and evaluating in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. The strengths and weaknesses encountered when teaching the curriculum are not identified in order to build on the strengths and improve the weaker areas. While the school has a comprehensive set of curriculum plans and policies, these are not always followed in practice. A new suite of computers extends learning opportunities in information and communication technology, a big improvement since the last inspection, however the lack of a school library has a negative impact on developing pupils' independent research skills.
38. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good although procedures need to be reviewed to ensure all are clear to new and temporary staff. The school follows the nationally agreed code of practice for these pupils. Reviews of their individual education plans take place in accordance with its recommendations. The school's team of teachers and support staff work well together to provide good support for all pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is not their first language. There is an effective system for teachers to note initial concerns and so help to identify emerging needs as rapidly as possible. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and there is good informal contact with parents. There is very good liaison with and support from local authority educational psychologists, and this helps to provide expert diagnosis and advice. Most pupils achieve well and make good progress, mainly because of the levels of support they receive. All pupils with special educational needs have full and equal access to the curriculum.
39. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory in the nursery and good in the rest of the school. Meticulous records of their attainment are kept and each has an 'Individual Language Plan' that plots progress in learning and gives clear guidance on the next steps to be taken. This represents a significant improvement since the time of the last inspection. Most of these children are in the nursery, reception and Year 1 classes. The teaching assistant who supports them has developed good levels of

expertise in providing for the learning needs of these pupils. She is supported well by the school's inclusion support manager and by visiting specialists.

40. The school offers a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities during the year. There is an appropriate range of clubs, such as information and communication technology, creative arts and crafts, fun through mathematics and science and, judging by attendance, these are much appreciated by pupils. Pupils also have opportunities to learn a musical instrument, as the school offers instrumental tuition for brass and woodwind. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoy a residential visit while Year 6 pupils also have the opportunity to visit the local high school for a humanities transition activities morning. These visits make valuable contributions to pupils' personal and social development.
41. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. It includes appropriate opportunities for sex and drug awareness. Older pupils receive instruction from community visitors, such as the school nurse and Police Liaison Officer, on these aspects of life. The introduction of personal, social and health education as a timetabled subject for all classes has made a very good impact on pupils' personal development. Special weekly assemblies are held to celebrate pupils' various achievements, and these contribute to raising self-esteem. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of health issues. High regard is given to road safety with the school participating in 'Safer Routes to School and Kercraft' providing cycle and pedestrian training for all pupils. In many aspects of their life in school pupils learn how to become good citizens.
42. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good. The church plays an active role in the affairs of the school. For instance, pupils from the school participate in the Mothering Sunday service at church and help with the distribution of flowers. The school houses a multi-agency centre which is well used by the community for, for instance, the 'Mother and Toddler Group' and a regular session run by 'Early Steps,' a local authority initiative. The school has established satisfactory links with partner institutions. For instance, it supports the training of graduate trainees in conjunction with Newman College and provides work experience for students from local high schools. However, there are few links with other primary schools for music and sports events.
43. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when provision was unsatisfactory. Better planning by teachers has contributed to this improvement.
44. Pupils' spiritual progress is satisfactory. Collective worship makes a good contribution to spiritual development. There are opportunities for prayer and reflection at these times, whether the venue is the school hall or the classrooms. Pupils from Year 5 visited an infant assembly and spoke about friendship. Pupils respect assemblies as special occasions. Through its links with the church, the school provides opportunities for pupils to visit the church and reflect upon the significance of items such as the font used for Christenings. Spiritual development is also encouraged in lessons and through a range of stimulating visits. For instance, pupils in Year 2 were spellbound when watching butterflies emerging from their chrysalis. During museum visits pupils are encouraged to reflect on the world as it was as well as human achievements.

45. Provision for moral development is very good. There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of moral values and distinguishing right from wrong and the school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond well to these expectations and try to follow the school rules in their daily routines. Playground wardens from Year 6 help to make play times a satisfying experience for all pupils. Fund-raising activities are arranged for good causes, which gives pupils a growing sense of duty. The school was commended by the local radio station for collecting so many Easter eggs for less fortunate children. Teachers make good use of the curriculum to discuss moral issues and problems that arise are discussed by the whole class.
46. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. In lessons, pupils of all abilities and backgrounds work together and feel valued. Teachers and pupils greet each other in a warm hospitable manner, reflecting the caring ethos of the school. Pupils have opportunities to take responsibilities, for instance in leading assemblies. The sound extra-curricular provision makes an important contribution to developing social skills.
47. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils gain a sound understanding of beliefs, festivals and practices associated with Christian culture. Overall, the school makes effective use of artefacts, visits, and visual material to promote pupils' cultural understanding. However, the school's stock of books does not reflect fully the multicultural nature of society. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures is occasionally promoted through their studies in music, art and design and history. School assemblies make a contribution to developing understanding of different cultures. One excellent example included the celebration of the Muslim festival of Eid to celebrate the end of Ramadan. However, opportunities are missed to deepen pupils' understanding of different cultures by, for example, investigating the different traditional foods eaten or traditional costumes.
48. The school has made substantial efforts to include all pupils in all aspects of curricular provision and the school's ethos is founded on adopting a positive approach to providing equally for all its pupils. The aims, objectives and implementation procedures for achieving equal opportunities are clearly laid out in the school's inclusion policy. The effectiveness of the school's approach is clearly illustrated by the fact that both pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language achieve well.

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

49. The provision for the care and welfare of pupils is very good and a strength of the school. This represents an area of significant improvement since the last inspection.
50. Very good child protection procedures are in place, which are well understood and acted upon by staff. The named person for child protection has received appropriate training. Governors are aware of the school's responsibility for child protection and the school has established good working relationships with the various external support agencies. Teachers and support staff are alert to the need for vigilance in monitoring the well-being and welfare of the pupils in their care. All staff are expected to respond in a discreet and sensitive manner to any personal queries or concerns raised with them by pupils and to ensure confidentiality.

51. Very effective strategies have been established to care for and support, 'looked-after children' and those pupils identified with having special educational needs. Effective procedures are in place to ensure the regular review of their progress in consultation with parents and carers. Effective filter procedures are in place to safeguard pupils from accessing inappropriate information on the Internet. All pupils appear happy in school and most show they have the confidence and independence to approach staff to raise any queries and concerns they may have.
52. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support within the school from teachers, non-teaching staff and pupils. Systems are in place to enable pupils to cope with difficult situations. Their progress is monitored and specialist support from a variety of external agencies is sought when needed and used effectively.
53. The school has established good health and safety procedures. Risk assessment procedures are in place. Standing orders are in place to ensure the annual inspection requirements for school equipment and electrical systems take place. Fire evacuation drills are undertaken regularly to ensure all pupils and adults are familiar with school procedures. Formal health and safety inspections are undertaken by school staff, however there is no formal practice for governor involvement in the health and safety audit and reporting process. During the inspection period, staff and pupils demonstrated good health and safety awareness in and around the school. The school premises are maintained to a high level of cleanliness and provide the pupils with a safe and secure learning environment.
54. The school has an adequate provision of staff with first aid training and good procedures are in place for the management and reporting of injuries. Examples were seen during the inspection week of the quality of care and attention given by qualified first-aid staff in school and of the trust and reliance in them shown by injured pupils.
55. Good procedures are in place for the recording and reporting of attendance at school and the daily registration practice in school complies with statutory requirements. The school actively promotes the benefits of good attendance and has been successful in reducing the late arrival of pupils to school.
56. Very good and well-established behaviour management procedures help to enhance and promote the self-image of pupils and contribute greatly to pupils' very good attitudes to learning. Great emphasis is placed on promoting good behaviour and the school operates a number of incentives to encourage and reward pupils' good work and behaviour. There are a good opportunities for discussing social issues so that pupils understand the teachers' expectations and the process of rewards for good behaviour. The clear behaviour procedures are understood by pupils and parents, applied in a fair and consistent manner by staff and successfully used to promote the very good behaviour in and around the school.
57. The school's philosophy of zero tolerance towards bullying has worked successfully to promote an anti-bullying culture of amongst pupils. Very effective use has been made of assemblies and the personal, health and social education programme to raise pupils' awareness and confidence in dealing with any incidents of bullying they may experience

in life. There are no recorded incidents of bullying for the current year and parents and pupils agree that bullying is not an issue in the school. During the inspection there was no evidence of any oppressive behaviour or racial harassment. Pupils feel safe and happy in school and incidents of inappropriate behaviour that arise are judged by pupils and parents to be swiftly and effectively dealt with by staff.

58. There are no formal procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development, except for pupils who have been identified as causing some concern. Where pupils have opportunities to evaluate their own work, this helps them further in their personal development, but this practice is not consistent throughout the school.
59. Overall, procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in Years 1 to 6 are unsatisfactory in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Extending assessment procedures to the other subjects features as an area for development in the school development plan. Following consultation with staff, good procedures to assess and monitor pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science have been implemented. Group and curriculum targets in English, science and mathematics are set and monitored effectively by the assessment co-ordinator. The assessment information is used effectively, for example to identify higher attaining pupils in science so that they can receive higher level tuition. However, in other subjects, assessment is unsatisfactory and there is little in the way of formal assessment procedures. This makes it difficult for teachers to keep track of pupils' progress as they move through the school, and for them to adjust their planning according to what the pupils already know and can do. Teachers' day-to-day assessment is of variable quality. Where assessment is effective, pupils are provided with clear feedback in oral and written formats. However, marking of pupils' work often lacks sufficient detailed guidance to enable pupils to know what they need to do in order to improve their work. Teachers know their pupils well and have a sound knowledge of their personal development. However, records on pupils' attainment and progress are insufficiently detailed and do not always indicate clearly what the next steps in learning should be.

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

60. Partnerships and communication with parents have improved since the last inspection. Parents are very supportive of the school, hold the staff in high regard and believe their children receive a high quality of care and education. Most parents are involved in their child's learning and parents receive a good level of information about their child's time in school. The school has gained the confidence and trust of parents.
61. The school has established good links with parents that provide opportunities for their full and regular involvement in all aspects of their child's education and personal development. Parents are welcomed, and actively encouraged, to become involved in their child's learning. The great majority of parents have signed the home-school-child agreement and the parent and teacher termly consultation meetings are well attended. Parents agree that teachers are more than willing to make themselves available to discuss the progress of pupils. The good practice where teachers hand over pupils to parents and carers at the end of each day provides valuable opportunities for informal exchanges of information.
62. The school provides parents with homework guidelines setting out the type and frequency of homework expected from their children. Homework document folders are used well for the exchange of comments between parents and teachers on pupils' progress in their reading. During the inspection examples were provided of teachers and

parents working together to develop strategies to help pupils improve their attitudes and behaviour towards their learning in the home and school environment.

63. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are closely involved and informed at all stages of a pupil's assessment and review and contact is maintained at other times on an informal basis. Parents have access to class teachers as well as the special educational needs co-ordinator. This helps to maintain a steady flow of information.
64. The school appreciates greatly the valuable contribution of some ten regular volunteer parents, who support pupils' learning in the nursery and reception classes. The school has made good use of the Sandwell Volunteer Bureau to provide experience and colour to Year 6 history lessons. Many more parents willingly make themselves available to accompany pupils on out-of-school visits, all of which helps to enhance the pupils' learning opportunities.
65. The school continues to gain benefits from the 'Friends of St Martin's' association, which organises regular fund-raising social events, all of which are well attended and provide informal opportunities for meetings and communications between teachers and parents. In addition the association provides a valuable conduit for making parent views known to the school.
66. The developing and good level of parental involvement in the working of the school has a positive impact on improving the quality of the pupils' learning. Parents believe in the school's effectiveness and there is a waiting list for admissions as the school is oversubscribed. However, there still remains a minority of parents who do not involve themselves in the school.
67. The twice-termly school newsletters ensure parents are kept up to date on general aspects of their child's time in school. Termly class newsletters are well used to inform parents of the curricular topics and themes their children will be following. The school prospectus is a comprehensive publication and viewed as a valuable reference document about all aspects of their child's time in school. The school calendar and school noticeboard provide timely information on important dates and events over the school year. In general, the end-of-year progress reports are detailed and provide parents with appropriate information about what their children know as well as identifying targets for improvement.
68. A minority of parents consider that insufficient extra-curricular activities and out-of-school visits are provided. The inspection team does not support this view and considers that the school provides an adequate level of extra-curricular activities and that the out-of-school visits programme is effectively planned to enhance pupil's learning experiences.

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

69. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and there is greater clarity in the leadership of the school than at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher has worked hard to improve educational provision and under his effective leadership many improvements have been initiated. However, the role of the deputy headteacher in

identifying, supporting and leading developments across the school is unsatisfactory because it is insufficiently developed. The deputy headteacher is leaving the school at the end of this term. The contribution made to leadership by other key members of staff is largely satisfactory but there is a lack of teamwork and the establishment of a united form of collaboration to bring about improvements. Senior management team meetings have been infrequent and this has contributed to a lack of focused direction.

70. Soon after he took up his post, shortly after the last inspection, the headteacher and the governing body had to attend to significant staffing problems that impeded school improvement. These took a considerable time to resolve but the school now has a highly competent teaching force and a good supply of teaching assistants. The senior management team is due to be restructured in the next school year. This restructuring is designed to enhance the school's capacity to make further advances. Currently teachers do not all share a common vision of how school development should proceed. There is a commitment to raising standards but the course towards fulfilling this aspiration is unclear. The school has a good range of policies to guide its work. The recently revised race equality policy has been implemented well although its principles were already embedded in the school's practice. The work of the inclusion support manager is highly effective in ensuring that the particular needs of all groups are attended to well. Racial harmony is a strong feature of the school.
71. The headteacher takes a leading role in producing a good annual school development plan. This includes all subjects but not all have a clear focus on how the subject co-ordinator intends to raise standards. In art and design for example there are clear plans to improve resources but this is not linked to what action is to be taken to raise standards. The plan is closely linked to long term financial plans and helps to ensure that resources are focused on the areas of highest priority. The school's strategic planning for improvement is good. The school analyses its performance well in order to identify areas for improvement and there is a strong emphasis in the development plan on self-evaluation.
72. The governing body is ably led by the chair, who has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She is closely associated with the school. Governors are more closely associated with the school than they were at the time of the last inspection but, as was the case in 1998, the governing body does not ensure that all legal requirements are met. The governing body maintains a broad overview of provision but it does not check that plans and policies are being fully implemented. The last inspection report charged the governing body with ensuring that the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education were fully taught. A key issue was for governors to become more involved in the monitoring of the implementation of policies. The governing body studies plans and ratifies policies but, as at the time of the last inspection, governors do not assure themselves that all subjects are taught according to legal requirements. The plans and policies for teaching religious education, for example, are clear and detailed. They suggest that the subject is taught systematically but in fact this is not the case. In one class the subject was removed from the timetable so that the class could concentrate on developing English, mathematics and science. This is unsatisfactory and contributes to the below average standards that pupils attain by the end of Year 6.

73. The headteacher has introduced good systems for monitoring, evaluating and improving the quality of teaching. Classroom observations are made regularly by the headteacher and several subject co-ordinators and the quality of teaching is assessed against clear criteria. This is a significant improvement since the time of the last inspection and has made a strong contribution to the improved quality of teaching. However the work of temporary stand-in teachers who visit the school is not monitored sufficiently. As a result the quality of teaching declines when they are in charge of classes.
74. The area of special educational needs is well managed by the special educational needs co-ordinator with the assistance of the school's team of support assistants. The school has fully implemented the new nationally agreed code of practice for pupils with special educational needs. Any pupil who is giving cause for concern is assessed and suitable action taken if necessary. All assessments and reviews are carried out accurately and regularly and parents are quickly informed of any suggested changes to their child's provision. The special educational needs co-ordinator administers the day-to-day organisation of pupils with the involvement of the headteacher and class teachers. She checks that targets set in pupils' individual education plans are clearly linked to pupils' needs and addressed by class teachers and learning support assistants although recent staff changes have highlighted the need to monitor this process carefully to avoid any gaps in pupils' learning. Parents are involved, and receive regular reports on their child's progress. The governing body supports and monitors the provision for pupils with special educational needs, and reports on the school's provision for these pupils, including how resources have been allocated to and amongst pupils with special educational needs, in its annual report to parents.
75. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is managed well and teaching assistants make a strong contribution. The inclusion support manager, who is also the special educational needs co-ordinator, maintains a good overview. However, in order to avoid interruptions to pupils' learning when teaching staff are absent, she teaches the classes of teachers who are away from school. This does promote greater continuity in pupils' learning in general but it also diminishes the amount of time she has available to complete her other roles. Her planned programme of support cannot always be followed and this leads to a degree of frustration.
76. The school has an appropriate number of staff, who are well deployed to support pupils' learning. The good mix of staff qualifications and subject expertise is used in a flexible and effective manner to make best use of their skills and experience. The school has invested in, and makes good and effective use of, a team of teaching assistants. This is a significant improvement since the time of the last inspection when too few were employed. The school's administrative staff, caretaker and meal-time assistants are dedicated to their duties and ensure that the day-to-day life of the school functions effectively.
77. Very good induction procedures have been established for new staff and these are well used as a base from which to fully support and develop newly qualified teachers in the school. Satisfactory performance management procedures help to identify training needs. Performance management is well embedded within the school procedures and targets are clearly linked to the school improvement plans.

78. The school accommodation does not provide pupils with full access to all their necessary learning experiences. Overall, the school accommodation is used well for the benefit of the pupils' learning and personal development. Classrooms are of appropriate size and sufficient storage space is available for the easy access to learning resources. The computer suite is of good size and provides pupils with easy access to the computers and ample room for teachers to monitor progress and move between pupils during lessons. However, as at the time of the last inspection, the lack of a proper school library has a negative impact on the development of pupils' research skills and independent learning experiences. Good use has been made of bright colours in most of the teaching areas to give a welcoming feel to the school. There are good displays of pupils' work, and photographs of their achievements also contribute to attractive and informative displays that enhance the learning environment.
79. The school grounds provide pupils with access to good sized playgrounds and grassed areas. The grounds include a developed nature garden and there is an appropriate provision of seats and shade for pupils to sit and socialise. However, there are significant shortcoming in the provision of an outdoor learning area for the children in the nursery and reception classes. The fenced off area outside the nursery is subject to vandalism at night. The teacher is obliged to put every piece of apparatus, including a large plastic climbing frame and heavy flower pots, away at the end of each day. There is no shade from the sun. The area is not well developed as a learning environment and this restricts opportunities for imaginative play and physical development.
80. The range and quality of educational resources in the school are appropriate, have improved since the last inspection, and are well used by staff to support the teaching of the school curriculum. The resources for design and technology are newly purchased and provide pupils with a good range of materials with which to develop their learning skills. In sharp contrast the music resources are unsatisfactory and lack a sufficient range of tuned and untuned instruments for use by the pupils. Computerised information systems are used well to maintain records of pupils' attainment and progress and to analyse the statistics in order to identify strengths and weaknesses.
81. Financial management is secure. The highly skilled and experienced senior finance and administrative officer makes a strong contribution to regulating school finances efficiently. All accounts are kept meticulously and are audited regularly. Allocations of money are spent for the purposes designated. The school employs a private agency to advise on setting the budget and to assist with monitoring expenditure. This works smoothly and governors feel well informed about how the school's allocations of money are spent. Governors are prudent in spending money. Last year a very large amount of money remained unspent at the end of the financial year. This accrued because anticipated staffing costs were unexpectedly reduced by a substantial amount because one teacher left the school and the deputy headteacher was seconded to another school. The school is anticipating a much lower surplus by the end of this financial year. The governing body is aware of the principles of best value and for the most part applies them well. However there is little systematic consultation with pupils and parents about how improvements might be made in the quality of education provided. Governors study the annual statistical report on the school's performance and compare this school's performance with other similar schools. This enables them to form a good understanding

of where improvements are needed. Taking into account the improving standards and the high proportion of good teaching, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

82. In order to improve standards further the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- (1) \* Improve standards in English, mathematics, geography, music, physical education and religious education by:
  - improving assessment procedures so that gaps in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are clearly identified;
  - using assessments of pupils' attainment to teach them the skills, knowledge and understanding that they lack;
  - ensuring that the full statutory curriculum is taught in mathematics, geography, physical education and religious education;
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in practical activities across the curriculum.
  - reviewing the amount of time that is spent on teaching each subject in order to achieve a better balance. (*paragraphs 5,7,26,37,59,117,118,121*)
- (2) Check that curricular plans and policies are being fully implemented and that areas of strength as well as areas for improvement are identified. (*paragraphs 37,72*)
- (3) Improve the teaching of research skills by;
  - Developing a library and teaching pupils how to use it;
  - Spending time in class teaching pupils how to use non-fiction books to search for information systematically. (*paragraphs 78,114*)
- (4) Identifying gifted and talented pupils and ensuring that provision is made that enables higher attaining pupils to achieve well and attain high standards. (*paragraphs 34, 102, 105, 106, 113*)
- (5) Forging closer links between all those with curricular responsibilities so that a shared vision and a united approach to school improvement is established. (*paragraphs 69, 70*)

## OTHER LESS SIGNIFICANT AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- \*Developing a stimulating outdoor learning area for children in the nursery and reception classes. (*paragraphs 36,79*)
- The over-reliance on the use of worksheets, especially in mathematics. (*paragraphs 32,121*)
- Pupils' awareness of the beliefs and values of different cultures. (*paragraph 47*)
- The procedures for consulting pupils and parents about the quality of education provided by the school. (*paragraphs 81*)
- The monitoring and evaluation of the work of temporary teachers. (*paragraph 35*)

\* These areas for development have already been identified by the school and feature in its school development plan.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

50

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

37

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	9	22	15	1	0	0
Percentage	6	18	44	30	2	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 two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	206
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	50

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	38

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	74

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	13	16	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	10	10
	Girls	14	14	13
	Total	22	24	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (59)	83 (69)	79 (72)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	10
	Girls	14	13	14
	Total	24	23	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (69)	79 (72)	83 (78)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	15	14	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	13	15
	Girls	10	10	13
	Total	19	23	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (70)	79 (70)	97 (96)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	13	15
	Girls	10	10	13
	Total	19	23	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (52)	79 (67)	97 (96)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

*Ethnic background of pupils*

*Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	126	3	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	29	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	5	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	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*

*Financial information*

**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.9
Average class size	29.4

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	205

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

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

Financial year	2002-2003
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	£
Total income	612 664
Total expenditure	621 747
Expenditure per pupil	2739
Balance brought forward from previous year	95 993
Balance carried forward to next year	86 910

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Recruitment of teachers**

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

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
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	232
Number of questionnaires returned	45

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	20	2	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	62	31	7	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	41	5	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	42	11	4	0
The teaching is good.	69	29	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	38	9	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	38	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	40	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	42	51	7	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	51	42	4	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	47	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	33	29	4	11

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Parents feel that the school has improved significantly in recent years. Several felt that their children would benefit from more educational visits and competitive sporting fixtures with other schools.

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

**AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

*Since the last inspection, a revised curriculum that follows national guidance has been introduced for children in nursery and reception classes. National guidance recommends six areas of learning and these are:*

- *personal, social and emotional development;*
- *communication, language and literacy;*
- *mathematical development;*
- *knowledge and understanding of the world;*
- *physical development;*
- *creative development.*

*The curriculum details ‘stepping stones’ in each area of learning that lead to ‘Early Learning Goals’ for each area.*

83. Teaching in each area of learning is good, and on occasions very good, in both the nursery and reception classes. This is similar to the picture at the time of the last inspection. In the nursery a calm, purposeful learning environment has been established. Class routines are understood well by the children and this helps them to feel secure in their learning. The teaching in the reception class is livelier and is well matched to the children’s increased confidence. An extra member of the class, Zebby the puppet, lives in his sleeping bag in a corner of the classroom. He features strongly in many lessons when the children share their learning experiences with him and tell him how to behave and how he should complete activities. This helps them to order their thoughts and to consolidate their learning well. Zebby and the teacher keep making silly mistakes. This encourages children to be alert as they delight in pointing out the errors. Most of the nursery nurses and teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the good teaching and learning in both the nursery and reception classes. There are occasions, however, when they adopt a passive role rather than being actively engaged in supporting children’s learning. Children with special educational needs are supported well. Children with English as an additional language are supported well in the reception class but provision in the nursery, although satisfactory, is limited. In several lessons too little is demanded of the higher attaining children, especially those in the nursery, and in these instances they do not achieve as well as they could. Time is generally used very well but in the nursery the time from the end of the first set of activities until home time is not always used to best effect. Children spend too long over their snacks and the whole of the last session is often spent listening passively to a story. Homework is used well in the nursery and reception classes to consolidate and extend learning. Children take reading books home as well as a homework diary, which specifies precisely which words children are not sure of, and a packet of words to learn. Parents are provided with

good advice on how to support their children's learning. Standards by the end of the reception year are not as high as at the time of the last inspection because the children's attainment on entry to the school is much lower than it was in 1998, especially in language, communication and literacy.

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

84. Many children enter the nursery with poorly developed personal and social skills. They achieve very well in this area of learning and by the end of the reception year nearly all are likely to attain the early learning goals. Children develop good levels of confidence in the nursery. They learn to concentrate and sit quietly. During their snack time they sit patiently waiting to be served and waiting for everybody to finish before they go out to play. However, opportunities are missed to involve the children in preparing and serving the fruit and drinks. They share equipment sensibly. For example, when one child was upset because he had no water with which to 'paint' the fence outside, others quickly shared theirs. The children have a strong sense of justice and fair play. They were indignant when listening to a story about children squabbling over a painting and confirmed that they would never behave in such a way.
85. Good opportunities are provided for children to celebrate cultural differences and learn to treat those from different cultures with respect. One mother visited the nursery and showed the children how to wrap a sari and they all tried on Asian clothes. All children in the nursery recite a prayer before they start work and this helps to foster a sense of togetherness within the group.
86. Several children in the nursery still experience difficulty in dressing and undressing themselves but by the end of the reception class most have mastered this although shoes are still placed on the wrong feet. They understand that they must rinse their hands to wash away all the germs and have good levels of personal hygiene. The children are very well behaved and have high levels of self-esteem. They are courteous and readily say 'Excuse me' or 'Sorry'. They work and play together harmoniously. Most are likely to attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

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

87. Many children in the nursery, nearly a half, speak English as an additional language. In the reception class the proportion is nearly 40 per cent. Many arrive in school with little or no English speaking skills. The newcomers often observe the other children quietly, attempting no communication. Gradually they begin to join in activities alongside the others and start to speak a few words in English. Most learn quickly and by the end of the nursery year most are communicating well. However, several, especially those whose attendance is poor, remain very reticent and non-communicative. In the reception class the children whose mother tongue is not English receive good specialist support in developing language and literacy skills. By the end of the reception year all communicate eagerly. Most write their names clearly and enjoy writing short sentences. Several prove to be exceptionally quick learners.
88. The 'Palace Hotel' and 'Sea-View Café' in the nursery and the travel agents in the reception class encourage role play and speaking skills well. The receptionist in the hotel uses play writing to record guests' arrivals. Following the theme of holidays children are helped to write post cards that include short sentences, such as 'I can swim' and to write their names in their passports. Many are just beginning to make the link between the sounds they know and the letters they write. Children in the nursery answer the register in Gudjurathi for a week and then in a different

language, say Panjabi or Urdu, the following week. This fosters communication between children well and helps to build respect for different cultures.

89. Good links are made between physical activities and literature. In one very good lesson in the reception class, for example, the children studied 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' by Michael Rosen. They enacted the story in the hall, reciting the story in unison. They became so involved in the drama that they showed signs of genuine fear as they approached the bear's cave whilst chanting, 'We're not scared'. They are familiar with this story and enjoy 'reading' the book independently, although for many the words on a particular page do not always match the words they recite.
90. Children's achievement in developing early reading and writing skills is good. They learn the sounds that letters represent through regular daily practice. The teachers use a system that links sounds to appropriate physical movements. The sound 't' for example is repeated as children move their heads from side to side as if watching a tennis match. This physical link helps them to remember the sounds and their knowledge of phonics develops rapidly. Most children in the nursery remember most of the sounds made by nearly all the letters of the alphabet. In the reception year the system is extended to include the sounds made by combinations of letters such as 'ou', 'sh', and 'ing'. This systematic approach helps children to make good advances in reading and writing. Spelling is plausible and progress is good. One child wrote, for example, 'I pt ftbl' in March and three months later wrote, 'I playd wif my rabit'. The higher attaining children develop good strategies to help them find the words they need to use in their writing, such as the large 'wall dictionary' and their 'word books' which contain words they have asked for in the past.
91. Although pupils achieve well most are unlikely to attain all the learning goals by the end of the reception year. This is because they start from a low base and have not quite caught up before they transfer to Year 1. Few can use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences or use talk to clarify ideas and feelings. Many still struggle to find the words they need to explain their views and opinions. Several still do not complete sentences and say, for example, 'Come my house,' rather than 'Would you like to come to my house?'

## **Mathematical development**

92. Children's achievement is good but because most started school with low levels of attainment they are unlikely to have attained all the learning goals by the end of the reception year. Children are good at counting but find difficulty with the language of mathematics when comparing quantities, such as 'greater than' or 'lighter than'. They identify two and three-dimensional shapes but many find it difficult to describe the shape and size of solid and flat shapes.
93. In the nursery opportunities are seized to count. Every day they count the number of children who have arrived at school and calculate the number who are absent. They sing songs such as 'Five Little Monkeys Sitting on the Bed', which helps them to understand the principle of subtraction. They enjoy making 'fold prints' with thick paint to make symmetrical patterns in the shape of butterflies' wings and make shape pictures using paper triangles, squares, circles and rectangles. They cut lengths of paper to represent their height and compare them to determine who is the tallest and who the shortest. They are good at recognising shapes and were scornful at the very suggestion that a circle might have corners. Nearly all recognise a triangle but several were confused over which parts were the sides and which parts were the corners. They print repeating patterns of triangles and squares and higher attaining children thread beads in repeating patterns of shape and colour.
94. The good work in the nursery is extended well in the reception class. Children use well-produced pretend coins and paper money in the 'Holiday Shop' where holidays to

Greece cost 80 Euros and the salesperson claims that the journey takes 800 minutes. The teacher uses rhythm well to develop an understanding of number patterns, as when he used his guitar to accompany the children as they sang even numbers softly and odd numbers loudly.

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

95. Children achieve well but most are unlikely to attain all the learning goals by the end of the reception year. They are inquisitive but few ask questions about why things happen and how things work. Visitors to the nursery make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. The fire engine visited and children explored the firemen's protective clothing, their breathing apparatus and their powerful hoses. They were fascinated by the reflective stripes on the visiting policeman's fluorescent jacket.
96. They learn about their own cultures and beliefs as well as those of other people. There are good photographs of the children in the nursery working together co-operatively when performing the class Nativity play. They make divas as part of their Divali celebrations and dragons to celebrate the Chinese new year. They use the computer confidently to move images around the screen. They study photographs of themselves and their friends as babies and toddlers and gain a good appreciation of change over time.
97. In the reception class children develop a good understanding of where different countries are: 'To get to Greece you go past Majorca and Spain and then you're there.' They learn about hot countries where there is no running water and contemplate what it must be like to wash clothes in the river rather than in a washing machine. They develop a good understanding of how precious clean water is and how important it is to conserve resources.

### **Physical development**

98. Children in the nursery use the school hall and an enclosed area outside their classroom for physical activities. The children in the reception class have no such outdoor learning area but do play alongside the nursery children on the school field. The outside area is not well developed as a learning resource and this restricts opportunities for physical development and for investigative play. Nevertheless the nursery teacher creates imaginative scenarios with the limited resources available. Children enjoy pedalling tricycles and moving toy cars around roads that incorporate a zebra crossing where a masterful lollipop person stops the traffic to allow pedestrians with push chairs and prams to cross safely.
99. In the hall the nursery children enjoy moving like snakes, crabs, monkeys, giraffes, elephants and crocodiles. On the field children in the reception class learn how to throw and occasionally how to catch balls effectively. They pass and kick footballs and aim bean bags into a tub. Most develop good control of pencils and scissors although most find cutting accurately along a straight line very challenging. They use a good range of constructional apparatus to build houses and skyscrapers as well as imaginative vehicles and ingenious aliens. They run around the playground confidently and are good at avoiding collisions. They understand healthy diets and the effect that exercise has on

their bodies. After one very energetic lesson in the hall children placed their hands firmly on their chests and felt their heart beats slow. They achieve well and most are likely to attain all the learning goals by the end of the reception year.

### **Creative development**

100. Children's achievement is good and most are well on course to attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. When they join the nursery, only a few children can draw more than simple lines on a page. They quickly learn to draw patterns and paint animals and people. They are good at using textured rollers to apply paint, print patterns of footprints with different shoes and draw enthusiastically with chalks on the playground. They experienced a sense of awe as they removed black templates from a sea scene, that had been liberally spattered with different coloured paints, to reveal pristine white images of the shapes. Good links are made with other areas of the curriculum as, for example, when the children made spiders with four sets of two legs. Children enjoy painting with their fingers and hands. By the end of the reception year, most can express themselves effectively with different media and techniques. A good range of activities are provided for role play and children learn how to respect school equipment by, for example, taking off their shoes before they go to bed in the 'Palace Hotel'. They enjoy singing and they use percussion instruments well to create patterns of sound and a variety of rhythms.

### **ENGLISH**

101. Standards in English in the previous inspection were average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school's results in the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 show pupils performing well below average in reading and below average in writing. However, standards in both reading and writing are now average. Since 2001 there has been good improvement in the reading and writing standards that pupils attain by the end of Year 2. The standards that pupils attain by the end of Year 6 are below average. This indicates a decline in standards since the time of the last inspection. However, the group of pupils currently in Year 6 have experienced a succession of barriers to their learning that have had an adverse impact on their achievement. They have had changes of teacher partway through successive school years and many of the pupils arrived at the school at different points during this, the primary phase, of their education. There is also a higher proportion than usual of pupils with special educational needs in this year group as well as a lower proportion of higher attaining pupils. The standards that pupils in this year's Year 6 attained in 1999, when they were in Year 2, were well below average in reading and writing.
102. Pupils, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 and 4. Pupils enter Year 1 with early reading and writing skills that are generally below average and by the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 4 attain average standards overall, with many attaining standards that are above average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 5 and Year 6 and overall it is satisfactory. The achievement of pupils in Year 6 has not been as effective as it should have been. This is mainly due to factors that have impeded the consistency of their learning. It is also because the particular needs of these pupils are not identified precisely and their progress is not checked systematically. Teachers are, therefore, unable to identify specific gaps in pupils' learning and target pupils' particular learning needs. This limits achievement and the standards reached by a substantial number of pupils. A lower proportion of pupils than would normally be expected attain the higher National Curriculum levels.

103. When pupils enter Year 1, many lack confidence in speaking although they have better listening skills. By the end of Year 2, pupils' standards of speaking have improved but remain below national expectations. Many pupils are still not confident in talking and, when answering questions, give one or two words in response.
104. By the end of Year 6, speaking and listening skills for the majority of pupils remain below average. Some teachers miss the opportunity to ask questions that will encourage pupils to explain their thoughts and to talk at greater length. Consequently the teachers often talk much more than the pupils, although it is the latter who need the practice. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of speaking and listening. When they are given the opportunity to do so, teachers have to work hard to encourage pupils to speak clearly and express themselves lucidly. Pupils have more confidence in speaking informally in groups than in whole-class sessions. There are, however, pupils who are eager to share their experiences and do so with clear speech, using a wide range of vocabulary to express their opinions. The subject co-ordinator has identified the development of speaking and listening skills throughout the school as a key area for development
105. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading are average. Pupils have achieved well and made good progress, given their low starting point. They enjoy the stories in the reading scheme and have a good knowledge of what they have read, although very few attain standards that are above average. Standards in reading in Year 2 are similar to those identified in the previous inspection when they were in line with national expectations. Standards are below average in Year 6. Teachers have been successful in encouraging pupils to value reading. They come enthusiastically to read and have very positive attitudes to reading. However, pupils' reading skills in Year 6 are, on the whole, underdeveloped. Many pupils read slowly and deliberately. They stumble over new words because they do not have enough strategies to help them to decipher unfamiliar words. They recognise initial letters and familiar words, but only the higher attaining pupils can read new words with confidence. Teachers use a wide variety of books to develop reading. Pupils do not have the opportunity, however, to select from a range of reference books and develop their research skills fully, as the school lacks a library. Research skills were found to be underdeveloped at the time of the last inspection but the school has not tackled the issue. Also the last inspection report stated that classrooms lacked inviting areas for browsing and sharing books and this is still the case. However, there has been a substantial investment in new books over the last few years and this is a big improvement that promotes positive attitudes to reading.
106. Very few pupils in Year 6 exceed the national target of Level 4 and attain the higher Level 5 standard. Pupils enjoy reading and most have moved beyond the reading scheme and read a good range of fiction. A few pupils enjoy reading poetry and non-fiction books. Achievement in reading is uneven because the approach to improving standards is not sufficiently systematic. Pupils' reading problems are not always picked up. Reading records are insufficiently complete to indicate what needs to be done to improve standards. There is no detailed ongoing record where the common errors that pupils make are recorded to indicate areas for improvement. Teachers encourage pupils to read regularly and for most pupils there is a record of books read.

107. The school's reading strategy revolves around practising reading regularly but for many pupils this is not enough. The systematic teaching of skills according to pupils' differing learning needs, linked to clear records of attainment and progress, is not fully in place and particularly for the pupils in Year 6. Teachers set targets for pupils but they are broad and not sufficiently tailored to the needs of individuals. There is no indication that minor difficulties are picked up and appropriate action taken, such as recording unknown words and identifying them as short-term targets to be learned by the next day. Many pupils are keen on reading. A small minority of pupils visit the local library regularly. The 'Harry Potter' series of books by J K Rowling are popular, as are the works of Jacqueline Wilson, Roald Dahl and Dick King-Smith. Boys enjoy books about World War Two, like 'Blitz' by Robert Westall. Many pupils take books home to read with their parents, but records indicate that a large number of pupils do not read frequently outside school. The school's assessment records give a broad picture of achievement between Year 2 and Year 6. An analysis of these records shows clearly that many pupils do not achieve as well as they should in Year 6. However, little has been done to find out why not and to take action to improve achievement. Pupils' good attitudes to reading and their enjoyment of books provide a good basis for further development.
108. The school's overall systems are beginning to contribute to the rapid rise needed to raise standards. It has begun a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics. Staff are enthusiastic about the phonics teaching programme and there is already evidence in pupils' reading by the end of Year 2 that they are acquiring suitable phonic skills. However this is not true of Year 6 where pupils demonstrate few strategies to decipher unfamiliar words. Shared and guided reading are in place and the use of classroom assistants to support pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language during literacy lessons is making a positive impact on the progress pupils make in lessons. Although teachers and support staff hear children read regularly there are missed opportunities to fully assess progress and record what pupils need to do to improve their reading skills.
109. In Year 2, the quality of pupils' writing is average. Pupils make good progress from writing simple phrases and sentences to beginning to write paragraphs and complex sentences. Teachers correct work satisfactorily but do not always insist on the correction of misspellings or let pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.
110. At the end of Year 6 standards in writing are below average. This affects the standards of recording in other subjects. However, pupils in Year 6 used their writing skills effectively to describe the design and making of slippers in design and technology. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can write throughout the school are not sufficiently high. The least satisfactory lessons are characterised by the teacher talking for extended periods leaving too little time for the pupils to practise their writing skills and to produce enough work. Opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to spell words correctly and improve their key skills.
111. Handwriting is good throughout the school. There is a whole-school approach to the teaching of handwriting and pupils are given sufficient opportunities to practise their writing skills. By the end of Year 2 most pupils have developed handwriting which is accurately formed and of a consistent size and some pupils write with fluent, joined

handwriting. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to improve their handwriting, most pupils in Year 6 having developed a neat joined style. Presentation of work in other subjects is often good due to the quality of handwriting. Teachers' handwriting often sets a good example for the pupils. When pupils are given time and feedback on how to improve their writing during handwriting lessons they show they can present well-formed letters of a consistently high standard.

112. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. The teaching of literacy skills in other subjects is satisfactory. In their introductions teachers do not always highlight the key vocabulary to be used in the lesson. In the lessons where teachers emphasise this vocabulary and explain the key words to be used in the lesson, the learning of pupils with English as an additional language and lower attaining pupils is enhanced. Generally the teaching for these pupils is satisfactory. Teaching seen during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to excellent. In an excellent lesson in Year 3 all pupils were involved in learning how language can be used to create effect, linked to discussion of characters' behaviour, feelings and relationships in the story 'The BFG' by Roald Dahl. By the use of voice and gesture the teacher led the pupils into role-play as they enacted their own play scripts.
113. There are variations in the skills with which teachers teach English. In the best teaching, a good pace was set which ensured that the work set was stimulating and questioning was used to good effect to developing pupils' understanding. Teachers have a good understanding of how to teach the basic skills and reading is taught consistently. These are strengths. However, teachers use different formats for planning and as a result some teachers do not include all the key points the best planning contains. As a result several teachers do not always explain the learning objectives to pupils or provide learning tasks that are well matched to pupils' varying stages of development, particularly appropriately challenging tasks for the higher attaining pupils. Some teachers, but not all, read in a lively and dramatic way, which provides a good role model for pupils to follow when they read. Marking of pupils' work is not always thorough enough and does not indicate what pupils need to do to improve.
114. Resources for reading are well organised and have recently been extended for the youngest pupils. However the lack of a school library is holding back pupils' progress in wider literacy skills, particularly in research and study skills using non-fiction books. Computers are not being used sufficiently to extend literacy skills.
115. The co-ordinator has recently been appointed and has made plans to improve the standards of English throughout the school. The plans rightly target raising phonic awareness and improving writing throughout the school. It is early days for the actions to have had a significant impact on standards. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the subject's further development.

## **MATHEMATICS**

116. As at the time of the last inspection, most pupils attained average standards by the end of Year 2 and again by the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory but within this overall picture there are significant variations. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 to 4 and satisfactorily in Years 5 and 6. The achievement of pupils with English as an

additional language and of those with special educational needs is also generally good in Years 1 to 4 and satisfactory in Years 5 and 6.

117. Pupils are particularly good at basic number work. In Year 2, for example, they identify multiples of two, five and ten, add two-digit numbers with confidence, have a good understanding of subtraction and solve simple algebraic equations such as  $x - 2 = 28$ . Higher attaining pupils understand the principle of square numbers and draw 6x6 squares, for example, to help them to calculate six squared. Most are good at solving problems that are framed in a series of sentences. Most understand that it is easier to start addition problems by putting the largest number in your head first but many still rely on using their fingers to add and subtract. They understand that four right angles make a complete turn and have a good understanding of symmetry. Pupils know how to add sums of money and find out how much the contents of tins weigh by studying the labels. Their numeracy skills are well developed but they have too few opportunities to apply these skills in realistic situations or in meaningful investigations. This is the same situation as found at the time of the last inspection. It has not been tackled successfully.
118. Pupils in Year 6 also demonstrate a good theoretical understanding of number. They have a good understanding of prime numbers and test the conjectures of mathematicians such as Levy's conjecture, 'Every odd number greater than five is the sum of 3 prime numbers, with two the same and one different.' They have a good understanding of rotational symmetry and use protractors to measure angles accurately. They measure the areas of irregular shapes and higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of ratio and proportion. However, there is little evidence of data handling, such as the collection and analysis of weather conditions or, as with the younger pupils, of the application of number skills in purposeful activities. In these strands of the subject pupils' attainment is below average. Also a large proportion of pupils in Year 6 demonstrate a distinct lack of confidence in their abilities. Discussions with pupils indicated that many, especially girls, lack enthusiasm for the subject. There are many more girls in Year 6 than boys and an analysis of the school's results show that they do not achieve as well as the boys in this subject. This is a major contributory factor that resulted in the decline in the school's performance in this year's national tests.
119. In most year groups pupils have positive attitudes to learning and many enjoy the subject. In a lesson for pupils in Year 2 the class cheered when told that they would be working on magic squares. There is little evidence of computers being used to support teaching and learning, although programmable robots are used occasionally to consolidate understanding of distances and angles.
120. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and much of it is good. In most classes good attention is paid to the varying needs of pupils at widely differing stages of development. Recently two higher attaining pupils attempted to attain the very high Level 6 standard, normally attained by sixteen-year-olds. Although they just failed to make the grade they did succeed in attaining General Certificates of Secondary Education in the subject. However, in a lesson for pupils in Year 6 several lower attaining pupils found the pace of a lesson much too fast and they were left behind, bewildered and confused. Insufficient attention had been paid to providing work that matched their learning needs and enabled them to experience success. It was not possible to determine whether this is a common occurrence as the teacher had provided all pupils with brand new exercise

books for the start of the inspection because, he reported, the old ones had become too untidy to present for examination. Pupils' work is generally neat and carefully set out. They are trained to write the learning objective as a title for their work, to underline it neatly, to date their work and to set out their calculations clearly. Much of the work presented for scrutiny in Year 6 comprised practice papers in preparation for the national tests.

121. Although good and very good teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2, the analysis of pupils' work showed that there are shortcomings in the quality of teaching that lead to the judgement that, as a result of the balance of strengths and weaknesses, it is satisfactory overall for these year groups. In Years 3 to 6 the picture is similar but the teaching is much stronger in Years 3 and 4 than in Years 5 and 6. The main shortcoming in the teaching is the neglect of that strand of the subject that deals with using and applying mathematical skills. Others are the overuse of worksheets and the neglect of computers to extend and consolidate learning. Also assessment procedures are not sufficiently well developed to show clearly where pupils lack understanding and precisely what needs to be taught to which groups to fill gaps in their learning.
122. In nearly all classes the relationship between teachers and pupils is very good. There is a tendency for teachers to talk too much, not only during their introduction but also during the review sessions towards the ends of lessons, rather than allowing opportunities for pupils to express their views on the quality and extent of their learning. The preponderance of teachers' talking also slows the pace of lessons and restricts the time available for practical activities. However, in a good lesson for pupils in Year 2, a quick-fire introductory session set a good pace. Here pupils had to contribute one fact about a particular number, say 13 for example. They offered a good range of facts in quick succession such as, 'It's an odd number', 'It's a teen number', 'You cannot share it equally', 'It has only one ten in it', 'It is half of 26'. In this lesson, which was mainly concerned with explaining methods of calculating and reasoning orally, the teacher used the review session well to help pupils to understand the effectiveness of their learning, 'Who thinks that they are now really good at solving problems?' In this lesson, as well as in a very good lesson on tens and units in Year 1, teaching assistants made a strong contribution to the learning of pupils with special educational needs as well as those whose mother tongue is not English. Another characteristic of the good teaching is the review of previous learning to introduce the lesson. This helped pupils to remember what they had already learned and what stage they had reached in their learning.
123. In Year 6 pupils are well drilled in knowing and understanding the definitions of mathematical facts and confidently explain that, for example, 'A prime number has only two factors, itself and one'. In many lessons the pupils are required to perform mathematical operations with no reference to why they might be useful or how they might have some application in everyday life. Pupils have a good understanding, for example, of how to convert fractions into percentages but there is little understanding of why this might be of some use. As a result opportunities are missed to make the subject relevant and meaningful. An after-school club extends learning opportunities well.
124. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has only recently taken charge of developing the subject. She has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in provision and has formulated a good action plan designed to improve

standards in all strands of the subject. She teaches the subject in an exemplary manner. She has spent all the money allocated for improving resources wisely but is only partway through the task of ensuring that all teachers have sufficient equipment and materials to support teaching and learning. Under her good management there is good capacity for further improvement.

## SCIENCE

125. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and by the end of Year 6 most pupils are on course to attain average standards. They achieve well in their knowledge and understanding of carefully learnt facts. However, there is little evidence to show that pupils have the opportunity to carry out scientific investigations independently, selecting resources and checking their own form of recording. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well and make good progress.
126. Pupils' achievement is generally satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 2 most attain average standards and some a higher standard. They have a good basic understanding of what electricity is used for in the home, such as cooker, computer and lights. With support they begin to understand that electricity is a source of energy used to power items such as cookers and televisions. They carry out experiments, for example, to find out the conditions needed for seeds to grow successfully. They begin to make predictions on what they think will happen to the seeds. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively individually or alongside their classmates in small groups. Pupils with the potential to attain more highly are encouraged to lead group discussions on an 'investigations board.' Pupils in Year 1 can sort things that are alive and not alive, name parts of their bodies and discuss how people change over time using photographs of family groups. Year 2 pupils survey pupils' favourite foods and present the results as a table and a pictograph showing the most popular foods and discuss links with healthy eating.
127. Pupils' work in Years 3 and 4 shows that they are able to predict results, and with support carry out fair tests and describe results using appropriate scientific vocabulary. In a very good lesson seen in Year 3 pupils investigated the properties of materials that were transparent, translucent or opaque. Pupils discussed the investigation and agreed their methods before setting up the test. They were able to carry out fair tests and record their results, which they presented to the class, with support as necessary. Pupils in Year 4 used their knowledge of electricity to make and incorporate a switch as part of a circuit, and groups decided which materials to use before setting up and testing. They recorded their circuits using appropriate symbols, the lower attaining pupils receiving advice and support from the teacher and learning support assistant. Year 5 pupils carried out a test to record the changing position of shadows cast by the sun during the day, making regular measurements of the shadows and presenting the results in a table and as a graph. Pupils in Year 6 predicted and tested what happens when water evaporates from a solution, using scientific terminology to record the results of the investigation.
128. Teaching and learning are good overall and often very good. Teaching was particularly effective in a lesson where a brisk pace was sustained as this held pupils' attention well. In the most effective lessons there was very good use of class explanations of what was

planned using correct scientific vocabulary. Learning was good when pupils were involved in planning the investigations. The good use of equipment and resources such as the butterfly 'pavilion' were a source of wonder to Year 2 pupils as the butterflies emerged from their chrysalis stage. The use of the electron microscope connected to a computer enabled these pupils to investigate and record enlarged features of a butterfly. Pupils' good and often very good behaviour is a direct result of teachers' good class management skills and presentation of interesting and challenging tasks. Teachers work hard to stimulate and challenge pupils, who show a real interest in the tasks set. Teachers use a variety of methods, often with a practical emphasis, such as when pupils in Year 5 demonstrated the orbit of the sun around the earth. Teachers often begin new topics with an assessment so that new work can suitably build on prior knowledge. Lessons are occasionally dominated by the teacher's explanations and consolidated by requiring pupils to complete worksheets to demonstrate their understanding. However since the last inspection more emphasis is placed on investigations, first-hand experiences and experimental work. Overall, teachers' subject knowledge is secure and their skilful questioning encourages pupils to recall previous learning and make appropriate links to reinforce current learning. Teachers state clearly in their planning what pupils are expected to learn from each lesson and emphasise relevant scientific vocabulary such as 'conclusion', 'energy', 'circuits and 'wilted'.

129. All aspects of the National Curriculum are successfully addressed but there is limited use of the schools new computers for recording, data handling and research. The pupils' discussions, investigations, recording and presentation of results contribute well to the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils' worksheets and science books are usually marked but do not always help the pupils to understand how to improve their work. Pupils write about their work and use reference books well, although the Internet is underused as a resource. Pupils use their mathematical knowledge in using graphs but these are occasionally not used or interpreted, and few conclusions are drawn from the data. The school makes good use of assessment through the investigations undertaken at the end of each unit of work, but there is too little use of day-to-day assessments. The curriculum is not sufficiently enriched by visits to local places of scientific interest and the school grounds, including the 'Memorial Garden', are not used enough to support the curriculum.
130. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching across the school and implemented with colleagues a good system of assessing, tracking and recording pupils' progress. She provides good subject leadership and is aware of the need to review and revise curricular planning. She has produced an action plan, which is part of the present school development plan. There are sufficient resources in the school and the subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' social and spiritual development through opportunities to work together and to share resources and experience the wonder of new discoveries.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

131. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 most pupils attain average standards. Insufficient teaching was seen to make judgements about the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

132. Throughout the school pupils draw and paint bold self-portraits. They use pastel crayons sensitively to create delicately coloured landscapes. In Year 3 they learned how to create designs for beach bags, transfer their designs onto fabric and apply fabric paints to colour their designs. Pupils are very enthusiastic and in one lesson asked, 'Can we stay in at playtime to do a bit more?'
133. Pupils in Year 6 have used sketchbooks well to experiment with different media as well as test their ideas and try out techniques. They have been taught techniques such as cross-hatching and shading in drawing with sketching pencils. They have created good sketches of still life compositions of flowers, fruits and musical instruments. They have experimented with primary colours to produce a range secondary colours such as brown and purple. They have studied the work of Clarice Cliff, John Constable and JMW Turner. Good links have been made with mathematics where pupils used a grid system to enlarge paintings by Constable by a ratio of 1:2. Pupils use their drawing skills well to illustrate their work in other subjects, such as history.
134. The subject is managed well. The subject co-ordinator works hard to improve standards. She recently organised a good whole-school art exhibition to celebrate pupils' achievements. She mounts meticulously prepared displays of pupils' work that help to set a high standard for teachers and pupils. Visits to local art galleries are organised. The school follows a good planning framework designed to develop skills, knowledge and understanding progressively. Although the curriculum requirements are covered adequately there were very few examples of three-dimensional work being produced. There was little evidence of computers being used to support teaching and learning. There are two after-school clubs run by teachers and these extend learning opportunities well.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

135. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 most pupils attain average standards. This is much the same picture as found at the time of the last inspection. Insufficient teaching was seen to make judgements about the quality of teaching and learning across the school. This is partly because the subject is taught in blocks of time, alternating with the teaching of art and design. It is also because the school has been concentrating hard on improving literacy skills and the time allocated for the subject has been squeezed to a minimum. Furthermore opportunities to transfer the skills learned in this subject to other areas of the curriculum, such as building timber framed Elizabethan houses in history, have not been identified.
136. Good work was seen in Year 3 where pupils had used syringes and plastic tubing to make models that were made to move with compressed air. They enjoyed creating models of mice popping out of mouse-holes and flowers emerging from flower pots. In this class pupils had also designed and made fridge magnets and special sandwiches. In Year 4 pupils designed and made purses and pop-up story books. In Year 6 pupils have designed, made and evaluated a range of ingenious slippers. They have taken musical instruments, such as bongo drums, to pieces to examine how they work before creating their own designs for making good working instruments.

137. The co-ordinator has succeeded in assembling a good range of tools, equipment and materials. Good mobile tool trolleys are available and there is a good quantity of wooden struts suitable for making the frames of houses or the chassis of vehicles. These are carefully stored and labelled but are not used much. This is partly because teachers lack confidence in teaching the subject and partly because the subject does not feature in the school's list of priorities for development. The activities that pupils have experienced are recorded but there is little evaluation of the skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils have gained. Assessment procedures are at an early stage of development. There was no evidence of computers being used to extend learning opportunities.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

138. Due to time-tabling arrangements, very few lessons were observed during the inspection. However, an analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils show that standards are below average. Further evidence gained from interviews with staff and pupils, and the scrutiny of pupils' past work, shows that pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory and that standards are not as high as they should be. The reason for these low standards is that the time allocated is insufficient for the National Curriculum programmes of study for the subject to be taught effectively. Scrutiny of the pupils' work in Years 2 and 6 indicates unsatisfactory achievement as they have had very few lessons. Therefore the school is not meeting the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum.

139. Too few lessons were seen to be able to form judgements about the overall quality of teaching. However, discussion with pupils and a scrutiny of their work indicates that little use is made of the local environment. Pupils in Year 6 were unable to recall any recent geography field trips and their knowledge and understanding of places and countries in various parts of the world was poor. They are aware of the purpose of a map and they know that it presents a view of the world from above. The evidence from the scrutiny of work indicates that pupils in Years 2 and 6 have little knowledge and understanding to build upon as there is insufficient geography taught. Very little is expected of them in terms of writing. The planning is satisfactory, as it is based on a clear scheme linked to the National Curriculum programmes of study designed to teach skills, knowledge and understanding in a progressive, step-by-step way, but these programmes of study are not taught effectively, particularly in Year 6.

140. In the two lessons seen pupils behaved well and were keen to talk about their work. Pupils in Year 5 are keen to offer their ideas about the differences that have taken place in the coastal town of a Llandudno in Wales from their study of two maps: a recent map and one from 1890. Pupils with special educational needs supported by learning support assistants make a satisfactory progress. Pupils in Year 6 have in recent weeks, with a student teacher, made a study of rivers using maps and the Internet, and most can now identify a river, explain where it is and provide some key facts about it. Pupils in Year 6 also realise that the amount of traffic has a major effect on pollution. This contributes to their moral development by raising awareness of environmental issues.

141. There are good links with other subjects. For example, pupils sing songs and learn about music from different countries. Pupils in Year 2 show obvious enjoyment when comparing a recent map of London with one from long ago as part of their history programme. Displays show people of different races and many of the pupils' extended families have members across a range of countries. This makes a satisfactory contribution to their cultural development.

142. Some weaknesses found at the time of the last inspection have not been improved. Standards have declined and the National Curriculum programmes of study are not taught in a systematic way. The management of the subject is unsatisfactory and has not led to the improvements needed. Few records are kept of pupils' progress and marking in books is rarely helpful in developing greater understanding. Displays of work, the use of books for research and the use of computers are all underdeveloped. There are too few visits to places of interest and the local vicinity to broaden the curriculum. The school does not capitalise on the potential offered by its own school grounds and immediate environment.

## **HISTORY**

143. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Overall standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

144. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of famous historical people and events. For instance, groups of Year 2 pupils discussed a photograph of Florence Nightingale to discover facts about her life. They made some very perceptive comments about her dress and deduced from her expression that she had a deep sadness. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 remembered the cause and effects of the Great Fire of London while lower attaining pupils clearly recorded in picture form the growth of the Fire. But throughout the school, knowledge of famous people and events from different cultures is limited. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are developing awareness of changes in their own lives and adults around them. Pupils in Year 1 placed toys from different time periods in the correct chronological sequence. By the end of Year 2, pupils have acquired an adequate grasp of what events took place recently and which took place a long time ago. For example, they described basic differences between seaside holidays in the past and today. They recognised that transport, clothes and toys have changed over time. Pupils learn to acquire historical information from adults, photographs, artefacts and television programmes.

145. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a secure sense of chronology. They use dates and historical terms accurately to describe the main characteristics of different periods studied. Higher attaining pupils in Year 3 knew that Henry VIII's father was Henry VII and Elizabeth 1 died in 1603. As pupils move through the school they acquire an adequate knowledge and understanding of historical evidence. Pupils in Year 4 were beginning to relive the experiences of evacuee children by writing letters home as part of their study of World War Two. In one very good lesson, the teacher's skilful use of illustrations of Tudor houses helped pupils to understand the lifestyles of the people who lived there.

146. Although few lessons were seen during the inspection, discussion with pupils and a scrutiny of their work indicates that the quality of teaching is satisfactory and ensures that pupils achieve the standards expected. Where teaching was effective, pupils were engaged in active methods of learning and were provided with stimulating resources, such as artefacts, and searching questions to focus learning. The quality of marking is uneven. In the best cases, teachers write comments that help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work. But there are also examples in pupils' books of work left unmarked with no indication of progress. Teachers provide pupils with an

adequate range of opportunities to present their historical findings in a variety of ways, but the use of computers to support teaching and learning is underdeveloped. Opportunities are also missed to develop mathematical skills, for instance through the consistent use of timelines.

147. The subject makes a sound contribution to the development of pupils' language skills. For instance, pupils in Year 3 worked well in groups as 'History Detectives' producing and presenting information they had listed about the lives of people who lived in different types of Tudor homes. Pupils in Year 5 wrote comparative accounts of Victorian and present day schools, presenting their results in a table. Pupils in Year 6 recalled with interest the three visitors who came and talked about their lives during the Second World War. They also enjoyed working on a 'Humanities Transition Project' about 'Industry in Tipton' at the local high school to which many will be transferring to in September. Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to undertake independent research, especially in local history. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of local history is unsatisfactory and is the weakest element in their learning. This is because teachers do not plan systematically for the development of historical skills within this strand of the curriculum.
148. Pupils enjoy the subject, particularly when they are introduced to exciting learning experiences. For instance, they make good social and learning gains when visiting the Black Country museum. Such visits also make important contributions in developing pupils' cultural awareness and an understanding of their heritage. They behave well in lessons as a result of the teachers' clear expectations.
149. The subject is managed satisfactorily. The new co-ordinator for history has improved the level of resources and produced a list for colleagues an improvement since the last inspection. The subject policy and planning framework have been revised to include key skills to be taught to ensure the sequential development across the school, in line with national guidelines. However there are no formal assessment or monitoring procedures in place to track pupils' progress in acquiring knowledge and skills.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

150. Standards in the last inspection were below average in Year 2 and Year 6. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 they are now average. This shows a good improvement since the previous inspection and is due to the greater emphasis now being given to the subject.
151. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 because of the well-planned curriculum, teachers' good subject knowledge and good resources. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils showed the ability to follow the teacher's clear instructions. They worked very well, handling the mouse with confidence. Pupils showed confidence in editing text to improve it, using the shift key to create capitals.
152. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory as teaching builds progressively on their previous knowledge. Their achievement is promoted satisfactorily by the good subject knowledge of teachers and teaching assistants. For example, pupils in Year 4 created a list of commands to control a programmable device so that it followed a prescribed course. Pupils were encouraged to find solutions to the problems they encountered and those with good computer skills were encouraged to demonstrate the possibilities of the program to others. Discussion with Year 6 pupils showed that they understood how information and ideas could be shared with others in a variety of ways, including using e-mail. However, not all pupils have the opportunity to send messages over distance electronically. The provision of more opportunities to use control technology, which was an issue in the previous inspection, has been addressed satisfactorily.
153. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 as pupils are making good gains in their knowledge and the curriculum covers all the required aspects of their learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and so learning activities are appropriately challenging and suitably organised and paced. Teachers have good expectations of pupils that are conveyed through clear learning objectives. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is satisfactory. The teaching seen during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to good. In the good lessons in Years 1 and 2 the teachers showed good subject knowledge and awareness of pupils' abilities. Pupils were challenged consistently and learning was good. Planning of work, which is based on nationally recognised guidelines, is satisfactory. A programme of training and support has increased teachers' confidence. The co-ordinator has introduced a system of assessment that is helping teachers to plan the next stage of learning. Pupils' learning is helped because they are highly motivated and show a willingness and enthusiasm to succeed.
154. Since the previous inspection the school has had a computer suite installed. All pupils use the suite regularly and this has resulted in them becoming familiar with computers and their uses. Use of the suite has also enabled teachers to demonstrate computing skills and the uses which computers can be put to. There is little evidence of computers being used to support learning in other subjects. The subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' social development by promoting co-operation and sharing of expertise when pupils are working alongside one another on one machine.
155. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has correctly identified the strengths of the subject and the areas for development.

He recognises that staff knowledge, skills and confidence, although satisfactory at present, is an area on which to focus. The overall quality and quantity of computers has improved greatly since the last inspection. There are computers in the classrooms and the use of these to support learning in other areas of the curriculum is an area for development. During the time the co-ordinator has been in post, he has used his expertise to give advice and guidance to other staff. He has a very clear idea of what now needs to be done. Staff share a commitment for further improvement. Good progress has been made since the last inspection.

## MUSIC

156. During the previous inspection standards were judged to be average at the end of Year 2 and below average at the end of Year 6. Standards are still average by the end of Year 2 and below average by the end of Year 6.
157. Due to timetable arrangements too few lessons were seen to be able to form judgements about the quality of teaching. All classes received teaching from a music specialist until 2002. Since this teacher left, the school has lacked effective teaching of music. The level of subject expertise among the staff is variable and subject coverage has not been consistent. Judgements on standards are based on the lessons seen, a thorough scrutiny of planning, and discussions with pupils and staff.
158. In Years 1 and Year 2 achievement is satisfactory. Pupils develop their singing skills well and they appreciate each other's performances.
159. In Years 3 to 6 pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards should be higher for this group of pupils. This is because the curriculum is not broad enough and some aspects of the National Curriculum receive too little emphasis. As a result pupils do not develop their skills in a coherent and progressive way. The statutory requirements for teaching the subject are not met. Although due emphasis is given to singing, teaching is not precise enough to raise standards. By the end of Year 6 pupils have steadily built their skills in singing, composing and appreciating music as they move through the school. Pupils have the opportunity to perform in front of their peers, and they sing with satisfactory levels of volume in assembly. However, many showed little sign of awareness of tone. Not enough emphasis is given within the curriculum to musical appreciation and composition. For example, in Year 5, when listening to excerpts from 'The Planet Suite' by Gustav Holst, pupils found it difficult to describe differences in musical terms such as pitch and tone, rather than differences in pace and volume. Standards are being enhanced for some pupils by good extra-curricular peripatetic music tuition for woodwind and brass. Concerts have been provided by the Sandwell Music Team.
160. Teaching over time is unsatisfactory because the subject is inconsistently planned for and teachers lack the confidence and knowledge to teach the subject well. Relationships are good and pupils' response generally meets their teachers' expectations.
161. The school Singing Group (Choir) have performed locally at the Tipton Health Fair as well as in church. However, opportunities are being missed to make music an important part of school life. For example, no information was given to pupils about music played

in assembly, such as who it was composed by. Music and instruments from other cultures are not used as much as they could be. No instrumentalist pupils performed in assembly during the inspection. Computers are not used enough to help with composition or to conduct research about composers.

162. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. There has been no monitoring of standards or the quality of teaching throughout the school or advice on how standards should be raised. A planning framework based on national guidelines has been put in place to ensure that all aspects of the subject are covered, however not all staff are confident in its delivery and it has not been in place for sufficient time to have a major impact on standards. There is no system for assessing pupils' progress so that staff are unaware of the levels that pupils are working at and therefore do not plan work to meet all pupil needs. Improvement since the previous inspection is therefore unsatisfactory.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

163. Standards were average in both Year 2 and Year 6 at the previous inspection. Standards are now average by the end of Year 2 but below average overall by the end of Year 6. This indicates a decline in standards.
164. All groups of pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 and there are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls. This is due to satisfactory teaching over time and a curriculum that develops pupils' skills and performance satisfactorily. For example, in a satisfactory Year 2 lesson pupils worked individually, in pairs and in groups, throwing and catching and passing a ball with their feet. The lesson was well structured but pupils spent a great deal of time listening to instructions rather than developing their skills.
165. Achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. There are a number of reasons for this. Outdoor and adventurous activities are dependent on participation in the school residential journey and therefore not all pupils have taken part in these activities. In addition staff lack confidence in the use of hall apparatus and the teaching of dance. Due to the closure of the local pool, no swimming lessons have taken place recently. Statutory requirements for teaching the full range of activities in this subject are not met.
166. Although the teaching seen in Years 2 and 6 was satisfactory, wider evidence shows that over time teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Teachers dress appropriately for lessons, which results in pupils being encouraged to wear clothing appropriate for physical exercise. The small number of pupils who fail to bring the necessary clothing take no part in lessons and there are no attempts to involve them in, for example, assessing other pupils' performance. The lessons seen started with an appropriate warm-up activity. Pupils particularly enjoy physical education and are enthusiastic. Lessons proceeded at a satisfactory pace and this helped pupils to be involved throughout. Teachers model different skills and movements satisfactorily, explaining these carefully so that pupils can understand readily. All these features have ensured that pupils have a positive attitude to the subject, concentrate well and work hard. In a satisfactory Year 6 lesson, emphasis was placed on pupils controlling and passing a basketball. Pupils showed enthusiasm for the activities, but there was little

evidence of an increase in skill level. Pupils were asked ‘What did you find difficult?’ rather than ‘How could you improve your performance?’ Opportunities to use computers, such as digital photographs to highlight good aspects of performance for example, are not grasped. Pupils have not had the opportunity to participate in games such as football and netball against other schools. In discussion many pupils stated that they regretted this.

167. Co-ordination of the subject is unsatisfactory. In addition to omissions to the curriculum already mentioned, there has been insufficient monitoring of the curriculum, together with the quality of teaching and learning. The deputy headteacher, who has co-ordinated the subject since January 2003, has had insufficient time to address these issues. Systems for assessing pupils’ progress are not yet developed, including helping pupils to evaluate their own work. More resources are needed for the subject. Outside, satisfactory use is made of the hard playing areas. Pupils have had no access to swimming instruction since the closure of the local baths and therefore standards and provision are unsatisfactory. Unsatisfactory progress has been made in enhancing provision and standards since the last inspection.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

168. Pupils’ achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and by the end of Year 2, most attain standards that are broadly average in terms of the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This represents an improvement to the situation found at the time of the last inspection when standards were significantly below the expected standard. However, pupils’ achievement in Years 3 to 6 is unsatisfactory and by the end of Year 6 standards are below the expected levels. This is because there is inadequate coverage of the locally agreed syllabus in both breadth and depth in Years 5 and 6. This is similar to the situation at the time of the last inspection.
169. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of what is special, particularly in relation to Christianity. Lower attaining pupils can recall key elements of the Christmas and Easter stories and higher attaining pupils can recall stories from the Bible, for example, the story of Joseph and his coat of many colours. Pupils’ understanding of stories from other faiths is not as satisfactory. Pupils’ literacy skills are helped through writing their ideas about religious stories and events such as the Nativity. Boys and girls contribute equally to lessons. Pupils with special needs are well supported by support assistants who help by explaining the tasks set and helping pupils to structure their work so that they can play a full part in lessons. Most pupils listen carefully and respectfully. In Years 3 and 4 pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to the requirements of the syllabus. For example, they understand the significance of Palm Sunday and the Last Supper in relation to the life of Jesus. In particular they write about the feelings of the disciples and reflect on the symbols associated with the crucifixion. Most pupils have a sound understanding of the main beliefs of Christianity and are aware of the other peoples’ religions such as Islam. All pupils contribute well to lessons.
170. Scrutiny of their work and discussion with Year 6 pupils indicate that although very little religious education has been completed their knowledge of Christianity, its main beliefs and practices is sound and easily recalled. Pupils have some understanding about symbols and festivals associated with other religions through the school’s programme of

assembly themes, which have recently covered Divali, and the Muslim festival of Eid. However, their overall knowledge and understanding of religion is inadequate due to the limited time allocated to the subject.

171. The quality of teaching seen in lessons was satisfactory. However, the fact that the subject is not taught regularly or for a sufficient amount of time leads to the judgement that in the longer term teaching is unsatisfactory. Teachers have a sound and sometimes good knowledge of the subject, which helps to make lesson delivery enthusiastic and purposeful, thus reinforcing pupils' understanding of key facts. Questioning is well focused and provides pupils with different religious beliefs the opportunity to share their experiences. This enables them to reflect on their own experiences, for example, when considering what they want to pray for and why, and relate these to the thoughts and beliefs of others. Some useful links are made with other subjects such as geography when pupils in Year 4 study the Indian village of Chembakolli and with history when pupils learn about the importance of religion in Tudor times and the changes made by Henry VIII. Literacy is also supported as, for example, when pupils in Year 3 were given the opportunity to look at an extract of an old English copy of the Bible. They worked well together as they used their knowledge of phonics to attempt to translate a section into present day English.
172. The changes of subject leader have contributed to recent difficulties of maintaining and planning the religious education curriculum for pupils in Years 5 and 6. There have been no regular curriculum review and planning meetings by key stage co-ordinators and teachers and this has contributed to the present problems. The school is well aware of the deficiencies and the subject features in the school improvement plan as an area for development. The lack of opportunities for pupils to pursue appropriate written work in the subject is reflected in the below average standards and unsatisfactory achievement. However, resources such as information books and artefacts have been improved, especially those that help to enhance pupils' understanding of faiths other than Christianity. Full use is not yet made of computers to support pupils' knowledge and understanding. The local vicar takes assemblies occasionally when themes are well chosen to increase pupils' knowledge of Christianity. Visits have been made to the local church, but pupils have not as yet visited places of worship of other religions. Current management of the subject is unsatisfactory, but there are plans to appoint a new subject manager in the near future.