

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HOLY NAME CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Great Barr, Birmingham

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 103996

Headteacher: Miss P Lucas

Reporting inspector: Mrs W Knight  
12172

Dates of inspection: 14th - 17th October 2002

Inspection number: 246342

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Cross Lane  
Great Barr  
Birmingham

Postcode: B43 6LN

Telephone number: 0121 357 3216

Fax number: 0121 358 5523

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr P Pritchard

Date of previous inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members |                 |                      | Subject responsibilities                          | Aspect responsibilities   |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|---|---|
| 12172        | Wendy Knight    | Registered inspector | Information and communication technology<br>Music | School's results and pupils' achievements<br>How well pupils are taught<br>How well the school is led and managed                                       |
| 10478        | Alison Smith    | Lay inspector        |   | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development<br>How well the school cares for its pupils<br>How well the school works in partnership with parents |
| 25623        | Ted Cox         | Team inspector       | English<br>History                                | Special educational needs   |
| 19765        | Pauleen Shannon | Team inspector       | Mathematics<br>Geography                          |   |
| 25771        | Pete Sandall    | Team inspector       | Science<br>Physical education                     | How good the curricular opportunities offered to pupils are   |
| 18709        | Nina Bee        | Team inspector       | Art and design<br>Design and technology           | Foundation Stage  |

The inspection contractor was:

Schools Inspection Unit  
The University of Birmingham  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham  
B15 2TT

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

|   | Page      |
|---|-----------|
| <b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>  | <b>6</b>  |
| Information about the school  |           |
| How good the school is  |           |
| What the school does well   |           |
| What could be improved  |           |
| How the school has improved since its last inspection   |           |
| Standards   |           |
| Pupils' attitudes and values  |           |
| Teaching and learning   |           |
| Other aspects of the school   |           |
| How well the school is led and managed  |           |
| Parents' and carers' views of the school  |           |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>   |           |
| <b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>  | <b>10</b> |
| The school's results and pupils' achievements   |           |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development  |           |
| <b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>  | <b>14</b> |
| <b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>                         | <b>16</b> |
| <b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>  | <b>18</b> |
| <b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOLWORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>                                      | <b>20</b> |
| <b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>  | <b>21</b> |
| <b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>  | <b>23</b> |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>   | <b>24</b> |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b> | <b>29</b> |

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Holy Name Catholic Primary School is larger than average with a roll of 288 three to eleven year olds; 50 children attend part-time in the nursery. The standard number for admission has recently increased to 45. Pupils are mainly white, with just 16 from black and seven from Asian backgrounds. No pupils need extra help to speak English. The number of pupils with special educational needs is below average and only a few pupils are entitled to free school meals. Few pupils move from the school once they have enrolled. The school is sited on the outskirts of Birmingham (but in Sandwell Local Education Authority) and it serves the Roman Catholic parish of Holy Name. Most pupils are of the Roman Catholic faith (94 per cent). The locality includes a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds but many parents are home-owners. Parents are generally extremely supportive of the school. Attainment on entry to the nursery is average.

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

The school is effective. By the end of the juniors standards are currently above average in English, mathematics, science and history. The teaching is sound from nursery to Year 2 and good in the juniors. The headteacher provides strong leadership and the school is soundly managed. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and history are above average in Year 6.
- Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good.
- Pupils are mature and develop constructive relationships.
- The school creates an ethos in which pupils can flourish.
- There are very good opportunities for spiritual, moral and social development.

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

- Use of monitoring information to improve the teaching of younger pupils and raise standards.
- The management of school improvement.
- Standards in information and communication technology, art, and design and technology.

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

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

The school was last inspected in November 1997. It has made sound improvement.

- Information and communication technology is now soundly taught, but attainment remains below the national average. This is because the school has only had the necessary resources for just over a year. Pupils do now have regular lessons in the computer suite and work is planned to cover National Curriculum Programmes of Study.
- Pupils are now assessed regularly and systematically and the information is used to group pupils, set targets and track progress.
- Regular monitoring of teaching and curriculum provision takes place, but the information is not used effectively to improve teaching and learning.
- Formal procedures for dealing with parents' suggestions and complaints have been strengthened, but a small number of parents are still not satisfied about how individual problems are dealt with.
- Pupils in Years 4 to 6 now have timetabled swimming lessons and are meeting National Curriculum requirements.

Standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 have risen in English, mathematics, science and history, and the teaching has improved throughout the school.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

By the end of reception most children reach nationally expected levels in all areas of learning. In the 2002 tests for seven year olds, attainment in writing was average, but it was below average in reading and well below in mathematics compared with national results. Compared with similar schools, writing was below average, and reading and mathematics results were well below average. Teacher assessments for science at the end of Year 2 were below average. In the present Year 2, most pupils are now reading, writing and calculating at the expected level. At the age of eleven, standards in English, mathematics and science were well above average in the 2001 national tests, but results in 2002 declined in English, mathematics and science, which meant that the school did not meet its relatively ambitious targets. However, a large proportion of pupils in this year group had special educational needs. Compared with similar schools attainment in mathematics was below average, and in English and science results were well below average. Results had improved in 2001, and over the last four years they had generally been above average compared with schools nationally. The trend is similar to schools nationally and standards have improved since the last inspection. Inspectors judge attainment in the current Year 6 to be above average. Many Year 6 pupils read expressively for enjoyment and talk knowledgeably about their favourite authors, but they have limited knowledge of how to use the library classification system. Pupils write confidently with accuracy and expression. Pupils understand place value and use suitable mental and written methods to calculate and solve problems. Pupils have good scientific knowledge, and understand scientific principles they have studied. However, pupils seldom design their own experiments. Inspectors judge attainment in the current Year 6 to be above average. Many Year 6 pupils read expressively for enjoyment and talk knowledgeably about their favourite authors, but they have limited knowledge of how to use the library classification system. Pupils write confidently with accuracy and expression. Pupils understand place value and use suitable mental and written methods to calculate and solve problems. Pupils have good scientific knowledge, and understand scientific principles they have studied. However, pupils seldom design their own experiments. Standards in history are above average by the end of the juniors, but standards are below average in art, design and technology and information and communication technology. Attainment in all other National Curriculum subjects is average.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school                | Pupils are keen learners, work together well and participate enthusiastically.   |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Pupils behave well in classes and at playtimes. They are orderly around the school and obedient to rules. Pupils are polite and courteous.                   |
| Personal development and relationships | Pupils form very constructive relationships and fulfil responsibilities conscientiously. All pupils are valued and included in everything the school offers. |
| Attendance                             | Average.   |

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching is sound in younger classes and good in the juniors. Teachers' expectations of junior pupils are generally higher than in the infants and the teachers give useful feedback through marking. As a result, junior pupils concentrate harder and are aware of how they can improve. Basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills are taught throughout the school, but work is better matched to different needs, more challenging and completed more quickly in junior lessons. Setting for literacy and numeracy in the juniors enables teachers' particular expertise to be used. It enables teachers to match work to pupils' needs more precisely and to target efficiently support for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers throughout the school manage pupils well, plan varied methods and resources to interest pupils and introduce relevant technical vocabulary so that pupils learn to use the correct words. Teachers question pupils well so that they learn to reason and explain their thinking as well as providing factual answers. Useful homework tasks are regularly set.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect   | Comment   |
|--|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum  | All subjects are taught appropriately and there is good provision for personal, health and social education. Some sessions are too long for infant pupils to sustain concentration. Ability sets for literacy and numeracy contribute to better progress in the juniors.  |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs  | Pupils' needs are identified early. They receive effective support from teachers and learning support practitioners. Targets given to pupils are precise, but not all teachers use these to plan work matched to individual needs.  |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development | Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. They have many opportunities to pray, reflect and consider moral issues, and learn much about less fortunate people. Sound provision is made to appreciate culture, but opportunities are missed to appreciate the full richness and diversity of other cultures. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils   | Pupils are all known as individuals by the adults responsible for them so are well cared for and helped to mature and progress.   |
| How well the school works in partnership with parents  | Formal procedures for consulting and informing parents are established, but a small number are unhappy about the way their individual concerns are handled.   |



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, provides strong leadership and sound management. Not all senior staff and co-ordinators are contributing as effectively as they might to school development. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | Governors fulfil their duties well, actively supporting the school, but do not always challenge proposals effectively before making decisions.   |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | Monitoring is done regularly and provides much data, but this is not used effectively to ensure that teaching and learning are improved.   |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | Resources are used appropriately. Consideration of cost effectiveness in purchasing services has resulted in savings.  |
| Extent to which the school applies the principles of best value  | There are useful systems for consulting parents and taking account of pupils' ideas but the school does not compare its performance with other schools and use the information to set itself precise challenges.   |
| Staffing, accommodation and learning resources                   | There is adequate staffing and enough learning resources to teach the curriculum. Accommodation is adequate.   |

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most  | What parents would like to see improved   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school and behave well.</li> <li>• Pupils are expected to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• The school helps pupils to be more mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• Some think the school does not work closely enough with them.</li> </ul> |

The inspection team agrees that children like school, work hard, behave well and achieve well by the time they leave Holy Name. One of the strengths of the school is undoubtedly that it helps pupils to become mature and responsible. The inspectors agree that teaching is good in the juniors, but judge the teaching of younger pupils to be sound. Although the number of after-school clubs is limited and mainly only available to the oldest pupils, the inspectors do not entirely agree with parents' views about extra-curricular activities because the school offers a good range of visits and visitors and two residential trips. Inspectors judge that formal arrangements for discussing parental concerns are now sound.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 By the end of their time in reception the majority of children will reach levels expected nationally in all areas. Children have positive attitudes to learning and work well together. They listen satisfactorily and answer simple questions. They learn the conventions of books and recognise some letter sounds. Many children are beginning to form letters and copy writing. Children learn to count and recognise numbers to 10. They know about changes in autumn and how to care for living things. Children improve their control of pencils and scissors and use a variety of materials to make pictures. They join in songs and rhymes with enjoyment.

2 Attainment in English by the age of seven was broadly average in the 2002 national test results. While reading scores were below average compared with national results, they were well below average compared with similar schools. In writing, pupils' attainment was average in relation to schools nationally but below average compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (3) was much the same as other schools in reading, but a slightly greater proportion reached level 3 in writing. There were no significant gender differences. Results declined in 2001 from well above average in the previous three years as a result of inadvertent over-estimation in the past.

3 Teacher assessment of speaking and listening at the end of Year 2 in 2002 was low, but these results were not confirmed by inspection evidence. This group, now in Year 3, have standards typical of pupils in this age-group. Pupils practise their speaking and listening skills across the curriculum and speak clearly and confidently to an audience. They listen carefully to what they have been told during lessons.

4 By the age of seven, pupils' reading is in line with national expectations but not enough reach higher levels in many cases. In the current Year 2, pupils use letter sounds to build unfamiliar words but average and lower attaining pupils do not always recognise when they have made mistakes, even when what they read does not make sense. Higher attaining pupils try to read expressively and recognise the humour in stories. Pupils know the technical terms used in reading such as author, illustrator and title, and can name the titles of their favourite books. Pupils are beginning to find information using the contents and index pages.

5 Pupils' writing is average by the age of seven. Nearly all pupils use full stops correctly and write in sentences, and higher attaining pupils use imaginative adjectives to make their work more interesting. Although average pupils do not always spell words correctly, their attempts are recognisable and higher attaining pupils spell most words accurately. Most pupils have clearly shaped handwriting although the size of letters sometimes varies.

6 At the age of eleven standards in English were average in the 2002 national tests, but well below average compared with similar schools. Boys did better than girls. Pupils made less than average progress from their test scores at the age of seven. Results for 2002 declined significantly and the school did not meet its relatively ambitious targets, but this is accounted for by the proportion of pupils in the year group with special educational needs. Results had improved in 2001, and over the last four years they have generally been above average compared with schools nationally. There has been an improvement in

standards for eleven year olds since the previous inspection because pupils in Years 6 now do more challenging work.

7 By Year 6, pupils clearly explain their thinking in lessons and use many of the correct words in science, mathematics and English lessons. They listen attentively and use contributions of peers to add to discussions appropriately, and many ask relevant questions to clarify what they need to do when set tasks. Many pupils confidently offer an opinion when asked to do so. Pupils are able to take messages to other classes without being told the exact words to say.

8 Pupils in junior classes make good progress with their reading and, by the age of eleven, standards are above average. In Year 6, many pupils borrow books for their own enjoyment from the local library, and have preferences for particular authors. They talk knowledgeably about their favourite authors. All pupils try to read expressively and most recognise a large number of words by sight. They confidently find information from non-fiction books, using the glossary and index, but have only a limited knowledge of how to use the classification system in the school library.

9 Pupils' writing is also above average by the age of eleven, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress, particularly in the latter stages of the juniors. Pupils choose words carefully to create the atmosphere they want. The higher attaining eleven year olds write with accuracy, confidence and expression, using paragraphs and punctuation accurately. Most write fluently and neatly by the end of Year 6.

10 In the 2002 national mathematics tests for seven year olds, results were well below average compared with schools nationally, and with similar schools. There was no significant difference between boys and girls. The results in 2002 are broadly similar to those in 2001. As in English, results declined in 2001 from well above average in the previous three years. Inspectors judge current standards to be broadly average. The majority of Year 2 pupils can order whole numbers below 50. They can count forwards and backwards in ones and tens from two-digit numbers. They understand that subtraction is the reverse of addition. They have appropriate understanding of telling the time and can match flat and three-dimensional shapes.

11 Pupils attained average results in the 2002 national tests for eleven year olds in mathematics, but results were below average compared with similar schools. Pupils made average progress from their test scores at the age of seven. Girls did less well than boys and the proportion of higher attainers was average. The school did not meet its relatively ambitious target, but, as in English, this is accounted for by the proportion of pupils in the year group with special educational needs. Results improved in 2001, and over the last four years they had been above average compared with schools nationally.

12 Standards are currently above average by Year 6. Pupils have a good grasp of place value. They use a range of mental methods to multiply and divide whole numbers up to 10,000, estimating accurately. They use addition and subtraction as inverse operations to check the accuracy of their answers and use informal pencil and paper methods to record their calculations. Pupils apply their understanding through number problems. Parental concern about the progress of lower attainers is unfounded, as pupils in the lowest set are progressing as well as their peers.

13 Teacher assessments for science at the end of Year 2 were well below average for the number of pupils achieving the expected level 2, but average at the higher level 3 in the 2002 assessments. In the 2002 national tests for eleven year olds, pupils attained average results in science but results were well below average compared with similar schools. Pupils

made less than average progress from their teacher assessment scores at the age of seven. Girls achieved less well than boys in the 2002 tests.

14 By the end of Year 2 pupils have sound knowledge of how their bodies change when they exercise, and how this contributes to a healthy life. They also know about which foods are important for a healthy diet and the importance of drinking water. Higher attaining pupils know that the heart pumps blood around the body.

15 Analysis of pupils' work confirms above average standards by the end of the juniors for the current Year 6. Pupils not only acquire good scientific knowledge, but can also discuss scientific concepts with understanding, think logically and discuss the reasons why things happen as they do. Pupils conduct investigations sensibly and are very clear about 'fair testing', understanding the principle behind changing just one variable and the need to repeat an experiment for checking results. However, as at the time of the last inspection, pupils seldom plan and design their own experiments and this limits the level of challenge for higher attainers.

16 The trend in results at the end of the juniors in 2002 was broadly average compared with national trends. Inspection evidence confirms that results at the end of Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science, and that pupils make good progress in the juniors. Progress from nursery to Year 2 is steady. However, pupils' response to higher expectations and greater challenge in the juniors shows they are capable of making better progress when teaching is more effective. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is not as high as it could be. Monitoring of lessons and pupils' work has failed to identify these differences in progress and to focus action on raising expectations in the infants.

17 Standards in history are above average by the end of the juniors. Attainment in geography, physical education throughout the school, music at the end of Year 6 and history at the end of Year 2 is average. In both the infants and the juniors, standards in art, design and technology and information and communication technology are below average. Pupils' skills in using the computer are relatively weak and more time needs to be made available for practice.

18 Pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed in subjects such as science and mathematics by increasing their vocabulary and providing opportunities to reason and explain. However, writing skills are not as effectively developed across the curriculum because work sheets are over-used and writing is often copied. Pupils seldom use their reading skills to carry out independent research. Numeracy skills are occasionally used in geography and science, but there is no systematic application matched to the planned mathematics curriculum. Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently in lessons and is not yet being promoted as a useful tool for locating, processing, editing and presenting information.

19 Pupils with special educational needs achieve standards that are below average but appropriate to their level of understanding. By the age of seven they are making sound progress relative to their abilities, but by the age of eleven they are making good progress. This reflects the position at the previous inspection for infant pupils, but is an improvement for pupils in the older junior classes. The good quality teaching they receive in the class and the good quality of the support they receive from the special educational needs teacher enhance the progress of these pupils. The often good, and sometimes very good, quality of support from the learning support practitioners contributes well to the learning these pupils make within lessons.

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

20 In the Foundation Stage the children develop good relationships with the adults who work with them and, during their time in the nursery, begin to develop good relationships with each other. As they get older these relationships are strengthened. Behaviour is good. Although a few children display challenging behaviour they are managed well by the adults who work with them. Most children show positive attitudes to learning, settle in well in the nursery and enjoy coming to school. When given the opportunity, the children develop independence skills and begin to tidy up at the end of sessions.

21 As at the time of the last inspection, Holy Name pupils have good attitudes to learning; they are enthusiastic and enjoy the activities in which they take part. Relationships with other children and with adults are very good and reflect very clearly the strong Catholic and caring ethos of their school.

22 The pupils know they come to school to learn and are keen to gain new knowledge. They settle down quickly in lessons, are alert and want to participate. A good example of this was seen in a Year 2 history lesson where pupils were asked to consider how it might have felt being an eyewitness to the Great Fire of London. Responding to effective teaching, pupils were fully involved, thinking most carefully about their task and very keen to do their best work.

23 The pupils' behaviour in the classroom and around school is good. This results in lessons that have a happy and positive atmosphere in which the opportunity to learn is present. The pupils are very familiar with the classroom codes of conduct and think they are fair. Movement around the school is orderly. Daily assemblies and the weekly Mass are periods of peace and harmony, and pupils are most respectful during daily prayers. The new dinner arrangements are working well and children have sufficient time and encouragement to eat their packed lunch. The noise level does rise in the hall (the acoustics are not helpful), but behaviour is sensible and pupils are well supervised. During the lunch break, behaviour in the playground continues to be well supervised by the lunchtime team. The playground space available is monitored in order to provide a separate area for younger children. Pupils are able to use some play equipment and supervisors have been trained to help promote playground games. No instances of oppressive behaviour were observed during the inspection and discussions with pupils suggest they themselves do not consider bullying to be a problem in this school. They expressed confidence in teachers' ability to sort out any problems quickly. No pupils have been excluded from school in the last year.

24 There is a friendly atmosphere in the school. Pupils are polite and courteous and make visitors feel very welcome. In the classroom, when working in pairs or small groups, they appreciate the need to listen to others' ideas and viewpoints. Pupils readily take turns and collaborate productively. This was seen in a Year 4 physical education lesson in which pupils were working on a sequence of movements. In pairs they observed each other's performance with interest and understanding. The whole school, through its adult members, strives and succeeds in fostering very good relationships. Many areas of school life benefit from this success, for example the atmosphere in class, the self-esteem of pupils and the support offered by older pupils to younger children. Pupils with special educational needs are well behaved and have good attitudes to learning. They respond well to learning support practitioners, and older pupils in particular enjoy working individually with a special educational needs teacher.

25 The majority of parents feel that their children are being helped to become more mature and responsible. The inspection team agrees that the rate of personal development is very good. The pupils are keen to show initiative; for example they suggest ideas for

raising funds for charities. They are also very willing to help in the running of the school. A school council is active and is made up of elected members from each class. These representatives gather suggestions and views from their classmates, allowing pupils to participate in the development of their own school. A recent initiative has resulted in revised arrangements for football in the playground. Several pupils, without prompting, highlighted this as evidence of a fair decision and a direct benefit stemming from the school council. On leaving this school, pupils are very polite, confident and sensible. They are a credit to the school and their parents.

26 The school has succeeded in maintaining an attendance rate (94.7 per cent) equal to the national average for primary schools. There is no unauthorised absence. Punctuality at the start of the school day is good and registration periods are efficient.

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

27 The teaching is sound from nursery to Year 2, but is better in the juniors. In nursery and reception 80 per cent of lessons were judged to be sound and 20 per cent good. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. In Years 1 and 2 a greater proportion of lessons were good or better (40 per cent), but this increased to 63 per cent in the juniors, and one in five was very good in the juniors. A few lessons in Years 1 to 6 were judged unsatisfactory, mainly due to inappropriate expectations of pupils. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was judged to be sound overall, but 10 per cent of all lessons were unsatisfactory and no very good lessons were observed. The teaching of information and communication technology was judged to be unsatisfactory. Information and communication technology is now soundly taught, and there has been significant improvement in the quality of the teaching in the juniors. Monitoring of lessons has not identified these differences in the quality of teaching in each key stage.

28 In nursery and reception, teaching is sound and occasionally good. Planning is sound and most activities are interesting and relevant to the needs of the children. However, information about individuals, which is collected on a daily basis, is not consistently used to move individuals or groups of children on to the next step of learning. Sometimes adults do not promote basic letter and number formation effectively, in particular in the reception classes. Adults interact productively within groups.

29 English and mathematics are soundly taught in the infants and well taught in the juniors. Effective use is made of teaching strategies from the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. In English, there is a daily focus on reading or spelling words to develop basic skills, and discussion of a shared text to increase understanding and pupils are made aware of successful work done by peers during a concluding plenary session. In mathematics, brisk mental sessions improve pupils' quick recall of tables and number bonds; pupils use a variety of methods to calculate and then discuss strategies regularly so that they can apply them flexibly. The more successful lessons in the juniors are often characterised by work better matched to different pupils' needs, a more demanding pace and more useful marking which identifies ways in which pupils can improve their work.

30 Pupils are generally well managed throughout the school and there are clear expectations of behaviour. This enables teachers to plan a wide variety of activities which engage pupils and appeal to their interests. They are able to compete with each other, co-operate in groups and pairs and take responsibility for books and resources to help with organisation of the class so that time is used efficiently. Despite this, pupils are not often actively encouraged to be independent learners. In a Year 5 science lesson on germination, for instance, each table had to wait for a turn to plant seeds with the teacher rather than getting on with the task themselves. However, pupils' independence is encouraged in

searching for information to support their learning through homework tasks such as finding out more, following history lessons, about the Egyptians in Year 6 and Pepys in Year 2. They also have regular tasks which consolidate their learning of skills as, for example, in a Year 4 numeracy homework which set further examples of using the inverse operation (addition and subtraction/ multiplication and division). This regular homework establishes good work habits and prepares pupils for secondary education.

31 Most planning clearly identifies what pupils will learn in the lesson and how the essential knowledge, skills and understanding will be taught. At best, teachers have thought through how this will be put into practice in the lesson by building on what has gone before. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, for instance, pupils learnt to select the correct number operations to use for a particular calculation and the teacher had carefully graded the examples so that they became progressively harder and more challenging but used what had been learnt during the easier introductory questions. Varied methods are often employed to encourage pupils to make an effort to achieve their best. In a Year 2 history lesson, for instance, pupils used their imagination to understand what experience of the Great Fire of London would have involved. Similarly, a demonstration of different sized brushes for painting flowers in a Year 5 art lesson helped pupils to make suitable choices; in Year 4's science lesson on worms they brainstormed ideas on appearances as a starting point for comparing animal body structures. Teachers are usually effective in choosing suitable resources to support their lessons. For instance, in most numeracy lessons throughout the school, pupils use number fans, 100 squares, number lines and a variety of number games to practise skills in calculating; in a Year 5 history lesson the time-line is used effectively to understand the chronology of the Victorian age.

32 Teachers throughout the school introduce and use the relevant technical vocabulary so that pupils learn the words and use them to give precise answers when responding to teachers' questions. Pupils in a Year 1 information and communication technology lesson, for instance, learned to refer to the scroll bar and the text when discussing how to locate their work and label it. Teachers often question pupils effectively to help them to reason and explain their thinking as well as eliciting factual answers. In a Year 5 English lesson, for example, the teacher used a variety of questions to help pupils understand how authors use devices for describing different characters in preparation for their own writing.

33 While the best lessons proceed briskly and pupils do a great deal of work, undemanding pace is often a shortcoming in less successful lessons. In a physical education lesson in Year 2, pupils lost time during their games session while the teacher selected pupils for teams, and during literacy pupils in the same year group sat on the carpet for 35 minutes and many lost concentration. However, in a lesson with a pupil with special educational needs, for instance, the pupil was given one minute to sort 'ai' and 'ay' words in practising knowledge of sounds, and in a Year 5 art lesson, pupils were given a deadline by which they had to mix different colours. The same variation occurs in the use of assessment in different classes. In the best lessons, teachers set well-matched work to meet pupils' differing needs and provide pertinent and timely feedback so that pupils can build on their existing skills, but not all teachers do this effectively. In a Year 6 science lesson the teacher used information from marking pupils' work to advise them about their common errors before setting further work to improve their knowledge. In a Year 3 physical education lesson pupils were actively encouraged to use their existing dance skills and imagination to create a 'sailor's dance'. However, poor handwriting skills were not corrected in a Year 1 literacy lesson, and in a Year 2 physical education lesson pupils' weaknesses in control were not picked up and dealt with by the teacher.

34 One of the most significant differences between the teaching in the juniors and that of younger classes is teachers' expectations. While junior pupils, particularly in Years 5 and

6, are often expected to rise to a challenge, complete a great deal of work and apply the knowledge, skills and understanding they already have, younger ones are too frequently set undemanding work or tasks which are unsuitable. In two lessons observed in literacy and science, Year 1 pupils were only required to cut, stick and colour. On the other hand, in a Year 6 numeracy lesson pupils calculated many examples involving decimals and long multiplication, sometimes mentally.

35 Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported and sometimes receive good teaching, particularly in the juniors. Teachers know their pupils well and usually plan activities that are matched to their needs, although there are some instances where work is not suitable and the progress of pupils with special educational needs is held back. Some teachers are not using the latest individual education plans and focusing on pupils' individual targets. Learning support practitioners are used well to support learning by scribing for them or enabling them to use the computer rather than having to write laboriously. All adults develop good relationships with pupils and are quick to praise their efforts, which has a positive effect on learning and the efforts these pupils make.

36 While teachers' subject knowledge is usually sound and often better in literacy and numeracy, there are occasions when a lack of confidence adversely affects lessons, particularly in information and communication technology and music. This is usually evident in explanations given, the quality of the feedback given to pupils or the variety of activities planned. In a Year 1 information and communication technology lesson, for instance, pupils were not helped to become more independent through being encouraged to carry out work for themselves while the teacher assisted, but adults actually did the procedure for the less confident pupils.

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

37 The curricular provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is good, which is an improvement since the last inspection. It is planned according to the national guidelines and activities are varied and interesting. There are regular opportunities for structured outside play. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported.

38 As at the time of the last inspection, the curriculum for pupils aged five to eleven makes a sound contribution to the standards achieved. The school meets statutory requirements to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum and provides extra opportunities for pupils to broaden their interests and extend their skills, for example in the areas of sport and music. The range of learning opportunities is broadly based and relevant, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In English and mathematics, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are used effectively, and the setting of pupils into different ability groups for these subjects also contributes significantly to the learning of all. The curriculum is less well planned in art, and design and technology, resulting in some under-achievement in these subjects. In information and communication technology, very limited use is as yet made of computers to promote learning in a range of subjects. Provision for swimming, a key issue in the last inspection report, is now in place.

39 Sufficient time is allocated to all subjects in the curriculum, and there are schemes of work, usually based on government guidelines, together with supporting material in certain subjects. Some literacy and numeracy sessions are too long, however, particularly for younger pupils whose concentration span is limited. The school could usefully review the organisation of the school day to ensure that the time available is put to the best possible use. A successful example of this happening is in pupils' personal, social and health education, a decision having been taken to trial an 'immersion' day once a term where this



area is the focus of every lesson. The positive reaction of both pupils and staff is leading the school to consider having two such days each term.

40 Appropriate provision is made for sex education and the dangers of drug misuse. The use of 'circle time' is being considered as an opportunity to discuss important social and moral issues, although this is clearly also a focus within religious education lessons. The school's underlying ethos of care and concern for every individual, which embodies the intention of its mission statement, makes a powerful contribution to the personal and social development of its pupils. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Girls and boys are given equal opportunities and teachers have similar expectations of both.

41 All pupils are given opportunities to take a full part in lessons and the activities the school offers. Individual needs and differences are viewed positively, and all pupils are valued. Pupils of all ages, including those with special educational needs, take a full part in whole-school assemblies. The school promotes positive attitudes towards gender issues with the result that, in a Year 6 dance lesson, boys and girls danced with each other without self-consciousness.

42 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Difficulties are identified early and the referral system complies with the Code of Practice. Targets contained in pupils' latest individual education plans are clear and pupils of all abilities are given individual targets, which in the case of pupils with special educational needs are based on those targets in their individual education plans. However, not all teachers are using these targets effectively to plan work.

43 The school provides a sound range of experiences to broaden pupils' education, including extra-curricular activities, which is better than reported at the time of the last inspection. The latter include sporting activities, such as 'tag rugby', football, netball, rounders and trampolining, as well as an art club and a very well supported guitar group in Year 6. Most are understandably for older pupils, and are open to boys and girls. The curriculum is enriched through a good range of visits and visitors for pupils in all year groups, which are often linked to current studies. Pupils have the opportunity for a week's residential visit in both Year 5 and Year 6, and both year groups also benefit from a day spent at the Catholic High School.

44 There are strong links with the parish. Mass in school is a regular event, attended by both pupils and parents. Parishioners as well as parents are encouraged to come into school to give individual help with reading, making a valuable contribution. The school is part of the Birmingham Roman Catholic Partnership, which offers training opportunities. The local cluster of catholic schools is also a useful source of ideas and information, especially as one is a 'Beacon' school. Close liaison with the high school has led to involvement as a partner in their bid for specialist status in performing arts. While headteachers meet regularly, there is scope to increase teacher and subject links, and the school intends to pursue this further.

45 The previous inspection judged provision for pupils' personal development to be very good and this has been maintained. The very good provision has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships. The school fulfils its mission statement of promoting 'a unique Catholic character, with a caring spirit between pupil, staff, parents and the community'.

46 Provision for spiritual development is very good, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. The school's acts of collective worship together with the weekly mass and

voluntary prayer sessions contribute significantly to pupils' spiritual growth. The collective worship sessions are led with reverence and respect, and the music, hymns and prayers all create a suitable atmosphere for reflection. Special community Masses such as at harvest time create a real sense of belonging. The daily prayers in each class throughout the day are meaningful and help pupils understand the significance of God in their everyday lives. The school's curriculum also contributes to the pupils' spiritual development. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and to explore ideas around intangible issues such as friendship, helping others and life after death.

47 Pupils' moral development is very well promoted, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. The headteacher has very high expectations of good behaviour and all staff give clear moral direction and provide very good role models. Children respond very well to the school's behaviour and reward system. The family atmosphere encourages pupils to care about each other. The occasional incidences of inappropriate behaviour are acted on quickly and parents involved at an early stage. This helps pupils understand that they are responsible for their own actions. A strong feature of the school is the extent to which pupils are encouraged to consider the needs of those less fortunate than themselves locally and around the world.

48 The school is very good at developing pupils' social awareness. The school's approach is inclusive and values the contribution of all children. Younger children are class helpers and older pupils have a range of responsibilities. There are many opportunities for pupils to work together and co-operate in small groups within lessons. Older pupils participate in residential experiences. The staff and parents provide a range of clubs, including art and guitar clubs and various out-of-school sports events, where girls and boys learn to perform, compete and collaborate.

49 Pupils develop their personal initiative by organising many fund-raising events and involving themselves in local environmental issues, for example helping design the local Redhouse Park play area. The school council also provides good opportunities for pupils' views to be heard. Some opportunities for independent learning are missed, as the library and computers are not used regularly enough for research purposes.

50 Provision for cultural development is sound, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils learn about British, European and non-European cultures through the curriculum and a range of visits and visitors. However, some pupils' knowledge of different artists is limited. Their awareness of cultural diversity within Britain is developed mainly through the religious education programme. Younger children learn about how people with different faiths celebrate harvest time. Older pupils are taught to understand and respect the lives and traditions of different religious cultures. The school is reviewing its programme of visits so that older pupils also visit non-Christian places of worship. The school has improved its programme of preparing pupils for life in contemporary Britain through increased resources, including a wider range of books and attractive posters and by providing opportunities for pupils to discuss events as they arise. However, opportunities are not planned systematically within each curriculum area to increase pupils' appreciation of what each culture has to offer within Britain.

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

51 The school is successful in providing good standards of care, welfare, health and safety for its pupils. The positive aspects at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and assessment of academic progress has improved.

52 Procedures for child protection remain effective. The named person, the headteacher, has been fully trained and continues to keep abreast of new requirements in this field. Established teaching staff are aware of the school's role in these procedures but such provision needs to be available to all staff, particularly newcomers. The school works well with the appropriate external agencies.

53 Health and safety policies and procedures are well established. Frequent fire drills ensure that safe evacuation procedures are well rehearsed. Equipment checks take place regularly. There is a good level of first aid cover. Regular checks of health and safety take place. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are effective. Registers are well kept and are monitored regularly. When necessary, the educational welfare service is available to the school. There is an appropriate policy for safe use of the Internet.

54 The procedures for promoting appropriate behaviour are good and their effectiveness can be seen around school. High standards of behaviour are expected; the rules are clear and applied consistently, and staff look for and reward examples of good behaviour. Inappropriate behaviour is subject to clear sanctions. Good records of any instances of poor behaviour, including bullying, are kept. The school's attitudes to bullying and racism are very effectively conveyed in class discussions and assemblies.

55 The school has good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Most parents recognise this and agree that the school is helping their children to grow and mature. Teachers know their pupils very well and grasp the opportunities that will offer new experiences to them. Although some parents feel that the extra-curricular activities are limited, the inspection team's view is that the combination of out-of-hours clubs, mainly sport, together with the varied school trips and residential visits provides an appropriate range of opportunities for pupils. Class discussions offer good opportunities to explore beliefs and values; pupils are able to voice their opinions and listen respectfully to those of others. The school council also provides an effective forum for airing school-wide issues. The school is actively supporting the provision of a personal, health and social education programme. In addition to the established areas of the curriculum, time is now set aside every term for each class to consider, in depth, an issue of relevance to that particular class. These 'immersion days', whilst only recently introduced, are being carefully evaluated in order to maximise their benefit.

56 Assessment procedures are now sound overall and well established in English, mathematics, and science. All pupils are regularly assessed in these subjects and have individual targets for English and mathematics. Information is used to set challenging targets. Pupils' progress is tracked on individual pupil tracking sheets that clearly show the National Curriculum levels which pupils reach in English, mathematics and science. Teachers have begun to predict National Curriculum levels and track pupils' progress as they move through the school. In other subjects the co-ordinators have recently developed sound assessment procedures which link in with the guidelines for each subject. These have not been in place long enough to have an impact on standards but will ensure that teachers can easily see how pupils are doing as they move through the school.

57 Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by their teachers and the learning support practitioners who work with them. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is sound, ensuring that pupils have appropriate individual education plans. However, not all teachers use the targets when planning work. The results of baseline, spelling, optional and mandatory national tests are used to measure pupils' attainment and to help teachers provide work focused on individual pupils' needs. The school intervenes at an early stage when teachers or parents express concerns about a pupil's progress.

58 Performance information is carefully analysed and used to place pupils into ability sets for English and mathematics and into ability groups within classes in science. This then enables teachers to move individuals and groups of pupils on to the next stage of learning more easily. However, the use of this information is inconsistent because in some lessons teachers do not match work accurately to the needs of all pupils. This hinders the learning within lessons and ultimately the progress which pupils make over time.

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

59 At the time of the last inspection a key issue for action required the school to introduce more effective strategies for dealing with suggestions and complaints from parents in order to foster better relationships. In response the school has ensured that information regarding the complaints procedures is clearly stated in the prospectus and that it is also covered in the induction meetings for those parents new to the school. The school has also used parent questionnaires to monitor views on various aspects of school life. Questionnaires have identified areas of concern that the school has then been able to address, for example the identification of parent governors. The most recent school questionnaire shows that a few parents are still not happy about the way the school communicates with them. The pre-inspection contact with parents also highlighted a small number of adverse views on the success of the partnership between parents and the school. The headteacher and governors are aware of the need for continuing work on ways to improve communication with parents.

60 Overall, parents and carers have positive views of the school. Most parents, over 90 per cent based on the pre-inspection questionnaires, agree that their children like coming to school and that they behave well at school. Most parents also agree that the school has high expectations of their children and that the school is helping them to grow and mature.

61 Much useful information is provided for parents. The prospectus, induction arrangements and the governor's annual report are thorough and informative. A regular fortnightly newsletter tells parents of coming events and school news. There is an appropriate home-school agreement. Both the governing body and the parent teacher association (PTA) have notice boards to keep parents informed of their activities. There are opportunities each term for parents to meet their child's teacher in order to discuss progress. The annual written reports on progress meet statutory requirements but tend to concentrate on what each child has done in general terms, lacking specific detail on achievements. However, there is also a paragraph that concentrates on general progress and this often offers a view as to future objectives. This formal process is well supported by personal and specific educational targets for each pupil that are sent to parents each term. In addition, booklets are produced that describe the topics that are to be covered in the next term. These two initiatives are helpful in that they offer parents a clear opportunity to support their children's learning in the home. Such guidance was judged to be lacking at the last inspection.

62 The school welcomes parents to a parish Mass each week and parents greatly value this opportunity to worship as a community within their children's school. An established team of trained reading volunteers help in school regularly and many parents are willing to help out as necessary to support other class activities such as swimming and library visits. The PTA is active and successful in raising funds for the school, primarily through social events. The main priority for funding this year is the school playground.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

63 The headteacher provides strong leadership and gives a clear direction to the work of the school. She sets a good example which promotes the school's Catholic values, and has established a positive, caring ethos where pupils are valued for themselves and relationships are constructive. The deputy headteacher, who is relatively newly appointed, is effectively supporting this lead and is gradually being introduced to her responsibilities and given relevant training. Other recent appointments have been wisely made to increase the expertise and broaden the experience of the teaching staff. All staff work well together and are supportive of each other's efforts.

64 As at the time of the last inspection, the school is soundly managed overall. The management team, which has been recently re-organised, includes teachers from across the school and meets regularly to discuss the school's work. However, much of the discussion at meetings is organisational or administrative rather than making key decisions about the best way to drive the school forward. Similarly, subject and phase co-ordinators have yearly action plans to which they work, but many of the agreed actions fail to identify key factors which will ensure improved provision. For instance, a new scheme of work recently purchased for history has in practice lowered expectations of what pupils can achieve and resulted in some infant pupils spending time colouring worksheets. Similarly, resources for art have been a focus of the action plan instead of addressing the weakness in pupils' skills, and several action plans identify a need for more information and communication technology but its use remains limited and plans show the weakness in coverage. Many of the action plans include producing a portfolio of pupils' work, but there is no indication of what effect these will have on raising standards.

65 Not all co-ordinators have the time or expertise to fulfil their roles. Although music is currently a priority on the school development plan and the intention is to improve teaching and learning in the subject, the co-ordinator is not sufficiently confident about music and is only employed part-time. The school has acknowledged her lack of confidence by giving the observations of music lessons to another member of staff to carry out, but the substantive co-ordinator remains responsible for monitoring on the action plan. Other priorities for the year are more precise and measurable, such as that to increase the percentage of pupils achieving level 3 in mathematics, and these targets are useful in improving provision.

66 Following the criticism of the way in which the school monitored its work in the last inspection report, the headteacher instituted a regular and organised timetable of lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and monitoring of planning. Co-ordinators carry out these procedures conscientiously and record a great deal of information about what they have seen. Some co-ordinators produce useful summative comments about strengths and areas for development in the provision for the subject, and all give feedback to individual teachers on what they consider are helpful areas to the person concerned. The process also ensures school policies such as marking and setting of homework are consistently applied. However, the monitoring process is not being used to inform action plans. The key decisions which would raise standards or improve teaching are not always identified and recorded to ensure subsequent development takes place. For instance, effective action has not been taken to improve reading comprehension in Year 2 so that more pupils achieve level 3.

67 The management of special educational needs is sound. The special educational needs co-ordinator is up to date with recent changes in this area. All pupils on the register of special educational needs are provided with individual educational plans. However, the time scale for review of pupils without statements is too long which makes progress difficult to check. Pupils are usefully provided with simpler, more easily manageable targets which they can work towards, but not all teachers are using the most up-to-date objectives when

planning work for pupils. The time available for the special educational needs co-ordinator has recently been increased and the co-ordinator is working hard to ensure that pupils with learning problems are identified early. Good use is made of outside agencies, such as the Speech and Language Therapy Service and the Hearing-Impaired Service, to provide support for pupils and teachers.

68 Formal systems for appraisal and performance management are in place and there is a suitable process to ensure that teachers are set targets. Relevant courses are provided to assist staff in their professional development, although some lack of confidence in certain subjects remains. Newly qualified teachers and graduate trainees are appropriately advised and supported.

69 The governing body are good at fulfilling their statutory duties, and the governors have managed to recruit members with a wide range of skills and experience which enable them to carry out their responsibilities effectively. They are fully committed to the school and are prepared to devote considerable time and attention to ensuring that pupils are offered the best possible education as they see it. They agree the required school policies, including recently debating at length a new race equality document. There are effective working relationships between the governing body and senior staff so that they receive regular reports on what is going on, and governors are appropriately involved in development planning. Governors have a clear picture of the school's strengths. However, although they are prepared to challenge proposals when they have the necessary information, they are not questioning the rationale for some important decisions sufficiently so are not always aware of the most important areas for further development.

70 The headteacher and governing body ensure that financial planning is effective and takes account of the identified priorities. Cost effectiveness is a priority and recent decisions about purchasing goods and services have resulted in some significant savings. Financial administration is efficient, providing the governors and headteacher with the essential information to make prudent budgetary decisions. Specific grants are used appropriately for their intended purposes.

71 The school regularly consults parents through formal procedures such as questionnaires so that account can be taken of their opinions, and pupils' views are now also considered through meetings of the school council. The school does not, however, have formal arrangements for comparing its effectiveness with similar ones so that it can challenge its performance more critically.

72 The accommodation is adequate, although the need for a mobile classroom pending the erection of a new permanent one, and the use of the information and communication technology suite for literacy and numeracy sets, are inconvenient and restrict provision currently. The playground is also limited in terms of physical education and play areas for different activities. Likewise, learning resources are adequate for what is taught. The library is small but does also contain some computers. It is not used often enough, however, for independent learning.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

73 To further develop the effectiveness of the school and raise standards, the headteacher and governing body should:

[i] Use information from monitoring to raise standards and improve teaching throughout the school and to raise expectations from nursery to Year 2 by:

- deciding which areas will have the most impact on pupils' learning;
- ensuring monitoring focuses precisely on these areas;
- using monitoring outcomes to identify and feed back those developments which are most effective;
- providing teachers with models of effective practice;
- regularly evaluating the effectiveness of steps taken, and reviewing progress.

*Paragraphs 16, 27, 66, 69, 94, 116, 118, 124, 129, 137, 144, 148, 152, 158*

[ii] Ensure staff have the time, expertise and confidence to manage improvements by:

- allocating each responsibility to the most suitable member of staff;
- scheduling available monitoring time efficiently to agreed priorities;
- providing relevant training, including analysing and evaluating data;
- developing action plans with measurable outcomes which challenge teachers to improve provision.

*Paragraphs 64 - 66, 68, 118, 152*

[iii] Raise standards in information and communication technology, art, and design and technology.

*Paragraphs:*

*(ICT) 17, 18, 36, 81, 92, 108, 116, 124, 129, 137, 139, 144 - 148, 152*

*(Art) 17, 117 - 125, 142, 146*

*(Design and technology) 17, 36, 126 - 129*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 60 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 30 |

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

|            | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number     | 1         | 6         | 22   | 28           | 3              | 0    | 0         |
| Percentage | 2         | 10        | 37   | 47           | 5              | 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 nearly 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)      | 25      | 263    |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals |         | 6      |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs   | Nursery | YR– Y6 |
|---|---------|--------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs       | 0       | 6      |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 0       | 11     |

| English as an additional language                       | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 0            |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year                                       | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 6            |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 7            |

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 5.3 |
| National comparative data | 6.1 |

#### Unauthorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 0   |
| 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 | 17   | 16    | 33    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 14      | 14      | 15          |
|   | Girls    | 14      | 14      | 14          |
|   | Total    | 28      | 28      | 29          |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 85 (85) | 85 (94) | 88 (91)     |
|   | National | 84 (84) | 86 (86) | 90 (91)     |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 14      | 15          | 14      |
|   | Girls    | 14      | 12          | 12      |
|   | Total    | 28      | 27          | 26      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 85 (79) | 82 (91)     | 79 (88) |
|   | 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 | 20   | 13    | 33    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 17      | 17          | 20      |
|   | Girls    | 18      | 9           | 12      |
|   | Total    | 25      | 26          | 32      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 76 (97) | 79 (85)     | 97 (97) |
|   | National | 75 (75) | 73 (71)     | 86 (87) |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 17      | 17          | 19      |
|   | Girls    | 10      | 9           | 12      |
|   | Total    | 27      | 26          | 31      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 82 (79) | 79 (85)     | 94 (85) |
|   | National | 73 (72) | 74 (74)     | 82 (82) |

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

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

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

| <b>No of pupils on roll</b> | <b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b> | <b>Number of permanent exclusions</b> |
|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| 237                         | 0  | 0                                     |
| 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| 2                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| 1                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| 2                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| 5                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| 7                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| 8                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| 1                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| 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***

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

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 16.3 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 16.1 |
| Average class size                       | 26.3 |

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

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 9   |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 237 |

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

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 0    |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | N/A  |
| Total number of education support staff  | 3    |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week    | 97.5 |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult           | 10   |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

|                |        |
|----------------|--------|
| Financial year | 2001/2 |
|----------------|--------|

|  | <b>£</b> |
|--|----------|
| Total income                               | 649661   |
| Total expenditure                          | 649748   |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 2304     |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 12017    |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 11930    |

**Recruitment of teachers**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years   | 3 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years   | 1 |
|  |   |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)  | 1 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)                           | 1 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 1 |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 313 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 129 |

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

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 57             | 37            | 5                | 0                 | 1          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 44             | 43            | 8                | 0                 | 6          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 54             | 36            | 4                | 0                 | 6          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 26             | 54            | 12               | 2                 | 6          |
| The teaching is good.  | 47             | 46            | 2                | 1                 | 5          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 31             | 54            | 10               | 0                 | 5          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 52             | 37            | 9                | 2                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 57             | 39            | 3                | 0                 | 1          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 34             | 44            | 14               | 2                 | 6          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 46             | 40            | 9                | 1                 | 5          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 52             | 39            | 2                | 0                 | 6          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 14             | 24            | 28               | 10                | 24         |

## **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**

74 Overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is sound as at the time of the last inspection. Children spend a year in the nursery and then the majority of them transfer to a reception class in the main school. During the week of the inspection there were 51 part-time children in the nursery. In the two reception classes there was a total of 44 children. A small number of children have been identified as having special educational needs and these children are well supported.

75 The school has developed sound procedures for introducing the children into school, and these have resulted in most of them settling in quickly and happily. The attainment of the present children in the reception classes is average and this reflects the standards reported during the previous inspection. However, information collected over the last few years shows that standards vary from year to year; for example, the present Year 4 were above average on entry to reception. Links between the nursery, reception classes and Year 1 are sound and profiles on all children are sent on when they transfer. The Early Years co-ordinator has identified the need to develop these links further.

76 The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good and this shows an improvement since the previous inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. Planning is clear and identifies interesting activities, which promote all areas of learning well. This results in the delivery of a curriculum that is well suited to the needs of these young children. All children are soundly supported by the adults who work with them. There are many opportunities for children to begin to develop confidence when speaking during class discussions, for example when the children talk about what they did at the week-end or answer questions about the stories they listen to. Mathematical skills are promoted soundly, as when counting skills are developed each day as children are encouraged to remember how many are present after the adult has called the register. The curriculum is well planned on the basis of the national early learning goals. Profiles on individual children are developed on entry to the nursery and completed during the reception classes. Learning resources are satisfactory to promote all areas of learning inside and outside the classroom. In the nursery, the children have daily opportunities for structured outdoor sessions where there are opportunities for physical development using a sound range of wheeled toys and climbing apparatus. Reception children have regular opportunities to use the outdoor facilities in the nursery and they all use the school hall for physical development lessons.

77 Teaching is sound and occasionally good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when there was some unsatisfactory teaching. An example of good teaching was seen when both reception classes joined together for a music lesson. All adults worked well together, praise was used effectively to promote good sitting and listening and all children's ideas and comments were valued. Learning was good because the children listened attentively to instructions and all children took part enthusiastically. The teachers demonstrated high expectations regarding the importance of using the percussion instruments with care. Adults were usefully engaged in collecting information on individual children's responses. Other good features in the teaching are that adults generally manage the children effectively and homework is used well to support the curriculum. Planning is sound, but adults do not always feed information which they collect on individuals effectively into their weekly planning. This results in some children getting work which is either too easy or too hard and affects learning within lessons and progress over time. Learning is overall satisfactory and most children concentrate soundly on the tasks they are given. This promotes sound progress. Adults generally interact satisfactorily with groups of children, but

sometimes nursery nurses are not used effectively at the beginning and end of the lessons when opportunities are missed to collect information on individual children's behaviour and responses.

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

78 Teaching is sound and this area is consistently promoted in lessons. This results in most children developing good relationships with each other and with the adults who work with them. Progress is sound. Most children show positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. A few children find it difficult to sit and listen but adults manage these children sensitively and supportively. Behaviour is good and although a few children sometimes shout out during class discussions all adults work hard at developing acceptable behaviour. Personal independence is developed well during drink and snack times in the nursery when the children are taught how to say "please" and "thank you" and at break time when they put on their coats to go outside. From an early age in the nursery they begin to learn how to change for physical development lessons and in the reception classes they get changed satisfactorily and ask for help if they need it. There are many opportunities to work in pairs and small groups and children begin to develop the skills necessary to work independently. In the nursery, children are encouraged to select activities and most do this confidently but a few have difficulty and at times wander aimlessly around the classroom. In all classes, adults give children opportunities to tidy away at the end of sessions and they do this well. By the end of the reception class most children are likely to reach the expected levels and a few are likely to exceed these levels. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well in the area. There are daily opportunities where their own religion is referred to, for example when they say their prayers in the classrooms and listen to stories from the Bible. Spiritual and social development is particularly well promoted. A good example of this was seen as children in the nursery listened very carefully to the story of *Jonah and the Whale*.

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

79 Communication, language and literacy skills are soundly taught. Teaching has an impact on learning, the children's attitudes to learning are enthusiastic and this results in steady progress. Teaching is occasionally good in the nursery. A good lesson was seen where the adult reinforced nursery procedures well such as the importance of sitting properly and the children listened attentively. They then went on to talk about the different parts of the body and enthusiastically answered questions and named body parts. Speaking and listening skills were promoted well because all children were expected to take part. In the reception classes most children sit and listen satisfactorily when they are told stories such as *The New Children*. They answer simple questions about stories and begin to name the main characters. Reception children take part in assemblies with the older children and sit and listen appropriately. Children in the nursery handle books carefully and most are aware of the differences between the text and the pictures as they look at the pictures or begin to talk about them. Above average children begin to identify a few initial sounds such as 't' for teddy bear. As they get older the children in the reception classes choose books and sit down and attempt to read them. A lovely example was seen when after finishing their writing task, one girl said to another "Do you want to watch me read this book?" They then settled down on the carpet to do this. Higher attaining children look at the pictures carefully and begin to tell the story with confidence. All begin to develop an idea of the different letter sounds. In the nursery, the children have the opportunity to take home packs, which enables them to practise basic reading skills. There are good opportunities in all classes to take work home. Early writing skills are competently promoted in all classes. In the nursery, the children work on developing their pencil control as they learn how to write with straight and curved lines. They trace objects or join pictures together such as a bee to the flower. In all

classes, children are given many opportunities to try to write independently. All make marks on paper and by the time they are in the reception classes children begin to form letters within these marks. Higher attaining children attempt to write in sentences such as “I am going on my bike” and lower attaining children use phrases such as “Me and my dad”. A number of children of all abilities need to improve their pencil control and sometimes the adults do not promote this effectively enough. Sometimes writing tasks are not accurately matched to the children’s needs. For example, some work is too easy for the higher attainers, they finish their work quickly and opportunities are missed to reinforce correct letter formation. Lower attaining children sometimes receive too little guidance, for example when they are expected to write on lines. This happens when information collected on individuals is not consistently fed into the planning. By the time the children reach Year 1, most will reach standards which are average. Information and communication technology is beginning to be used to support the curriculum in this area, but during the inspection few children were seen taking up these opportunities.

### **Mathematical development**

80 The children in the nursery have many opportunities to develop mathematical skills in the activities they are offered such as identifying how many legs, arms and fingers they have. They sort by shape and colour and begin to develop a sound idea of counting up to five as they count the number of people in their family. In reception, they work together and count the 22 children in their classes. However, adults do not consistently promote the written number effectively because they do not consistently feed information, which they collect on individuals into their planning. For example, higher attaining children confidently and accurately count up to and over 20 but still write numbers such as numbers ‘2’ and ‘5’ incorrectly. They are sometimes given simple tasks such as working with numbers up to five and opportunities are missed to reinforce how to write numbers correctly. Lower attaining children write numbers with incorrect formation and the teachers do not always address this effectively. Number charts on the walls promote basic counting skills but are not used well to promote what the digits look like. This hinders learning within lessons and the progress which children of all abilities make over time. Teaching is sound overall. In all classes children have many opportunities to reinforce basic number skills as they sing counting songs and rhymes. From the earliest age they learn about different shapes as they make shape patterns and pictures. In the reception classes they make colour and shape sequences and develop this further by linking art with mathematics as they print these sequences. As they get older, the children begin to develop an understanding of basic mathematical vocabulary such as ‘one more than’ and begin to learn how to write down this information using symbols for ‘add’ and ‘equals’. They begin to simply record basic addition problems. Progress overall is sound, and most children are likely to reach the expected levels by the end of the reception classes. Information and communication technology is beginning to be used to support this area.

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

81 Teaching is sound and the children make steady progress. There is a good range of activities to support this area. In the nursery, the children have learnt about the sense of smell and matched examples to the scents hanging on their ‘scented tree’. Past planning shows that they learn about their local area and how to be safe when out on the roads. The children in the reception class enhance their knowledge of the local area by visiting the local park. All classrooms have areas where children can explore and investigate such as ‘The feely table’ in the nursery and the collection of signs of autumn found in the reception class. Fish in tanks enable the children to develop an understanding of how to care for living things. Discussions show that they develop a basic idea of how to treat and feed animals and of what happens when the summer changes to autumn. Past work shows that children

have learnt about the different parts of the computer such as 'monitor', 'mouse' and 'keyboard'. Literacy skills are not consistently well promoted because adults allow children to copy these words with incorrect letter formation. The children learn to link items together such as cows and milk and potatoes and bags of crisps. All adults work hard at promoting language and developing understanding in this area. By the time they leave the reception class, most children are likely to reach the expected standards. All children learn about their senses and about how important it is to listen and look carefully. Most children confidently learn songs and rhymes. They look at the colours they use when painting and learn the names of them. However, although the computers were on in the classrooms, few children chose to use them. Most children confidently select from a range of materials to develop skills needed to cut, stick and join materials together.

### **Physical development**

82 There are regular opportunities for all classes to develop skills using the sound range of outdoor equipment in the secure outdoor play area. No outdoor lessons were observed during the inspection because of wet weather. All classes use the hall to develop physically. Personal independence is well promoted as children in the nursery undress and place their clothes in neat piles in the classroom. They sensibly use the large space in the hall and most follow simple instructions well. All children manage to find their pile of clothes and get dressed after the lesson. Reception children develop an awareness of space but a few do not always listen appropriately because the teacher does not promote listening skills consistently throughout the lesson. Adults generally develop personal and social skills consistently as they encourage the children to have a go at undressing and dressing themselves but are there to help them and guide them when necessary. Teaching is sound. All children have many opportunities to develop skills by working with construction toys and to use soft materials such as dough to develop rolling and cutting skills. Many children, particularly in the nursery, handle scissors, paint brushes and pencils with weak control but develop more confidence as they get older. All children use equipment safely and make sound progress in this area. By the end of reception most children are likely to reach the expected levels in this area of learning.

### **Creative development**

83 Sound teaching and support enable most of the children to make satisfactory progress as they move through the Foundation Stage. In all classes, children have many opportunities to sing songs with enjoyment. In the nursery, they sing *Oats and Beans and Barley Grow* and reinforce numbers as they sing *Five Little Leaves*. Reception children learn the names of the percussion instruments that they play. They learn songs about the rain such as *Pitter Patter Raindrops* and develop a good idea of how to look after and use musical instruments. There are opportunities in all classes for children to express their own ideas and communicate their feelings through role-play sessions in the 'home corner'. Children in the nursery confidently learn colours as they collect items for their colour table. They paint with confidence but a few have difficulty using paintbrushes to begin with. All develop a sound idea of three-dimensional art as nursery children use household materials to make, and later paint, vehicles. Past work in the reception classes shows that children use paint competently, producing pictures of their mums and dads. They link this area with mathematical development as they use circles to make collages of spacemen. All develop a sound idea of printing as they use paint to print patterns. Careful artwork is created using a sound variety of materials and techniques such as collage, printing and painting. Most children will reach the expected levels in their creative development by the end of reception. Adults who work in the nursery and reception classes value all artwork and work is displayed imaginatively and enhances the learning environment.



## ENGLISH

84 Standards in English currently are typical of those expected of seven year olds but above those expected of eleven year olds. There has been an improvement in standards for eleven year olds since the last inspection. This is because pupils in Years 6 are presented with work that is more challenging and the teacher has high expectations of what they can produce. Results at age seven have declined over the last four years but at age eleven had been rising at a faster rate than the national average until 2002. The school failed to reach the challenging targets agreed for it in the national tests in 2002 because of a relatively large proportion of pupils with special educational needs. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls in the infants, but girls do less well than boys in the juniors.

85 Standards achieved in reading by seven year olds in the national tests in 2002 were below those achieved nationally, whilst writing results were broadly average. When compared to similar schools, the school's performance in reading was well below average and below average in writing. The relatively weak reading results were the result of a larger than usual group of pupils who fell below or only just reached the expected standard. Average numbers achieved the higher level (3).

86 Standards in speaking and listening are about typical for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. This is because pupils are given many opportunities to practise their speaking and listening skills in English and other subjects. For example, in a history lesson in a Year 2 class, pupils acted out eyewitness accounts of the Great Fire of London in front of the class. This developed their confidence in speaking clearly to an audience and showed they had listened carefully to what they had been told about events surrounding the fire. In Year 5, pupils explained the meaning of prime numbers confidently and clearly. Teachers build pupils' knowledge of vocabulary when they use the correct words in science, mathematics and English lessons. However, in some lessons in infant classes, they keep pupils sitting on the carpet too long during discussions and this leads to pupils becoming restless and not listening as well as they might.

87 By the age of seven, pupils' reading is average but not enough reach higher levels. In Year 1, average and lower attaining pupils are not as confident using letter sounds to build words as they should be. This means that they struggle with some words. Higher attaining pupils are more confident and try to read expressively. However, they sometimes misread simple words such as 'saw' and do not always recognise when they make mistakes. In Year 2, pupils show a wider knowledge of words and use letter sounds more often to build unfamiliar words. Sometimes, average and lower attaining pupils do not recognise when they have made mistakes so that what they read does not make sense. They guess words incorrectly once they have recognised the first sound, for example reading 'carpet' or 'carrot' instead of 'crater'. However, average and higher attaining pupils try to make their reading interesting. They use punctuation to read expressively and recognise the humour in stories. Although all pupils know the technical terms used in reading such as author, illustrator and title, and can name some favourite books, none could name any authors. Pupils are developing a sound understanding of how to find information using the contents and index pages.

88 Pupils make good progress in the juniors and by the age of eleven, pupils' attainment in reading is better than the expected level. Pupils regularly visit the local library in lesson time and this encourages them to use it for their own enjoyment. In Year 6, many pupils borrow books, some more frequently than others. Pupils enjoy books by authors such as Jeremy Strong, Anne Fine, Roald Dahl and Dick King-Smith. They talk knowledgeably about some of these authors, saying, for example, that Dick King-Smith's experience as a

farmer must help when he writes his animal stories. A higher attaining pupil compared the different styles of Roald Dahl's *The Witches* with *The Famous Five Stories* by Enid Blyton, explaining how she used their ideas to help her with her own written work. Pupils at all levels try to read expressively and most recognise a large number of words by sight. They are skilled at finding information from non-fiction books using the glossary and index. However, pupils have only a limited knowledge of how to use the classification system in the school library. Teachers' planning shows that they do not have regular enough opportunities to carry out research in the library.

89 By the age of seven, pupils' writing is average. Nearly all pupils use full stops correctly and write in sentences. However, some average attaining pupils write sentences that do not make complete sense and sometimes do not write very much. Higher attaining pupils use imaginative adjectives such as 'spooky' and 'crooked' to make their work more interesting. All pupils benefit from exercises designed to teach words containing blends of letters such as 'ee' and 'ea', and 'ai' and 'ay'. Consequently, although average attaining pupils sometimes do not spell words correctly, their efforts are recognisable. Higher attaining pupils spell most of the words they choose accurately. These pupils, and those of average ability, generally have clearly shaped handwriting although the size of letters sometimes varies. Some average attaining pupils have made particularly good progress with their handwriting in the short time since the beginning of the term. Their writing is now more consistent in size and with suitable spaces between words. This contrasts with lower attaining pupils who tend to form letters incorrectly and do not leave spaces between words.

90 Pupils' writing improves by the age of eleven, when it is above average. This shows an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress particularly in the latter stages of the juniors. In Year 5, pupils choose words carefully to create the atmosphere they want in sentences such as, "White ghosts advanced on the children, but one just hovered." The highest attaining eleven year olds write with accuracy, confidence and expression. They write in paragraphs and use punctuation accurately. Pupils make good progress because the teacher has high expectations of what they can achieve. Consequently, when pupils studied Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, they rewrote the witch's spell. Average attaining pupils understand the impact of repeating lines such as "Dance around the cauldron, here we go" and use imaginative language when devising ingredients for the spell, such as, "Scale of snake, elephant's tail, the big cow and the slimy snail." Pupils maintain the reader's interest by constructing their sentences carefully. When describing her grandmother, a higher attaining pupil evoked a sense of the affection she felt by writing, "She seemed most wonderful to me when she was cooking." The same pupil used the tense of the verb well to establish a feeling of reminiscence when she wrote, "I would watch the pots bubbling."

91 Teaching is sound in the infant classes. It is good overall in junior classes with some very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and teachers make good use of the National Literacy Strategy. Teachers make good use of the introduction to lessons to make sure pupils know what they have to do. They use questions well to find out what pupils know, how well they are learning and to improve pupils' understanding. Consequently, in a good lesson with a Year 4 class, pupils were able to work out the imagery of lines in a poem, such as, "The air smokes from us." The best lessons are characterised by a good level of challenge in the work presented to pupils and the brisk pace of the lesson. This ensures that pupils are kept on their toes and made to think hard. When Year 2 pupils were asked to predict what might happen next in a story, one suggested that a rose bush could be cut down so that the cat in the story would not get any more thorns in her paw. In a Year 6 lesson, average and higher attaining pupils had to write stage directions for an extract from *The Wind in the Willows* while taking into account

the action taking place and the way the characters spoke. Lessons are less successful when pupils are not made to think hard enough and the pace of lessons is too slow.

92 Teachers mark work regularly and in many cases make suggestions about how pupils can improve their work. They praise pupils for good work but do not always tell them why their work is good. In lessons, teachers are sometimes over-generous in their praise, for example saying that work is excellent even though the pupil has misread a word. In general, teachers make good use of the last few minutes of lessons to check pupils' understanding of their work. Sometimes these sessions and the introductions to lessons are too long, so that pupils become restless. Teachers make good use of learning support practitioners to support pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. Although teachers develop pupils' vocabulary in subjects such as science and mathematics, they miss opportunities to develop writing skills in history when pupils complete work sheets or copy work. Limited use is made of information and communication technology for drafting and editing work in English lessons. Good use is made of visits to the local library where pupils learn to select books, but there is not enough use of the school library to teach pupils to carry out research.

93 All pupils have individual targets, which meet their needs but not all teachers use the most up-to-date targets when planning work for pupils. Good provision is made for pupils to receive help individually or in small groups with a special educational needs teacher. By the age of eleven, these pupils make good progress.

94 The subject co-ordinator has not long had responsibility for the subject but is developing a view of what needs to be done to raise standards. She is taking steps to improve her own knowledge of the role by attending relevant courses. The quality of pupils' spelling, handwriting and speaking and listening has been identified as an area for development. A new way of teaching spelling has been introduced that encourages pupils to get a picture of the shape of the word and gives credit for the letters they get correct when the work is marked. This is popular with pupils but it is too early to judge its impact on standards. The co-ordinator has begun to make a collection of pupils' work showing the levels they have achieved so that teachers can see what is expected of pupils at all ages. She monitors teaching and pupils' work. However, the form used to gather information on pupils' work does not concentrate on agreed whole school issues so that information can be gathered for the purpose of improving attainment. Assessment arrangements are sound. The daily assessment of lessons by teachers has recently been introduced but evidence shows that this is being carried out more rigorously by some teachers than others. The longer-term assessment of pupils' progress towards National Curriculum objectives takes place once a term. Resources for English are adequate. The school makes good use of visiting theatre companies, trips to the theatre and plays performed by pupils to raise pupils' interest in the subject.

## **MATHEMATICS**

95 At the time of the previous inspection, attainment at the age of seven and eleven was in line with national standards. The published results for 2002 show that pupils' attainment declined for both seven year olds and eleven year olds. There are no significant differences in the standards of girls and boys in the infants, but girls do less well than boys in the juniors. Standards are average in the current Year 2 and above average in Year 6. The school's targets for Year 6 indicate that more pupils will achieve at least the expected level (4) in 2003.

96 Results for eleven year olds have presented a positive picture over time although they declined to around the national average in 2002. This was because the group

contained more pupils than usual with special educational needs. Progress from the time when the pupils were seven was average for those in Year 6 in 2002.

97 Test results for seven year olds have shown a marked decline since 2000. This is because inadvertent over-estimation of standards achieved in the past has now been corrected. In 2002, the scores were well below the national average and results in similar schools. This was largely because fewer pupils than would be expected reached the higher levels (2A and 3).

98 By the age of seven, most pupils, including those with special needs, make sound progress compared to their results when they joined the school. Pupils make good progress in the juniors, including those with special educational needs.

99 There have been a number of improvements since the time of the previous inspection. The National Numeracy Strategy is securely in place. Detailed analyses of optional and national tests are undertaken and the information is used effectively to group pupils. Class sizes in Years 1 and 2 are small, so teachers can give pupils more individual time. There is an appropriate balance throughout the school between number work and practical work on space, shape and measure, with some opportunities to solve problems. Published schemes are used appropriately to provide work with different levels of challenge and to consolidate learning.

100 There is a range of strategies for junior age pupils, including booster sessions and Springboard mathematics to help pupils who would benefit from extra teaching in small groups. The use of teaching within ability groups means that pupils do work which is very well matched to their previous learning. Lower attaining pupils and pupils identified as having special needs work in very small groups and are given opportunities to talk about any aspect they find difficult. A particularly high attaining pupil in Year 6 has additional work to ensure she is suitably stretched. The use of the mathematics co-ordinator to deliver mathematics in Years 5 and 6 is highly effective because of the high expectations.

101 The majority of Year 2 pupils order whole numbers below 50. They count forwards and backwards in ones and tens from two-digit numbers. They understand that subtraction is the reverse of addition. They have appropriate understanding of time and can match flat and three-dimensional shapes.

102 The current Year 6 pupils have a good grasp of place value. They use a range of mental methods to multiply and divide whole numbers up to 10,000, estimating accurately. They are learning to use addition and subtraction as inverse operations to check the accuracy of their answers. They are actively encouraged to use informal pencil and paper methods to record their calculations. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their understanding through a range of interesting and relevant number problems, for example in Year 5 when pupils calculated the cost of different holidays.

103 In the infant classes, teaching is mainly sound, with some good teaching; most pupils learn satisfactorily. Good use is made of practical equipment, games and number puppets to help pupils with their learning. Great care is taken by the teachers to make sure that mathematics is interesting and pupils clearly enjoy their activities. In most lessons, the pace is sound and at times good. However, in some lessons the pace slows because some pupils with poor number formation struggle to record their work. In a very effective lesson in a Year 2 class, the work was challenging for the different abilities of all the pupils. The teacher skilfully pitched questions to match their existing knowledge; as a result all pupils made good progress throughout the lesson. The teacher moved the lesson on at a good pace, because the pupils responded well to her regular challenges to complete their work.

104 Scrutiny of pupils' books shows that the work is not always matched closely enough to the needs of different groups. This holds back some more able pupils and some lower attaining pupils struggle. This was also evident in a Year 2 lesson where the mental, oral bingo game, while enjoyed by the majority of pupils, was too difficult for many of the lower attaining pupils. The focus of the rest of the lesson was also pitched more at the average and above pupils, and lower attaining pupils had less teacher time, which slowed down their progress.

105 In junior classes, the majority of teaching is good, with some very good and excellent teaching. Most of the lessons are good because the work is challenging and pitched consistently at the right level for the different groups. The pace is usually good and teachers target questions well at different groups. Time is usually given at the end of lessons for pupils to reflect on their learning and discuss aspects that are difficult for them. In an excellent Year 6 lesson, the pace was crisp, the questions focused and extension work provided for particularly able pupils. The teacher's excellent subject knowledge and high expectations made the lesson really interesting and engaging. As a result, the pupils were enthusiastic and totally involved in their learning.

106 The needs of lower attaining pupils are well catered for, as they work in small mixed age groups and have some good quality support, for example in a Year 3 lesson when a special needs teacher worked with six pupils. In a mixed Years 3/4 lesson a pupil with special needs made good progress because of the practical equipment provided by the teacher and the good support from her learning support assistant.

107 Expectations of presentation are good and pupils generally produce neat work. Teachers help pupils by giving them clear targets on which to work. Infant teachers use plenty of praise and junior teachers generally write helpful comments on how to improve the work. An appropriate range of mathematical homework is given on a regular basis.

108 Teachers give pupils good opportunities to extend their speaking and listening skills by encouraging them to explain their thinking. Numeracy skills are appropriately applied to other curriculum areas such as science, history and geography. There is some good use of information and communication technology (for example to present a graph of the traffic flow on the Walsall Road) but generally, information and communication technology is under-used.

109 The co-ordinator has only been in the school a short time, but has a good grasp of the priorities for the subject and has analysed last year's results. He has extremely good subject knowledge and very high expectations. Mathematics is a focus in the school development plan. The priorities are suitably aimed at supporting borderline pupils across the school to ensure that higher attaining pupils achieve their full potential. The co-ordinator has led mathematics in his previous school and has good leadership qualities to continue to take the subject forward.

## **SCIENCE**

110 Standards in science remain in line with the national average by the time pupils are seven, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Standards by the age of eleven are now above the national average, which indicates that significant improvement has been made in this area. Analysis of the work in pupils' books, and in particular talking to pupils, confirms the good standards by the end of the juniors, and also indicates that infant pupils are making better progress than they were. The standard of work in lessons seen, while consistently sound, does not altogether reflect these improvements. The interest, knowledge

and scientific understanding of the pupils spoken to, however, support the judgement that standards in science are improving.

111 Pupils make good progress in the acquisition of scientific knowledge: they are not just learning facts, but can discuss scientific concepts with understanding, thinking logically and discussing the reasons why things happen as they do. Teachers' planning is based on national guidelines and supported by the use of recently purchased published material. While this ensures the thorough coverage of scientific facts, too much of the work is teacher directed, and pupils have insufficient opportunity to plan and design their own experiments. Worksheets are commonly used, and while these support average and lower attaining pupils, they sometimes limit higher attainers through tasks that are either too prescriptive or lacking in challenge. Very high attaining pupils in Year 6 have no experience of being asked to find out why something happens as it does through their own investigations, justifying their methods and explaining their conclusions. There is some evidence of recording at the expense of investigation.

112 Pupils are very positive about science throughout the school and enjoy finding things out and investigating. They remember experiments they have carried out, describing what they did and what they discovered. Older pupils are very clear about 'fair testing', understanding why there is only one variable. They know why it is important to keep everything else the same and why it is sensible to repeat an experiment more than once to see if results are similar; they also understand why averaging your measurements helps accuracy. A suitable amount of curriculum time is allocated to science, and most pupils produce a good quantity of accurate written work.

113 Teachers make good use of scientific vocabulary from an early stage. Year 1 pupils are able to offer words such as 'nutrients' and 'investigating' when discussing science work from earlier in the week; in a Year 5 lesson the teacher makes sure pupils understand concepts such as a 'fair test', 'prediction' and 'hypothesis'. In a Year 2 lesson on exercise, while most pupils know why this is good for health, about half know the heart pumps blood round the body and a quarter that exercise increases the demand for oxygen. Year 3 pupils remember what they have learned. They name parts of plants, know what plants need to survive and how they reproduce. They understand that bricks are man-made and stones occur naturally, how materials can be changed, for example by heating them, and that some changes are reversible, such as water freezing and then melting. When they do not know the answer they offer intelligent suggestions, discussing possibilities with interest.

114 Year 6 pupils also show good reasoning skills. When asked about a 'habitat' they know it is where an animal lives, and why it is chosen, for example because it provides a good food source. They discuss the causes of night and day and the phases of the moon, correcting each other's ideas until they are sure they make sense. They remember experiments they have done, including what they did and what they found out, although interestingly these are all from Year 3, when their teacher was the previous science co-ordinator. However they can only recollect one occasion when they had any choice in the way an experiment was carried out.

115 The teaching seen in lessons is consistently good in the juniors, and successful in moving pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding forward. Teachers use questions well, looking for ideas as well as knowledge. Pupils talk with interest and understanding, both about present tasks and work they have done in the past; for example a boy in Year 5 independently related an experiment he carried out in Year 2 to his current work. They are also attentive and interested, behaving well in practical situations and working co-operatively in pairs and small groups. Teachers intervene appropriately to ensure that pupils know what they are doing and to check their understanding. Support during lessons ensures pupils with

special educational needs make appropriate progress. This applies to marking as well, which often makes helpful comments to move learning forward. As a result, recorded work indicates a good level of concentration and perseverance. Relationships are good, as is the management of pupils, leading to time being used productively. Lessons are well organised, with suitable resources, and tasks are carefully structured; while this is often helpful to lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, there are occasions when it limits more able pupils, as neither expectations nor pace are sufficiently demanding.

116 The science co-ordinator is well informed and has good ideas for moving the subject forward: the 'brainstorm sheets' and 'target booklets' are positive examples of this. She leads by example and has spent considerable time working with teachers to improve practice, although lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' books need a sharper focus if the best possible use is to be made of the time spent. To develop and improve standards further, there needs to be a focus on raising attainment in the infants and on independent investigation throughout the school. The school's teaching has ensured that pupils are certainly capable of taking the latter on board. Although information and communication technology is occasionally used to record scientific data, it is not yet regularly planned as a part of learning in science.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

117 Pupils' attainment is below average by the ages of seven and eleven. However, there are elements in certain year groups which are broadly average, for example painting skills in Year 5 and observational drawing skills in Year 2. Progress is overall unsatisfactory. Standards in art and design have fallen since the previous inspection because teachers have not consistently followed clear guidelines, which enable pupils to develop skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject. Although the school has recently adopted the national guidelines, they have not been in place long enough to have an impact on standards.

118 Judgements have been made by looking at teachers' planning, talking with pupils and past work, mainly in sketchbooks, because there are few displays around the school. Planning is consistently linked to the national guidelines but sketchbooks show that skills such as drawing and sketching have not been progressively taught. Pupils' learning at different stages through the school has not been monitored thoroughly by the co-ordinator and this is one reason why standards have declined since the previous inspection.

119 Discussions with pupils clearly show that they have had few opportunities to develop skills and knowledge in the subject. They speak about isolated incidences of past work. For example, Year 6 pupils spoke about sketching their reading books in Year 4, developing firework pictures in Year 3 and making pots from clay in Year 2. Year 6 pupils have difficulty naming famous artists or works of art, although there has recently been some good work in Year 5.

120 Teaching was seen in most year groups and although in the lessons seen it was sound overall, the quality varied considerably. Learning within the lessons seen was sound. However, there is a limited amount of evidence around the school, and many pupils demonstrate weak knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject. This indicates that elements of teaching in the past, particularly the teaching of basic drawing and sketching skills and developing the pupils' knowledge of famous artists, and teachers' expectations have been unsatisfactory. Teaching in two out of the five lessons was judged to be unsatisfactory because the planning was brief and did not address the differing abilities within the class. A number of pupils found the tasks difficult and one pupil was visibly upset. The tasks, although relating closely to the national guidelines, did not take into account the

fact that these pupils have had limited experiences previously. Assessment information had not been fed into the planning. Teachers' expectations were too low, which resulted in the pace of the lessons being slow and many pupils not sustaining concentration and wasting time. In one lesson, the learning support practitioner was not used effectively during the initial part of the lesson. During another lesson, the classroom assistant had difficulty because the task had not been modified to suit the needs of the pupils with special education needs whom she was supporting.

121 One lesson in Year 5 was judged to be very good because the teacher had very clear expectations of what the pupils should achieve and the lesson was very well thought out with activities which were interesting and developed skills and knowledge. In addition, the teacher demonstrated very good subject knowledge and the lesson developed at a brisk pace. No one was allowed to waste a minute and all were expected to answer questions about Vincent Van Gogh. The classroom assistant was used well to support a less able group, which enabled all pupils to succeed during the activity where they had to mix colours such as 'sunset red' and 'jungle green'. Learning was very good in this lesson because the teacher had developed good relationships with the class and transferred his enthusiasm for the subject to all of the pupils.

122 In lessons where teaching was sound tasks were appropriate to the needs of the pupils and this resulted in all pupils concentrating well and responding positively. Learning was sound in these lessons. In Year 1, pupils were given good opportunities to use their sketchbooks as they worked on their portraits. Pupils in Year 3 continued to develop their understanding of patterns which 'rotated and reflected' by using simple stencils which they had previously made. However, pupils' knowledge of mixing basic colour is limited and a number of pupils were surprised when they noticed that red and yellow make orange when mixed together. Many were confused as they tried to talk about what they had done and showed a muddled idea of 'rotating and reflecting shapes'.

123 Art is sometimes used to support other subjects. Examples were seen in Year 1 when pupils used crayons and scissors to develop a class picture of 'The Things which God Made'. In Year 2, pupils have painted night sky scenes and made silhouette pictures of 'The Great Fire of London' as they have linked their history topic with art. There is little evidence of this subject supporting pupils' spiritual and cultural development or of them using literacy and mathematical skills in lessons.

124 The subject co-ordinator has monitored teaching in some classes, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. She has continued to look at teachers' medium-term planning, but has not looked more closely at what pupils are learning as they move through the school in order to raise standards. Sound assessment procedures have recently been developed which is an improvement since the previous inspection, but these have not been in place long enough to have an impact on standards. Resources have been correctly identified by the co-ordinator as an area for development. She has begun to link resources to the national guidelines to support teaching and is aware that pupils have not had a wide range of resources to choose from in the past. For example, they have had too few opportunities to use clay and there is little evidence of information and communication technology being used to support the art curriculum, although pupils use graphics programs in information and communication technology lessons.

125 Pupils in Year 5 have recently been on a residential trip and visited Jackfield Tile Museum where they designed tiles. This has enhanced the subject greatly. These carefully decorated tiles are on display in the school. The co-ordinator runs an extra-curricular art club each week for pupils in Year 5. It is well attended and pupils are currently using



painting pencils to make letter patterns. The co-ordinator is aware that art has a low profile in most classes and around the school generally.

In order to raise standards, the school should:

- assess pupils' skills more effectively and planning lessons that build on these skills;
- provide more regular practice at skills;
- apply skills across the curriculum;
- give the subject a higher profile in the school.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

126 Standards are below average throughout the school. Pupils have made unsatisfactory progress in this subject because until recently teachers have not been teaching the necessary skills and knowledge in the subject so that understanding is secure. This has resulted in a fall in standards since the previous inspection. However, planning now indicates that the national guidance is being followed but has not been in place long enough to raise standards. The structured planning is an improvement since the previous inspection.

127 Judgements are based on discussions with teachers and pupils and a scrutiny of planning, work completed in sketchbooks and a small amount of past work. Design and technology is taught in blocks and alternates with art and design. For this half term, there is little design and technology being taught, except in Year 2. There is too little evidence to make an overall comment on teaching although in the one lesson seen in Year 2, teaching was sound. However, the pupils were clearly functioning below the expected levels. They are unfamiliar with construction kits and do not know how to connect pieces correctly. Pupils are aware of the purpose of an axle but few have little idea how to construct one. There is too little evidence to judge any differences in the rates of progress made by groups of pupils.

128 Past work in sketchbooks is limited but shows that pupils have had some opportunities to plan, design and make models as they have moved through the school. However, they have had few opportunities to evaluate what they did and improve their models. Talking to the co-ordinator and pupils reinforces these judgements. Pupils in Year 2 only speak about the models they are currently working on. They are vague about anything else they have designed, planned and made. In Year 6, pupils talk about making musical instruments last year when they were in Year 5 and how they learnt to sew in Year 4 when they made purses. They spoke about designing and beginning to make robots which had eyes that lit up. However, they never finished these models and no one could clearly say how the eyes were supposed to light up. They spoke about not really having enough resources at school to make these models and having to bring materials from home. Pupils in Year 6 have a limited understanding of words specific to the subject such as 'cogs', 'chassis' and 'axles' and cannot explain how simple objects move.

129 The school has recently developed sound assessment procedures, which are an improvement since the previous inspection. However, they have not been in place long enough to improve the standards which the pupils reach. The co-ordinator has developed resources to link closely with the guidance which teachers now use and is aware of the need to closely monitor what pupils learn as they move through the school. The use of information and communication technology to support design and technology is underdeveloped. There is little evidence of pupils using either literacy or mathematical skills in this subject or of it supporting their cultural development.

In order to raise standards in design and technology, the school should:

- assess pupils' skills more effectively and planning lessons that build on these skills;
- provide more regular practice at skills;
- apply skills across the curriculum;
- give the subject a higher profile in the school.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

130 Discussions with pupils and staff and a scrutiny of the pupils' work indicate that standards of attainment are average by the ages of seven and eleven which is the same as at the previous inspection. While most pupils make sound progress, including pupils with special needs, some higher attaining pupils do not make best progress because extension work is not provided. No lessons were observed during the inspection and therefore no judgement can be made about the quality of teaching.

131 Work from last year shows that, by the age of seven, pupils have covered the planned curriculum appropriately through a range of practical experiences. They have made maps of their class, school grounds and the road next to the school. Pupils have acquired appropriate mapping skills and can make sensible suggestions as to features that are useful on a map, such as houses, shops, the school and the local park. They have learnt some differences between a town and the seaside. The current Year 3 can recall some of last year's work and can explain what geography means to them: "We learn about different places in the world".

132 From photographs collected of last year's work and some work samples, it is clear that, by the age of eleven, pupils have covered the agreed curriculum. In Years 3 and 4 they have studied the local area and looked at aerial and local maps. Pupils have extended their mapping skills and learnt how to use a compass. They have researched ways to improve the playground and have studied contrasting climates of Bombay and Britain. In Year 5, pupils practised their orienteering skills on a visit to Edmond Hall. A feature of the curriculum is the emphasis placed on understanding environmental issues and their impact on people's lives so that by the age of eleven, pupils have learnt how people contribute to problems such as litter, pollution and deforestation.

133 While the elements of the planned curriculum have been covered, there are differences in the amount of work and depth of study in different year groups. There is limited evidence of work being planned for the pupils' different abilities.

134 Appropriate attention is given to developing pupils' literacy skills, although some lower attaining pupils have difficulty recording their work because the work is not modified for them. Numeracy skills are used to support geography research, for example comparing traffic flow on the Walsall Road.

135 Discussions with the current Year 6 pupils show they have appropriate factual recall of last year's work. Year 6 pupils name rivers, continents and capital cities and can explain geographical ideas confidently. They have begun to develop some research skills, for example when writing to the Tourist Board during their work on tourism, and some have undertaken further research on the Internet as homework. However, opportunities for independent learning are not sufficiently developed, as pupils do not regularly use the school library or Internet. The co-ordinator has identified the need to increase the use of computers and has purchased CD-ROMs and provided staff with web page details.

136 Overall, the geography syllabus makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding and appreciation of the wider world. The introduction of Barnaby Bear (who travels around

the world) widens younger pupils' appreciation of different countries. Some pupils have a good understanding of the weather and food of different countries and talk enthusiastically about their personal holidays. The shared project work in Year 6 on mountains generated a real understanding of factors that impact on different countries and deepened pupils' knowledge and understanding of different people's lives, including their religion and customs.

137 There have been some improvements since the previous inspection. The policy has been updated and the school has adopted the recommended national scheme. As a result of a whole school focus on geography last year, additional resources have been purchased and resources are now adequate. A published scheme has also been introduced with assessment opportunities built in to each topic although information and communication technology is not regularly incorporated. The co-ordinator monitors planning, pupils' work and teaching and learning. Although this is a useful starting point her monitoring role needs to be further developed so that issues are identified and addressed, such as extending higher attainers through extension work and ensuring sufficient coverage of each topic.

## **HISTORY**

138 Attainment in history is average for seven year olds but is above average for eleven year olds. This means that standards have improved for eleven year olds since the previous inspection but have remained the same for seven year olds. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress by the time they leave school.

139 Eleven year olds make sound progress in lessons when they carry out research into life in Ancient Egypt. They learn to form questions that enable them to focus their enquiries more precisely. Pupils use skills learnt in the literacy hour when they use the contents and index pages in books to find information. They consolidate other skills to speed up their research when the teacher reminds them how to scan through work by taking note of headings and highlighted words. However, during the lesson they did not develop research skills as much as they might because they did not find their own books in the library or carry out research in school using the Internet. In discussion, these pupils show a better than expected understanding of what they learnt in previous years. For example, they describe some of the benefits that the Romans brought to Britain, such as improved housing and roads. They show a good understanding of the advances in industry and social conditions during the long reign of Queen Victoria. Pupils explain that education was available to more people by the end of the Victorian age but that schooling then was very different to the present day. They have a good understanding of the sources of historical information such as books, pictures, building and documents and the role played by archaeologists.

140 Seven year olds made very good progress in a lesson when the teacher used imaginative methods to catch their imagination. In this lesson pupils acted as eyewitnesses to the Great Fire of London. The enthusiasm engendered by the very good teaching meant that pupils were eager to take part and act out their ideas, showing good knowledge of how the fire started, spread so rapidly and the ways that ordinary people managed to escape the flames. Discussion with pupils in Year 3 about what they had learnt when they were in the infant classes shows they have satisfactory knowledge of the Great Fire of London. They recall the main points, saying, for example, that the fire started in a baker's shop in Pudding Lane. Their understanding of the importance of Samuel Pepys and the account he wrote of the fire in his diary is, however, limited. Pupils show some knowledge of Florence Nightingale and the fact that ladies of her social class were not expected to be nurses, but could not name the Crimean War.

141 Pupils with special educational needs make steady progress in lessons in junior classes. They are helped by the contribution from a classroom assistant who ensures that pupils concentrate on their work. There was insufficient evidence to judge how well pupils with special educational needs progressed during lessons in the infants.

142 Teaching in history is sound overall but there is some good and very good teaching. In a very good lesson in Year 2, the teacher caught pupils' imagination by gradually building the level of challenge and anticipation in allowing pupils to describe the start of the Great Fire of London. The encouragement to write careful accounts of the fire was reinforced when the teacher 'dangled the carrot' that "those pairs who write the best accounts can dress up to act out their story." This made pupils try their hardest and acting out their ideas enabled pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. Teaching is less satisfactory when teachers have low expectations of what pupils can achieve and rely too much on worksheets without checking whether the worksheets make pupils think hard enough. This means that pupils do not have the opportunity to practise their writing and drawing skills. For example, a pupil of average ability in a Year 2 class was asked to colour an outline picture of London in 1666 as if it was on fire. Pupils are made to think harder when they use a worksheet asking them to draw comparisons between streets in 1666 and now. In Year 6, pupils show a better understanding of history than the sound teaching seen in the lesson would suggest. Good teaching in a lesson in Year 5, in which the teacher showed very good knowledge of history and brought the subject to life, also encouraged better than expected standards in history

143 Teachers do not make enough use of information and communication technology in history. The opportunities for pupils to make choices of suitable books for themselves are limited. When presented with books, however, most pupils from the age of seven upwards know how to find information using the contents and index pages. Pupils are sometimes asked to carry out research using the Internet at home. This means that only those pupils who have suitable computers and programs can get full benefit from the homework. For example, in a lesson with eleven year olds, about 20 per cent of the class had brought in information taken from the Internet.

144 The scheme of work is adopted from nationally agreed guidelines. The co-ordinator sees teachers' planning and expects to see all teachers teach once a year. However, the role of the co-ordinator is not developed sufficiently to allow him to check that teachers have sufficiently high expectations of pupils and that what is taught makes pupils think hard enough and promotes good practice in carrying out research. Information and communication technology is not used regularly enough to support the history curriculum. Assessments of pupils' progress are made at the end of each topic and comments about the standards reached by pupils are passed on. Resources are adequate and are supplemented by a good range of visits to places of interest, such as the Black Country Museum, where pupils take part in role-play in support of their work on the Victorians.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

145 Attainment in information and communication technology is below average throughout the school. Since the school only completed the installation of the computer suite just over a year ago, pupils' experience is very limited. This has resulted in slow progress since the last inspection, even though it was a key issue for action. Pupils are now receiving a weekly lesson and work is planned to ensure that the necessary skills and range of experiences will be provided. Restrictions on teaching space make it necessary for the computer suite to be timetabled for literacy and numeracy sets so that use of information and communication technology beyond the one weekly timetabled slot requires rescheduling of rooms. Although this is sometimes done, it is not always easy for teachers to organise the

necessary practice for pupils to develop and apply skills on a regular basis. As a result of these circumstances, pupils are not becoming competent in information and communication technology fast enough and progress is only just satisfactory.

146 Lessons were observed in Years 1, 3 and 4 and samples of work were seen from all classes. There is evidence of some progress in word processing, but even so, Years 3 and 6 are using similar skills in changing font, size and colour and inserting a graphic. Work in other areas is too limited to show progress. Year 3 have begun to learn how to use e-mail and Year 4 have used a graphics program to repeat patterns, draw a line and colour fill. This is not linked to work in art, however, and pupils do not compare the use of information and communication technology with other methods. In their lesson, most pupils are able to log on and access a program, but many have considerable difficulty highlighting and dragging sections of text to re-order it. Although a few higher attainers are able to respond to the screen indicators of errors, most do not do so. Many pupils are unfamiliar with the keyboard and hunt for the letters they wish to type. Lower attaining pupils are still not confident about saving their work. Year 5 pupils have produced a variety of simple graphs from information entered into a database, but skills in this are not commensurate with those they are using in mathematics lessons. Basic computer conventions are not always understood, so pupils' confidence in using the medium is sometimes limited. A group of Year 3 pupils, for instance, were unaware of the need to use the 'return' key and failed to realise why nothing further happened. Many Year 1 pupils are not confident about using the mouse and some become frustrated when it collides with the keyboard and they do not know how to manoeuvre it in order to move the cursor. Year 2 pupils are at an early stage of word processing using the backspace to make corrections and applying full stops and question marks. Because the school has only recently purchased the necessary software, junior pupils currently have no experience of controlling devices. Adults appropriately support pupils with special educational needs when working at the computer and they make similar progress to their peers. Indeed, in some literacy and numeracy lessons, pupils with special educational needs use information and communication technology to support their work and improve skills in both areas when the rest of the class write their answers.

147 The teaching of information and communication technology is generally sound. Teachers have received the appropriate training. However, some teachers still lack confidence in teaching the subject. This is reflected in their responses to unexpected events and in failing to stress the habits pupils need to develop when using information and communication technology, such as saving work regularly. Opportunities to compare use of the computer with other ways of doing tasks are rarely discussed. However, teachers do focus on the basic skills that are the objective of the particular lesson, use the relevant technical vocabulary and provide suitable activities to enable pupils to practise the new procedures. At best they use the Smart<sup>1</sup> board effectively to ensure pupils concentrate on knowing the procedures needed, and use time efficiently to introduce new work at a suitable rate. Teachers use support staff appropriately to provide assistance to individual pupils to overcome problems. However, different work is seldom planned to match pupils' needs, so in practice all pupils often work at the rate of the less confident and new learning is sometimes too slowly achieved. Teachers' expectations in this respect have a significant impact on progress. In the better lessons, pupils all confidently used newly-taught procedures, but peers in a class in the same year group lack independence and prefer an adult to do the work for them. Teachers who anticipate possible errors or allow pupils to show wrong procedures on the Smart board effectively assist them in suggesting ways to cope if mistakes are made. Homework is sometimes used effectively to support information and communication technology lessons, such as Year 4 pupils preparing ideas for improvement to the classroom in advance of a session where they are to re-order their lists.

---

<sup>1</sup> An interactive whiteboard connected to the computer network which enables commands given by touching the screen to be observed on it

However, on too many occasions the school expects pupils to use information and communication technology skills at home which have not been securely learnt in lessons, such as selecting, accessing and processing information from the Internet. Pupils are not helped by the American-English dictionaries on the computer and are frustrated by indicators of misspelling of words, for example colour (color).

148 Planning does not regularly incorporate information and communication technology across the curriculum, so pupils acquire skills in isolation and do not learn that it is a valuable tool for learning, such as in editing, sorting and presenting information. When information and communication technology is written into plans it does not necessarily match the computer skills development being taught in information and communication technology lessons for the same age group. Although planning is regularly monitored by senior staff, this has not been identified for review. Limited opportunities are offered to use computers outside the timetabled lessons. The school has rightly introduced a system for assessing pupils' computer skills, but this is recent and is not being used to match work to pupils' needs so that progress is accelerated by targeting support to ensure small difficulties do not detract from full participation in lessons.

In order to raise standards in information and communication technology, the school should:

- assess pupils' skills more effectively and planning lessons that build on these skills;
- provide more regular practice at skills;
- apply skills across the curriculum;
- give the subject a higher profile in the school;
- use the medium as a tool for learning as well as teaching it as a subject.

## MUSIC

149 Attainment in terms of performing and knowledge of music is broadly average in the juniors as at the time of the last inspection. Evidence of standards in music in the infants was too limited to make an overall judgement, and there was also too little evidence to judge composing or appraising of music in the juniors and the progress of different groups of pupils. Scrutiny of teachers' planning indicates that junior pupils have limited opportunities to compose music.

150 Throughout the school pupils sing tunefully and with clear diction. Singing is suitably sensitive during collective worship, and Year 6 pupils sing *John Brown's Body* animatedly in their lesson about the context of lyrics. Year 6 pupils have an appropriate awareness of pulse and rhythm and apply this in their early attempts to write some new lyrics to *John Brown's Body*. They are also able to identify small differences between the melody of *John Brown's Body* and *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. Higher attaining pupils have some basic knowledge of standard music notation, recognising the symbols such as treble clef and crotchet rest. Most pupils are aware that lyrics are written for different contexts, such as protest songs. Both Year 6 and Year 4 pupils recognise changes in pitch. Higher attaining Year 4 pupils identify notes in the pentatonic scale<sup>2</sup> when played on the glockenspiel, and most can say which is the higher or lower note of two. Year 4 pupils recognise string and woodwind instruments in a piece of Asian music they hear. In assembly junior pupils give some facts about Vivaldi's life as a result of him being featured as 'composer of the month', and some pupils have done further research on facts about the composers featured in the past.

151 Teaching was sound in one of the two music lessons observed and good in the other. Teachers plan suitable activities which interest pupils. They introduce and use the

---

<sup>2</sup> Scale using first, second, third, fifth and sixth notes of a standard scale

relevant technical vocabulary so that pupils learn to use it. When appropriate, teachers demonstrate themselves and set a good example when, for example, leading singing so that pupils have a standard to emulate. Pupils are managed well so that they can lead activities themselves and offer their own ideas and perform confidently when expected to do so. However, there is evidence of lack of teacher confidence when performance needs improving, both in feedback given, the amount of practice provided to refine performance and in expectations of what pupils can achieve.

152 Although planning has been monitored, the school has yet to work through the full implications of switching to a new scheme of work. For instance, where certain skills are introduced earlier under the new scheme of work, plans have not been amended to ensure pupils acquire them before tackling related work. The co-ordinator does not have the time (being employed part-time), confidence or expertise to lead the development of the subject even though it is currently a priority on the school development plan. She was not involved in lesson observations of music lessons and therefore is not in a position to contribute significantly to improving provision for the subject. The last inspection report criticised the contribution of music to pupils' cultural development but, apart from an improved range of percussion instruments, little has been done and this aspect does not feature in the latest subject action plan for the co-ordinator. Planning includes limited examples of music from non-Western cultures and little music other than classical. Information and communication technology is seldom used to support the subject. Peripatetic instrument lessons and an after-school guitar club enhance provision, as does participation in local concerts and a festival.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

153 Standards in physical education have improved since the previous inspection. A key issue at that time was the lack of any provision for swimming: pupils now learn to swim in Years 4, 5 and 6 and the great majority (about 90 per cent) reach the target of swimming 25 metres unaided. Dance has also improved, and pupils in the juniors are reaching standards above the expected level due to the quality of teaching they receive. Standards in gymnastics remain sound in both infants and juniors, as does infant dance. It is not possible to comment on standards in games as only one lesson was seen, and athletics are, appropriately, a summer activity. All aspects of the physical education programme are planned for, including outdoor and adventurous activities, which take place as part of the Year 5 and 6 residential visits.

154 All pupils are fully involved in lessons, and those with special educational needs make the same sound progress as their classmates, sometimes with additional support from learning support practitioners. Both infants and juniors enjoy their physical education lessons, and have positive attitudes to the subject; occasionally, as in a Year 2 games lesson, this leads to a level of noise which affects their progress in learning new skills. Pupils co-operate well, whether in pairs or small groups; there are good examples of this in gymnastics in Year 4 and dance in Years 3 and 6. It is refreshing to see boys and girls in Year 6 working together without embarrassment as they create a dance. Teachers encourage independence by expecting even the youngest pupils to set out apparatus, and pupils do this sensibly and safely.

155 The difference in quality between pupils' performance in gymnastics and dance relates to the teaching of skills and the expectations of teachers. In gymnastics many pupils, in both infant and junior classes, have difficulty in performing basic skills such as forward rolls. When asked to link different movements and balances into a sequence they show limited control, being more interested in doing the activity than in improving it. Teachers offer plenty of general encouragement but there is little focus on specific skills in either

planning or teaching. Pupils are not expected to hold a start or finish position, show poise and control in their movement or move with smoothness and grace. When they are challenged indirectly, by being asked to demonstrate to their classmates, there is a distinct improvement in quality.

156 In contrast, dance lessons in the juniors show a high level of expectation. Pupils are encouraged but there is also good use of questioning and discussion to raise standards of performance. Pupils watch each other and offer constructive comments on what they see. Praise is used to reward good work and to encourage improvement. Pupils understand the vocabulary of dance and as a result respond to teachers' instructions. Creative and innovative ideas are pursued, and pupils are expected to refine their performance. Music is carefully chosen and pupils relate their movements to it, using it to link their actions together.

157 Teaching is always at least sound and is good overall, with the best teaching being seen in the juniors. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils, making lessons productive as little time is spent on pupil management. The use of warm-ups is inconsistent, although all teachers use them and often discuss their effects with the pupils. Where they are good, as in Years 4 and 5, they are carefully controlled, with muscle stretches and a gradual build up; in other lessons they are too brief and just involve a quick activity. The use of exemplars, where pupils watch each other perform, was criticised as lacking in the last report. Teachers now make better use of this, although pupils are not always encouraged to watch carefully and comment on what they see.

158 The co-ordinator has led the subject for a year. She has made useful links with both the high school and Sports Development Unit, leading to increased opportunities for pupils and some training for teachers. She has yet to develop a clear picture of standards and progress throughout the school to refine practice and ensure that pupils develop and build on their skills consistently. The recently introduced assessments at the end of each teaching unit will support this.