

INSPECTION REPORT

MILL LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Shirley, Solihull

LEA area: Solihull

Unique reference number: 104057

Headteacher: Mrs L Coaché

Reporting inspector: Mr Alan Blank
8358

Dates of inspection: 30th September - 2nd October 2002

Inspection number: 246346
Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Aqueduct Road
Shirley
Solihull

Postcode: B90 1BT

Telephone number: 0121 430 3010

Fax number: 0121 430 8815

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Christine Thomas

Date of previous inspection: January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8358	Alan Blank	Registered inspector	Science Geography Physical education	Characteristics of the school How high are standards? - The school's results and achievements. How well pupils are taught
9928	Alan Dobson	Lay inspector		How high are standards? - Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18709	Nina Bee	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Music The Foundation Stage Equal opportunities	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
25384	Rob Bonner	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Religious education.	How well is the school led and managed?
22624	Sally Kaminski-Gaze	Team inspector	English English as an additional language History Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

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

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Mill Lodge is an average sized primary school with 248 pupils on roll, aged between 3 and 11 years, almost all of whom are from a white UK background. There are four pupils who have English as an additional language and one of these is at early stage of learning English. The school has its own nursery and also benefits from having a private nursery on site that provides care for children at both ends of the school day. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than average at 8%. The number of pupils on the register for special educational needs, at 23, is below average. Two pupils have formal statements of need. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is average in some years and in others it is below average. There have been a lot of staff changes in the last few years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Mill Lodge is a good school that has many very good features. Pupils generally reach above average standards by the time they leave. The majority of teaching is good or better and this enables all groups of pupils to make good progress over time. The school runs smoothly because it is well led and managed and it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Enables its pupils to reach above and sometimes well above average standards in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and religious education by the end of Year 6.
- The majority of teaching is good or better.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall is very good.
- Procedures for promoting good attendance and behaviour are very good.
- The quality of leadership and management are both good.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in reading writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1.
- The overall quality of regular day-to-day marking and the use of assessment information.

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 1997. Inspectors noted that the school needed to provide greater challenge for higher attaining pupils and improve standards in information technology. Good progress has been made on these issues and others regarding the management of the school. In the use of assessment to inform teaching, insufficient progress has been made. Standards have improved in the juniors, but have fallen in the infants. On the evidence of this inspection the quality of teaching has improved. Higher attaining pupils are well provided for and make good progress. The school is well placed to continue to improve, particularly if the current staffing situation remains stable.

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
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	A	A	A
Mathematics	C	A	A	A
Science	A	B	C	C

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

The school's results have shown an overall improvement for three consecutive years from 1999 to 2001. It has consistently met or exceeded its targets. When the results in all three core subjects of English, mathematics and science are considered together, standards are above average and sometimes well above those nationally and those of schools that are similar to Mill Lodge. The results in tests in 2002 are not confirmed at the time of writing, but they appear to be lower in English and mathematics and higher in science.

Annual fluctuations in performance do, and will continue to occur reflecting the significant difference in the ability of different year groups. Pupils' attainment on entry to school and on leaving the reception class varies from average to below average in different years. However this does not fully explain the differences recorded in attainment at the end of Year 2. Here, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have moved from well above average in 1999 to well below average in 2000, about average in 2001 and provisionally well below average again in 2002. Lower standards are largely due to the achievement of lower attaining pupils, the majority of whom are boys, whose progress in the odd lesson is unsatisfactory. The progress of all groups of pupils, including higher attaining and those with special educational needs is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors and Foundation Stage. Recent results suggest that most pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and is at least good and sometimes very good in Key Stage 2. Currently, standards in Key Stage 1 are average in all subjects, and in Key Stage 2, they are at least average, and above average in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and religious education. Targets for 2003 are very ambitious and if achieved will result in above or even well above standards being reached.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good. They like school and are keen to do well and learn. They respond well to challenging work and are proud to be part of the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in classes and around the school is good. Pupils understand rules and think they are fair. Movement around school is orderly and behaviour in the dining room is good.
Personal development and relationships	The personal and social development of pupils is one of the main aims of the school; its provision and the results it obtains are very good. Relationships throughout the school are very good.
Attendance	Attendance rates are well above average reflecting both pupils' attitudes and the rigorous monitoring of attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching in the nursery and reception classes, known as the Foundation Stage, is consistently good. In Years 1 and 2 teaching is satisfactory overall, though in half the lessons seen the teaching was judged as good. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is good overall. Nearly a third of the teaching seen was judged to be very good or excellent and more than a third was good. The rest of the teaching was, nearly all, satisfactory. In only in one lesson of the 40 observed was the teaching judged to be unsatisfactory, and that was largely due the fact that lower attaining pupils did not make sufficient progress in an English lesson. This profile of teaching, and information from pupils' work, indicates that teaching is good overall and that it has improved since the last inspection. General strengths in teaching are the good subject knowledge that teachers have, and their use of resources and learning support assistants in most classes. Teachers manage pupils well and the quality of questioning used by teachers is often good, ensuring that all pupils are involved and that their ideas and understanding are probed effectively. Where teaching sometimes falls below a good standard, the activities planned by teachers do not match the different abilities of pupils in classes closely enough, and very occasionally support assistants lack the skills to support pupils effectively. Pupils with special educational needs learn well when they are supported by the special needs coordinator, particularly in some literacy lessons. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall and the teaching of numeracy is good. There are examples of pupils' learning in both literacy and numeracy being developed well in other subjects such as geography and science. The school makes good provision for the progress of higher attaining pupils, those who have statements of special education need, and the few who have English as an additional language. These pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2 and the Foundation Stage. The school makes very good use of specialist teaching in design technology and music.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum provided by the school is rich. Pupils benefit from specialist provision in design and technology and music. The range of out of school activities and school visits is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is good. The provision for other pupils is satisfactory though in the odd lesson work needs to be matched more closely to their abilities and the support they receive in some lessons needs to be better informed.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The quality of support provided for these pupils is good and this is matched by the overall progress they make, which is the same as that of other pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The provision for personal development is very good and is a strength of the school. Pupils' social development is especially good. They learn to respect each other and understand the importance of tolerance and honesty.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The quality of care for pupils is very good. Pupils' personal development and their academic progress are monitored well. Procedures for monitoring behaviour and attendance are also very good.

The school's partnership with parents is very effective in promoting pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior management team provide good leadership for the school. They are clear about the educational direction the school needs to take and they plan and manage changes well. The role of subject coordinator has been developed well since the last inspection.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. It monitors spending and school development well and plays an important part in the school's long term planning. Governor awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses is very good. There is a clear link between the school's aims and its performance.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Most of the school's initiatives have centred on raising the attainment of older pupils. The school has not responded as well to the low attainment of younger pupils, though this has been hampered by exceptionally high changes in staffing.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Whilst the use of learning support assistants is generally effective, some require more training in how to support lower attaining pupils. The use of resources, staff and very good accommodation is effective. The school takes great care to get the best for its money, sometimes ignoring conventional means of acquiring resources and services and using more cost effective methods.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like coming to school. • Teaching is good. • The school works closely with parents, who feel they can approach the school with problems. • Behaviour is good and pupils are helped to become mature. • The school is well led and it provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work children are expected to do at home. Some parents feel there is too much and some too little. • A few parents do not feel well informed about progress. • A small number of parents think their children are given inappropriate work.

Inspectors agreed with parents' positive views. They found the provision of homework to be satisfactory. The quality of information on the pupils' progress is judged to be good. The inspectors found that some pupils, particularly those who are struggling with a subject, are very occasionally, not being given work that is appropriate to their needs. In this the inspectors agree with the parents' concerns.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 At the time of the last inspection children's attainment was judged as average when they entered the school. Since then the attainment of children entering the nursery and reception classes has varied. Information gathered by the school shows that in some years attainment is average, but in others it is below average. There are annual differences, but in recent years the overall trend has been towards lower attainment on entry. Until this year, children have made satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage of education, though a few have not made the progress expected. This has meant that in year groups where the attainment is below average, pupils have entered Year 1 with below average attainment and this has had an impact on the standards reached at the end of Key Stage 1.

Key Stage 1

2 Results in national tests in 1998 showed that standards were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. In 1999 a similar picture of high standards was achieved when results were well above average in reading and mathematics and writing was average. Then in 2000, the results plummeted to well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. The year group was identified as lower ability generally, it had more children with special educational needs in it and an exceptionally high number of boys, who at this age do not perform as well girls generally, but even more so at Mill Lodge in reading and writing. Results improved in 2001 to average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing, this remained the same when results were compared to those of similar schools. However, provisional results in 2002 tests indicate well below average attainment in all three elements. This irregular pattern of attainment is to some extent explained by the ability of pupils within different year groups, but not wholly. There have been considerable changes in staffing, and the quality of information available for teachers in Year 1, about children coming from the reception classes, has not always helped them to plan effectively. The low standards reflect the increasing numbers of lower attaining pupils, most of whom appear to be boys. Observations from the inspection suggest that these pupils require work that is better matched to their ability and more informed support to improve their progress. The progress of pupils generally through Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, though results in 2001 raised concerns; the year group had a significant number of pupils with low attainment and very few with above average. Current standards in Year 2 are average in all subjects, this would indicate that standards have fallen in science, improved in physical education and information communication technology (ICT) and remained the same in other subjects since the time of the last inspection.

Key Stage 2

3 Standards in English and mathematics have been consistently above or well above average in national tests since 1998. In science they have fluctuated a little more, though they are never less than average, and above average in 2000 and well above average in 1998. The only break with this trend was the result in mathematics in 1999 when standards were below average. The school has managed to keep pace with national improvement in standards, but almost always above the average for schools nationally. The results in 2001 showed standards that were well above average in English and mathematics and average in science compared to schools nationally and similar schools. There were some very interesting features of the results. Over half of pupils attained the higher level 5 in English

and over a third did the same in mathematics; both proportions far exceed the average figure nationally. When this group's performance in Year 2 is compared with the results in Year 6, progress is seen to have been good. Provisional results in tests taken in 2002 suggest that attainment is average in English and mathematics and is above and possibly well above average in science. Two pupils achieved an extremely high level 6 in mathematics, an example of how higher attaining pupils are challenged, a shortcoming raised during the last inspection. The annual fluctuations in standards are, as yet, much smaller in Key Stage 2. Current standards in Year 6, who are generally a more able year group, are above average in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and religious education. In all other subjects standards are average. This suggests that standards have remained the same, since the last inspection, in all subjects except music, where they have fallen, but are still average, and ICT and religious education where they have improved. The school has consistently met its targets relating to attainment in Key Stage 2, and the targets for 2003 are very challenging, which if achieved, will result in above and possibly well above average standards. Pupils make good progress over time in Key Stage 2 and their achievement is good. The progress made by pupils who have special educational needs is the same as other pupils. In some year groups, for instance year 5, where there are a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, these pupils progress and learn at a rate similar to other pupils. The number of such pupils and those of lower attainment generally, is growing in younger age groups and the school needs to reflect on its teaching and support strategies to help these pupils to learn as effectively as possible. In one lesson in literacy, lower ability pupils did not make satisfactory progress. Pupils who have English as an additional language are well supported and make progress that is the same as the majority of other pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

4 Pupils have very good attitudes to school life. Their behaviour is good and relationships are very good. By the time pupils leave the school they display very strong personal qualities. These judgements are similar to the previous inspection. Attendance continues to be well above the national average for primary schools. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in personal and social development.

5 Pupils like going to Mill Lodge School – a fact confirmed by pupils and parents alike. Pupils think it is a good school and are proud to be there. In class, they settle down quickly and most are eager to learn. Lessons tend to be characterised by attentive and alert pupils who are keen to participate. They generally work hard and respond very well to challenging work – although the work set is occasionally too hard for some pupils. Their positive attitude to learning is sustained throughout the school and is as apparent in Year 6 as it is in reception. For instance, in a Year 6 music lesson on developing rhythms within an eight beat format - a difficult task - pupils concentrated hard and worked at it for a long time until they had achieved success. Pupils take homework seriously.

6 Behaviour in the school is good. Pupils know and understand the rules and think they are fair. The collection of house points and other rewards for good behaviour are taken seriously. In lessons, the atmosphere is conducive to learning, however at times, a few pupils offer challenging behaviour. This is largely ignored by the rest of the class and quickly sorted out by the teachers. Movement around the school is orderly. Behaviour in assemblies and in the dining room is good. Play areas have a very friendly atmosphere with pupils playing happily together. No signs of oppressive behaviour were seen during the inspection. Pupils report that bullying is not a problem and that any incidents, usually name calling – are dealt with speedily and effectively by the teachers. There have been no incidents of racism or exclusions in recent times. Parents are very happy with behaviour in the school.

7 The school is a friendly community where relationships are very good. Pupils get on very well with each other and the many adults in the school. They are polite and courteous and make visitors welcome. When working in groups, pupils collaborate well and are prepared to listen to each other's opinions.

8 Pupils make very good use of the many opportunities provided by the school to develop their personal qualities. They take very seriously their role in the way their class and the school develop through sensible discussions in class councils and in the school council. Older pupils are enthusiastic about being involved in helping to run the school - responsibilities range from setting up the hall for assembly to supervising the number of pupils on the adventure playground. Pupils are keen to acquire skills in learning independently, for instance using ICT equipment during breaks. Care and consideration for others is rated highly by the pupils. This is particularly well exemplified by the way Year 6 pupils work collaboratively once a week with pupils with learning difficulties from a nearby school. During the inspection, pupils of both schools were fully integrated in a lesson making puppets as part of a long-term project to produce a puppet show. This lesson encapsulated extremely well the strengths of older pupils at the school – good behaviour, sensible attitudes and a clear respect for others.

9 Attendance at the school is very good. Pupils are punctual, registration is prompt and lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

10 At the time of the last inspection the quality of teaching was good or very good in half of the lessons seen. Of the rest, 13 per cent of teaching was judged unsatisfactory and the rest satisfactory. During the current inspection there were four teachers who were new to the school and in post for a matter of weeks, two of these were newly qualified. Nevertheless the current profile of teaching is a much more positive picture, reflecting the school's introduction of a teaching and learning policy after the last inspection. Forty-three lessons were observed during the inspection and of these teaching was judged at least good in 27 and in eight of these teaching was judged very good or excellent. Of the rest, in 13, teaching was satisfactory, except in one lesson where it was unsatisfactory.

11 The judgement of the quality of teaching is based on lesson observations and other information such as the analysis of pupils' work. The overall judgement of 'good' masks some significant differences between key stages. In the Foundation Stage classes of nursery and reception the teaching is never less than good and there is a little that is very good. In Key Stage 1, where it is satisfactory overall, about half the teaching seen was satisfactory and half was good. In Key Stage 2 teaching is good overall, with roughly a third of lessons being very good or excellent, another third good, and a final third satisfactory. In only one lesson was teaching unsatisfactory.

12 Teachers generally make good use of resources such as a projection microscope that displays images of mould growing on bread and other foodstuffs as part of work on microbes in Year 6. Pupils are enthralled by the images and ask questions such as "Is that hair on it, and how quickly does it grow?" Often in good and very good lessons teachers display very good knowledge, such as in an English lesson in Year 5 when the teacher develops scenes from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth*. Pupils were encouraged to speak out as they played their parts and they learned that when the original plays were performed the parts of women were played by men. Teachers are often well supported by learning support assistants, such as in a Year 1 mathematics lesson where pupils' learning was enhanced as the assistant helped a group of pupils to understand more clearly during the introduction to the lesson and then worked skilfully with a group of pupils carrying out

calculations using coins in group work. The excellent teaching was seen in Year 6 as part of a project that enables Mill Lodge pupils to work with pupils from a nearby school who have moderate learning disabilities. The ratio of adults to pupils was very high and staff and pupils were highly motivated by the experience. Most importantly, pupils' personal and social development was enhanced exceptionally well. Pupils worked in groups that were mixed, helping each other, and learning side by side in an atmosphere that was industrious, harmonious and joyful.

13 In the occasional lesson the support assistants are less effective in supporting less able pupils, some of whom may have special educational needs. They lack the expertise to promote learning or control the groups so that they work well and this may be something for the school to look at. This was noticeable in Year 3, and was the major reason for the overall teaching to be judged as unsatisfactory, but in most lessons pupils are supported very well, for instance in Year 5, where there are a large number of pupils who have special educational needs. Other pupils with special educational needs, those who have a statement of special educational needs, and those being supported by the special needs coordinator, learn well and make good progress.

14 A general strength of teaching is the ease with which teachers manage pupils, trading on good relationships that are formed quickly with new classes. The provision for the teaching of literacy is satisfactory, whilst for numeracy, provision is good and lessons are tailored to meet the range of abilities in classes. Sometimes in literacy lessons this is not the case. More use could be made of marking to provide pupils with greater knowledge of their own learning and how to improve. Pupils with English as an additional language are well taught and supported and the school has systems in place that challenge more able pupils, some of whom are especially talented particularly in mathematics, in Key Stage 2.

15 Teaching within individual subjects is at least satisfactory. In some, such as design and technology and music, lessons are delivered by specialist teachers who are especially knowledgeable and skilled, and teaching in these subjects is good throughout the school. In design and technology for instance the teacher knows how to teach cutting and shaping skills properly and has the resources to enable pupils to design and make products that look good and have mechanisms that actually work. In science, teaching is good in Key Stage 2. No actual teaching was seen in Key Stage 1 during the inspection but work from the whole of last year suggests that teaching is at least satisfactory. In Key Stage 2 work done by pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 reveals a clear understanding of how to prepare lessons of a practical nature that motivate pupils and develop their skills in investigating and experimenting sometimes choosing very interesting investigations such as finding the relative strength of different magnets.

16 Teaching in English and mathematics is good throughout the school. In all other subjects teaching is satisfactory. However in ICT, art and design and religious education there was too little evidence was available to make secure judgements on the quality of teaching.

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

17 The curricular opportunities available for pupils are good. The school ensures that the educational experiences offered to the pupils are broad, balanced and relevant. The school's approach to provide an inclusive education is satisfactory and has some strengths and all pupils have the opportunity to be included in the activities offered. A very good example was seen when pupils met after school for the 'Imagineering Club'. This is made up of a group of more able design and technology pupils and includes a number of pupils

identified with special educational needs. All pupils are given the opportunity to take part in residential visits, which are run annually. A minor weakness is that a few pupils miss important parts of lessons when they receive extra music tuition, though the school does attempt to compensate for this and some time spent out of other lessons is unavoidable. This hinders learning within that lesson and may affect progress over time if they miss the same lesson each week. All statutory requirements are met and appropriate provision is made for religious education. The previous report noted that the provision for ICT was inadequate. This is no longer the case. Policies are in place for all subjects and teachers plan lessons using the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. In addition there are clear guidelines for teachers to plan for all other subjects. This ensures the progressive teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding. Lesson planning for all subjects is generally satisfactory. Some English lessons need to be planned with greater regard for the different abilities of pupils in classes. The school has specialist teachers for the teaching of design and technology and music.

18 Good provision is made for personal, social and health education (PSHE), including sex education and information on drug misuse. All pupils learn how to keep their bodies healthy in science and physical education lessons and PSHE is planned for each week during regular 'circle times'. There is well-established school council that starts in all classrooms and develops into the full school council, with representatives from all classes. The school council meets once each month after school and successes of previous councils are the development of the attractive seating area, which has recently been built, and the adventure playground which is used enthusiastically by all pupils. An example of the success is the lack of litter around the school, because pupils recognised that this was an issue and worked together to develop a programme to alleviate the problem. The school has recently adopted new guidelines for teachers to follow for PSHE which results in all pupils having the opportunity to discuss many topics which develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.

19 The provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when there was minor criticism of the planning for these children. It is planned according to the Early Learning Goals, and activities are interesting and well thought out. There are regular opportunities for structured outside play for both classes.

20 The overall provision for pupils who have special educational needs is satisfactory. In most lessons pupils' special needs are catered for through different tasks, or special support from teachers and other adult helpers. In one lesson in Year 3, lower attaining pupils, some of whom have special educational needs, did not receive work or support that was appropriate and they did not make satisfactory progress during the lesson as a result. This is not the general case however. The quality of learning targets for pupils who have special educational needs is variable. Some are clear such as 'count in tens to one hundred' or 'leave spaces between words'. Others are vague such as 'avoid blaming others'. Pupils, when asked, are not always aware of the specific targets for learning and sometimes teachers confuse targets with strategies for achieving them, for instance 'attend extension maths sessions' is included as a target. Systems for identifying children with special educational needs are good in the Foundation Stage, but the school may want to review its current systems for similar identification in the infants. There may be a few a few pupils in Year 3, who have passed through the infants, who are not currently on the register and whose progress could be improved if they were. More use could be made of teachers' knowledge of these pupils in their short term planning, identifying specific tasks and support with greater clarity. This level of planning is currently under review.

21 Many subjects are satisfactorily linked together in the planning and there are some good opportunities in lessons to reinforce skills taught in previous lessons. A good example was seen during a Year 5 lesson where the specialist music teacher promoted listening and the development of social skills well as pupils performed in groups after working well together composing different rhythm patterns. Mathematic skills were used well during a Year 6 design and technology lesson as pupils confidently cut wood successfully after measuring it accurately.

22 The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities that are well supported and open to many year groups. They support learning well outside the school day. In Years 4, 5, and 6 pupils have regular opportunities to participate in sporting activities such as football, including some football coaching, fitness for fun and netball. There are also opportunities for pupils to become drawn into activities that include drama and the Nature Club, which is open to younger pupils in Year 1, 2 and 3. More able pupils in Key Stage 2 are invited to take part in the 'Imagineering Club' that looks in depth at the subject of design and technology. All pupils are integrated into these activities, including the residential visits that are offered to pupils in the upper part of the school.

23 There is a well-planned programme of educational visits and visitors who are invited into school to support and enrich most curriculum areas. This has been maintained since the previous inspection. All pupils have the opportunity to participate in them. They all support learning well and add much to pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils in Year 1 visit a butterfly farm and this links well with their English, art and science programme. Photographic evidence shows how infants listened to a lady who came in and spoke to them about how a new baby has to be cared for. Work completed after the visit shows good links with PSHE, English and art and design. Pupils in Year 3 visit a local church, which enhances their religious education lessons. In Years 3 and 4 the pupils visit special exhibitions in a museum in Birmingham to develop a better understanding of the Ancient Greeks and Egyptians, who they study in history. Year 4 have taken part in an Indian Workshop where they learnt about Indian art and dance which promoted their cultural development greatly as well as their art and physical education programme. Pupils in Year 5 visit an airport and Coventry Cathedral, which enhances their topic on 'Journeys' as well as their geography and religious education programme. Residential visits are arranged for pupils in the upper part of the school. These include an adventure week and a music and creative art course, which is open to all schools in Solihull.

24 Links with the local schools are good. They are very good with a local special school as pupils come into Year 6 and work with them developing three-dimensional artwork. They make papier-maché puppets and then develop a production, which is later performed in both schools. This experience promotes all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well. The local secondary schools, to which pupils regularly transfer to, send students on work experience, to work in the school. In addition the school houses student teachers from Warwick University and the University of Central England, and child care students from Solihull College. Good links have been developed with the local private nursery and child care facilities, which are based on the school site. Liaison is good and both nurseries join for annual events in the school such as the nativity play at Christmas and the Foundation Stage sports day. The school accommodates the 'before and after school care' which includes a number of children from other local primary schools being cared for each morning and evening.

25 There are good links with the community and in particular with two local businesses. Pupils in Years 2, 4 and 6 have the opportunity to work with a representative from Land Rover, which enhances their understanding of science and design and technology issues. The Imagineering Club visited a local factory and an engineer is now working with them

weekly in their after-school club. Their skills, knowledge and understanding in design and technology are greatly enriched by this link. Visitors, including those from local churches are regularly invited into school to talk to the pupils and support a number of areas of the curriculum well. For example, during the inspection a representative from the Salvation Army came in and talked to the pupils during assembly. The school links with different charities to raise monies for a variety of organisations. They are currently preparing for a harvest festival and produce collected will be given to Birmingham's homeless, which adds to pupils' moral development. The school's facilities are leased to different organisations, which the pupils and their families can benefit from. For example the nursery facilities are leased to the mother and toddler group each week. There are regular lettings to the Rainbows and the Guides and a Sunday morning church letting. A few classes are held during the week such as a goal keeping and a keep fit class. The local community are often invited into school to watch school productions. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in many areas are reinforced by the school's links with the local community.

26 The school's provision for pupils' personal development is very good and a strength of the school. Within the overall provision, social and moral development are very strong, spiritual and cultural development are good. This aspect has improved since the previous inspection.

27 The school treats this provision very seriously and sees its success as an essential ingredient in raising academic standards. Consequently considerable thought and effort has gone into providing opportunities for pupils to develop qualities that will serve them well in future life. The provision is apparent throughout the school but is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6. Personal and social development is a timetabled subject that is well planned across the whole school.

28 Pupils are encouraged to form opinions and make choices. Class discussion, in the form of circle time, is used well particularly with younger pupils to develop speaking and listening skills, build self-esteem and to cover areas where pupils might have concerns. Class councils allow pupils to be involved in how their class operates and to set their own standards and rules. Meetings are run well by the pupils themselves with very little teacher intervention. Agendas, and the need for formal proposals very effectively encourage sensible discussions. At a higher level, the school council gives pupils a powerful say in the overall running of the school, for instance, in recent decisions on the activities available in the play areas.

29 Pupils are taught well to show respect and consideration to others. Assemblies cover a wide range of personal issues such as jealousy, tolerance, and honesty. The school considers politeness, good manners and respect very important. For instance, at the beginning of the school year, each class has a discussion on what is expected of them, this includes what the teacher expects but also contributions from other staff on what they expect from the pupils, including the caretaker, the cook and the dinner supervisor. Pupils are left in no doubt of the school's high expectations. Pupils are also made aware that rights come with responsibilities. For instance in the Year 5 classroom, a notice lists that pupils have the right to be taught well, but the teacher has the right to expect good behaviour. Teaching an ability to work well with others is a vital part of the school's provision. Pupils are given many opportunities to work collaboratively. This is at its most impressive in the project in Year 6 for a joint lesson once a week with pupils with learning difficulties from a nearby school. The work is well planned covering a long-term period. It currently involves making puppets, writing a play and performing the play using the puppets. This project allows pupils from both schools regularly to mix together, get to know each other, work collaboratively – and produce something worthwhile.

30 Spiritual development is well covered, with a good range of themes in assembly. Pupils are usually given time to reflect on the theme during the act of collective worship. The new playground facilities with a quiet area allow infants space to think and appreciate the wonders of nature – during the inspection pupils were sitting quietly by raised beds full of flowers – none of which had been damaged. Teachers make good use of opportunities to develop pupils’ beliefs and insights, for instance, in a Year 6 religious education lesson, pupils developed their thoughts on what it might have been like to be a non-white American in a segregated Southern state forty years ago.

31 Cultural development is broad. Pupils are made aware of their own culture through, for instance, the work of Shakespeare and the music of Mozart. Other faiths are studied such as Judaism and Islam, together with how the faith impacts on their society. Pupils learn about people in other lands, for instance, in Year 3, pupils are corresponding with children in Taiwan.

32 Provision in personal development is well supported by a good range of books in the library covering such areas as the environment, history, art and also insights into disabilities that affect children.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33 The school takes very good care of its pupils. This is a similar judgement to the previous inspection.

34 The school is a friendly community where, in spite of considerable staff changes, pupils seem well known to the adults. Pupils commented to the inspectors on the friendliness of the teachers. Parents commented on good relations between teachers and children. Pupils are well supervised at all times. Parents are right to feel that their children are safe, secure and happy whilst at school.

35 Procedures for child protection are very good. The named person has been fully trained, the correct procedures are followed and staff are regularly updated on current good practice. Health and safety are taken seriously. There are termly inspections of the premises, equipment is regularly checked and all accidents are correctly recorded. There are regular fire drills – a point criticised in the previous inspection. The school has appropriate systems in place to ensure safe use of the Internet.

36 Procedures for monitoring attendance are very good. Registers are very well kept and monitored weekly. Absences without reason are followed up and the school tries hard to dissuade parents from taking holidays in term time. Very good use is made of computers in recording and monitoring attendance, for instance each pupil has a detailed record of their attendance attached to their annual report.

37 The school’s behaviour policy is very good. Rules are clearly displayed and well understood by the pupils. High standards are expected and great stress is made on individual responsibility. Overall there is a consistent approach to discipline within the school, however individual teachers use reward systems most appropriate to their class. Good behaviour is recognised and recorded. There are clear systems for recording and dealing with bad behaviour, including bullying, and parents are informed when necessary. Pupils are regularly reminded of the school’s attitude to bullying, sexism and racism in assemblies and class discussions.

38 There are good procedures for monitoring pupils’ personal development. Good records are kept and a Record of Achievement updated termly and sent home at the end of

Year 6. The quality of the sections on the pupils' annual reports covering personal qualities is very good and pulls no punches when there is room for improvement.

39 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, though in the odd lesson the quality of support is insufficient to ensure the progress of pupils. In the vast majority it does and often pupils make good progress. Pupils who have a statement of special educational need receive good support, as do pupils who have English as an additional language. Pupils identified as gifted in mathematics are given special support that enables them to reach very high levels of attainment.

40 The quality and use of assessment was key issue for the school following the last inspection. There are a good number of monitoring systems in place for tracking pupils' progress. Collection of a variety testing data and interpreting trends in pupil attainment over time enables the school to have a comprehensive overview of successive year groups' attainment. Predictions of how well pupils are expected to achieve in the national tests are made using this information. The school has a good understanding of the 'big picture', how well year groups and ability groups have fared in national tests. They have identified, for example, that some boys are underachieving in reading and writing. Targets have also been set in response to analysis. However, often these are general and do not address the specific learning needs for individual pupils.

41 With the support of the local education authority inspector, data is analysed and targets set. The follow through of this analysis, adapting the curriculum to meet the learning needs of the pupils is having mixed success, and for one ability group in particular, is too slow. As a result of analysis, to improve the attainment in mathematics, a special teaching group was set up with admirable results in improving attainment very well. However, adapting the curriculum for younger, lower attaining pupils based on the results of assessment has not been as successful so far. Although targets have been set, adapting the curriculum, identifying exactly how the targets are to be achieved through the provision of appropriate resources, teaching styles and support are not clearly identified. It is this aspect which is not feeding through quickly or comprehensively enough into the curriculum. Close and detailed analysis of weaker areas of learning, based on all forms of assessment is not always used, for example, for Foundation Stage pupils moving into Year 1, and from Years 2 to 3. The staff have received training to support the development of assessment and the link with planning, but this has not had maximum impact on the learning of all pupils.

42 The quality of teachers' assessment of pupils' learning on their short term planning is inconsistent and in some cases unsatisfactory. The current planning format is under review.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43 Parents have a very high opinion of the school and are supportive of the way their children are being educated. The school has a good local reputation.

44 Parents particularly like the school's high expectations of their children, the good teaching, the approachability of the staff, the way the school is led and the good behaviour. The inspectors agreed with all these views. Parents also reported that their children very much like going to school.

45 A few parents have concerns regarding homework. The inspectors disagree and found that the provision of homework is satisfactory. A small number of parents expressed concern about the appropriateness of some of the work their children are expected to do in class. The inspectors agree and found that some pupils, particularly those who are

struggling with a subject, are occasionally not being given work that is appropriate to their needs.

46 The quality of information available to parents is good. The prospectus and the governors' annual report give a good overview, particularly regarding the general aims of the school. Parents are well informed on what their child is about to learn, both over the coming year and over the next term. This information allows parents to be more effectively involved in their child's learning. Workshops are arranged so that parents have the opportunity of learning how subjects are taught – recently numeracy was covered – again encouraging parents to be involved in their child's learning. Information on their child's progress is good overall with a formal meeting with the class teacher in the spring term and if requested a meeting to follow up the report towards the end of the summer term. Pupils' reports are good. They meet legal requirements and outline what the child can do. The strongest sections of the report are those covering the child's general attitude and behaviour, and the suggestions on what the child should do to improve. These targets are clear and realistic. Many are written so that parents can be involved in helping the child to achieve the target. Apart from the Years 2 and Year 6, the reports do not contain information on the how the child is doing against national expectations. This makes it difficult for parents to monitor progress. A few parents thought they are not well informed about how their child is getting on. The inspectors disagree. Overall the quality of information is good.

47 The school tries hard to involve parents in the life of the school, but this is increasingly difficult with more parents working full time. The monthly family assemblies however are well attended and appreciated by parents. Parents who are governors are effectively involved in development of the school. There is an active parent teachers' association that is highly successful in combining social events and fund-raising. The home/school agreement has been signed by the vast majority of parents. The school uses questionnaires to monitor effectively parents' views on various aspects of the school with any negative comments being followed up.

48 Given the high regard parents hold the school, the approachability of the staff and the extent to which the school tries to involve parents particularly in their children's learning, the inspectors judge that the partnership is very effective.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49 The leadership and management of the school are good. This was the case at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher has provided good leadership in setting and maintaining the school's climate for learning. The aims of the school focus on the educational, social and personal development of the individual and are shared by all and underpin the work of the school. The school is committed to raising standards and promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils. There is clear understanding about where the school needs to improve, and a shared sense of determination to succeed and move forward. It is in a good position to make further improvements and has the capacity to achieve these.

50 The headteacher manages the school well. She communicates effectively with the staff, parents and governors and keeps them well informed. She ensures that staff and governors understand the school's priorities for development and works successfully as a team. She maintains a good balance between the strategic, administrative and monitoring elements of her work. In all of these she is well informed. She monitors the work of teachers in the classroom and has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of all staff. As a result of this monitoring professional development opportunities have been provided and strategic changes have been made to teaching staff to improve the quality of

education. There are three new teachers who have recently joined the school; two in the infants and one in the juniors. Each of these has settled well into their new classes.

51 The headteacher makes good use of assessment data to check standards, set targets and to monitor the progress pupils make as they move through the school. She knows that the standards being achieved by children on entry to the school are not as high as in previous years. In response to falling standards in English and mathematics in the nursery and infant classes, the headteacher has:

- taken remedial action to raise standards in writing, based on advice from the local education authority;
- allocated additional support staff to the infant classes; and,
- deployed the numeracy co-ordinator to work in the nursery and reception classes to raise standards in mathematics.

52 Frequent changes in staff in the infant classes have hindered progress to some degree. Nevertheless, the headteacher recognises that further measures need to be taken to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

53 The headteacher has a good understanding of the process of school improvement planning. There is a rigorous system in place for identifying the key areas for school development that involve staff and governors. The subject co-ordinators' contribution to the plan is based on a careful analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. The senior management team, in consultation with staff and governors, decides the priorities. The school improvement plan has a clear structure. A manageable number of areas for improvement are identified, including raising standards in English and mathematics and improving provision in ICT. All new initiatives are carefully appraised in relation to their likely costs. Although the school undertakes careful review of what has been achieved during a year, the school improvement plan does not include specific criteria against which the school can clearly measure its success.

54 The senior management team meets regularly and provides effective support to the headteacher. The deputy headteacher works very closely with the headteacher, and has taken a leading role in improving the provision of computer technology and the development of assessment procedures. Since the time of the last inspection there have been good improvements in the provision of computer technology and the standards that pupils achieve in ICT. The deputy headteacher has worked well in developing procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and the progress that they make. This includes data analysis and setting targets for improvement. However, this information still needs to be used more effectively to provide appropriately challenging work for all pupils.

55 The role of subject co-ordinators is at various stages of development. Literacy and numeracy co-ordinators monitor standards and evaluate the effectiveness of pupils' learning in the classroom. In other subjects, teachers work hard in their roles and are influential in their support of colleagues, providing guidance on a day-to-day basis. All subject co-ordinators are budget holders and monitor planning in their subject areas. At the end of each year they undertake an audit of their subjects and produce action plans that identify areas for future development.

56 The management of provision for pupils who have special educational needs is satisfactory. The coordinator has good knowledge of the pupils on the special needs register and provides good support when teaching and supporting pupils in classes and groups. Parents are kept informed about their children's progress and are invited to review meetings. The deployment of support staff is done through the headteacher, but the

coordinator has recently been given some responsibility for their professional development. The monitoring of the effectiveness of support is a feature for the school to review, particularly as the numbers of such pupils has, and is likely to continue, to increase.

57 The governing body is effective in its work and fulfils its statutory duties. There is a good committee structure with each committee having appropriate terms of reference. The knowledge and expertise of individual governors, for example financial and educational, is used very well. Chairs of committees speak knowledgeably about their areas of responsibility. There are good procedures to ensure that individual governors are kept well informed and play a vital role in shaping the direction of the school. For example, subject co-ordinators provide reports for members of the curriculum committee; the chair of finance receives budgetary information on a regular basis; and, the literacy governor has observed pupils learning in class. Governors have been involved in key financial decisions, for example the provision of computers in the computer suite. They explain clearly why they made their decisions and the positive impact that the improved provision has had on raising standards. Governors are also aware of the difficulties that staff changes have caused in the infant classes and are pleased with the new appointments they have made. In line with performance management procedures, the governing body has set targets for the headteacher. The governing body has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, how the school has improved and, where it needs to improve in the future.

58 The school has established efficient working practices to plan, manage and monitor its finances. Budget setting is firmly linked to development planning, and accurately reflects the educational needs of the pupils. Financial control and administration are good. There are close links between planning and resourcing. Records of financial decisions are accurate and clear. Specific grants received by the school are used for the purposes for which they are intended, and there is a detailed record of how the money has been spent. For administrative purposes, the school makes satisfactory use of computers. The school applies the principles of best value well. The school analyses its performance using both national and local data and uses this information to evaluate the standards that its pupils are achieving and where improvements are needed. Parents are provided with a range of opportunities to voice their opinions, for example through questionnaires, or when meeting with staff. The school seeks to obtain good value for money when purchasing goods and services, for example when buying computers, or when choosing a company to maintain the school grounds.

59 Teachers are well qualified for the curriculum subjects and the ages of the pupils they teach. There is an appropriate match between the training and expertise of teachers and the subjects that they are asked to co-ordinate. The school makes good use of the expertise of its teaching staff. For example, it employs a specialist design and technology teacher whose work with pupils in all classes has led to high standards being achieved in this subject. The mathematics co-ordinator is recognised as a 'leading teacher' in the subject, and is involved in working with the local education authority. She is currently being deployed to support children's learning in the nursery and reception classes in order to raise standards.

60 The procedures for the induction of new staff and staff development are good. The requirements for professional development opportunities are strictly adhered to. There are two newly qualified teachers on the staff whose teaching has been monitored by the headteacher and the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators. Each of these teachers has a mentor. Targets for development have already been set for one of the newly qualified teachers, and in the case of the other, they are currently being formulated. Both of the newly qualified teachers report they have been well supported since joining the school. The work

of other staff who are new to the school is carefully mentored and supported. There is a clear link between the main areas of school improvement planning and the courses that staff attend. Learning support staff are well qualified; they have a good level of expertise and provide the pupils in their care with good support and guidance. The school is effective in promoting race equality.

61 The accommodation provided within the school is very good. Since the last inspection there have been significant improvements to the buildings and the grounds. Inside, there are classrooms designated for the teaching of design and technology, music and ICT. The buildings are cleaned and maintained to a high standard by the site manager and cleaning staff. The school is built on various levels, which makes wheelchair access very difficult. Outside, the grounds are well maintained. There are good playground markings to encourage pupils to play constructively and extensive fields for the pupils to play on. There is a quiet area with benches and tables and an adventure play area for the pupils to enjoy. Resources are at least satisfactory for all subjects except design and technology, music and religious education, where they are good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62 To continue to improve the quality of education provided by the school, the headteacher, staff and governors should:-

(1) Raise standards in Key Stage 1 by:

a) Ensuring that good quality information on pupils' attainment is transferred to teachers in Year 1 from the reception class, to inform their planning and teaching;

b) Ensuring that teaching reflects the different abilities of pupils within classes more closely and that tasks are chosen that match this and provide appropriate challenge for all pupils especially in English and mathematics;

c) Set short-term targets for pupils' progress that are clear and measurable especially in literacy and numeracy;

d) Investigate why the achievement of boys is so much lower than girls in English and review the procedures used to identify pupils with special educational needs.

(paragraphs: 2, 12, 16, 19, 39, 74, 79, 84, 85, 87, 92)

(2) Make better use of results from regular assessments to inform short-term planning and teaching and guide pupils' progress. Use marking to provide pupils with greater knowledge of their own learning and how they can improve (*as some of the best already does*).

(paragraphs: 13, 16, 19, 40, 41, 78, 83, 84, 92, 100, 101, 113)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	7	19	12	1	0	0
Percentage	2	17	46	32	2	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than 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)	15	218
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	NA	17

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	23

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	18	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	14	16
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	15	28	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (69)	88 (80)	94 (91)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

0

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
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	88 (74)	88 (89)	91 (60)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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
		2001	21	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	18	20
	Girls	12	12	13
	Total	30	30	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (85)	86 (85)	94 (91)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	18	18
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	31	30	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (71)	86 (74)	89 (79)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	184	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	59	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: YN – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YN – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	126

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	540024
Total expenditure	541970
Expenditure per pupil	2268
Balance brought forward from previous year	-20761
Balance carried forward to next year	-18815

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	215
Number of questionnaires returned	58

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	41	55	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	50	3	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	62	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	55	21	0	5
The teaching is good.	45	52	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	47	12	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	45	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	36	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	28	66	5	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	38	57	5	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	36	3	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	45	3	0	3

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

63 Children attend the nursery part time from the age of three and the majority of these children later transfer to the reception class. During the week of the inspection there were 30 part-time children in the nursery and 30 full-time children in reception. One child has been identified as having special educational needs in reception. There is one child who has English as an additional language in the nursery. Both children are well supported. Information collected when children enter reception varies from year to year. The attainment in the current reception class is average which is similar to that reported during the previous inspection. However, in previous years attainment on entry to reception has been below average. The school has developed good procedures for introducing the children into the nursery, and these have resulted in them all settling in quickly and happily. Parents are very happy with the provision their children receive and feel well informed of nursery procedures.

64 Provision for the Foundation Stage is good. The school has worked hard to develop the provision according to the most recent national guidance despite having numerous staff changes. The planning system is under review, however it is satisfactory which results in the delivery of a curriculum that suits the needs of these young children. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. All children, in both classes, are well supported by the adults who work with them and continually act as good role models. In particular in the nursery, adults work hard at promoting the children's personal and social skills. For example, planning shows that they spend a considerable amount of time exploring the nursery environment, showing the children where items are kept, the importance of looking after equipment and encouraging them to put resources away. This is good practice and develops personal independence from an early age. There are good opportunities for children to begin to develop confidence when speaking during class discussions, for example when they recall what they have done at the end of sessions. Mathematical skills are similarly well promoted, as when children were seen revising the names of three-dimensional shapes during milk time in reception.

65 The curriculum is well planned using the national early learning goals. Records of achievement are started in the nursery and are continued as the children move up the school. Adults in the nursery have started to keep detailed records to show the progress the children make in all areas of learning and these will be transferred to reception. Learning resources are satisfactory to promote all areas of learning inside and outside the classroom. Outside areas are well organised with a variety of different activities. In the nursery the children have daily outdoor sessions where there are good opportunities for physical development using a satisfactory range of wheeled toys, climbing apparatus and small apparatus such as stilts. The range of activities widens to develop other skills outside, such as a quiet area to look at books, a role-play area and sand and water play. The outside area outside the reception class is used well to develop all basic skills. For example, children were seen thinking for themselves as they put paper onto the easel and chatted with each other as they waited in a mature way for their turn to paint. All children have regular opportunities to use the main hall to further develop physical skills.

66 Because of the close proximity of the two classrooms, the children visit each other's classroom regularly. For example the reception children attend an assembly in the nursery each week. Relationships are good between all adults who work in the Foundation Stage and although a number of the staff are newly appointed, a good team spirit has quickly been established. The Early Years co-ordinator, who has only been in post a few weeks, is aware of the need to develop better links between reception and Year 1.

67 Teaching is good and sometimes it is very good. These very good aspects of teaching were clearly shown during the start of a lesson in the nursery when a classroom assistant, whilst developing speaking and listening skills, used a puppet called Gerry to remind the children of nursery procedures. This was expertly done and the children were totally entranced with Gerry. Many of these three-year-old children conversed confidently and excitedly with the puppet. All listened very well. Another example of very good teaching was seen in reception when the teacher developed basic vocabulary related to the body such as bones, skull and skeleton, very well. Again, speaking and listening skills were very well promoted. During these sessions learning was very good because the children concentrated well, listened carefully and worked with obvious enjoyment. All adults have high expectations regarding the children's behaviour and response to the activities they are given. Both classes are very well managed as adults interact well with groups of children, and few opportunities are missed to reinforce skills and develop vocabulary. The consistently good and sometimes very good teaching influences learning throughout each day. It results in good and sometimes very good progress by all groups of children. This is an improvement, in particular in reception where the headteacher acknowledges that there has been some under-achievement because of staff absenteeism and changes. Teachers' planning in the Foundation Stage has been identified as being in need of review. It addresses all areas of learning effectively and is satisfactory but what children are to learn is not always clearly identified. Day-to-day assessments help to move the children on to the next stage of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

68 Teaching is good and this area is well promoted in most lessons. The children quickly develop good relationships with each other and the adults who work with them because adults consistently promote basic social skills well. Progress is good in this area. All children show positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. The three year olds in the nursery have settled in very well. Behaviour is good in both classes although a few children in reception have difficulty in concentrating and listening and sometimes shout out during class discussions. However all adults work hard at developing acceptable behaviour. Personal independence is consistently developed well throughout the day. In the nursery children are encouraged to select activities and most do confidently. All adults expect the children to share equipment and be polite towards one another and children in both classes were seen co-operating well with each other during activity sessions. There are many opportunities to work in pairs and small groups and begin to develop the skills necessary to work independently. Planning indicates that the children are developing an awareness of celebrations, their own cultures and the cultures of others as they prepare for a harvest assembly. By the end of the reception class most children are likely to reach the expected levels, and with the consistently good and very good teaching many are likely to exceed them.

Communication, language and literacy

69 The quality of teaching of communication, language and literacy skills is good and sometimes very good. Speaking and listening skills are very well promoted in both classes, which result in learning within lessons being consistently good and occasionally very good. A very good example was seen in reception when basic skills were very well taught as children developed a very good awareness of words related to books such as 'title' and 'author'. Nursery children learn to recognise their names on their name cards. A symbol such as a ball has been sensitively drawn alongside their name. As a result of this all nursery children excitedly 'read' their name card. In both classes children were seen selecting books, handling them carefully and sitting looking at them alone or in pairs. As

they get older children begin to tell the story by looking at the pictures. Most children in reception identify the 'front' page and know the difference between the pictures and the text. More able children identify a few letters correctly but few could pick out any familiar words. The youngest children select pencils and crayons to make marks on paper. They attempt to write their names showing little evidence of letters. However there are many opportunities to write in the designated writing areas in both classes. Older children in reception were seen freely writing 'prescriptions'. As they get older, letters are easily distinguished in their attempts to write. Above average children make a confident attempt at writing their names. By the time the children reach Year 1, most will attain standards, which are average and many will exceed these levels, in particularly if they continue receiving this good and very good teaching. They make good progress.

Mathematical development

70 Activities in both classes promote this area well. The children learn about repeating patterns, are taught to count the number of children in their group, sing number songs and rhymes, complete number jigsaws and work with jigsaws which begin to develop an awareness of different shapes such as squares, rectangle, circles and triangles. Children in the nursery enthusiastically count objects although some do not do this accurately. They name the colours of two-dimensional shapes as they carefully fit jigsaw pieces together. In reception, children work on a number of activities, which promote a satisfactory awareness of three-dimensional shapes. Above average children begin to name these shapes correctly. Teaching is consistently good in both classes because children are well supported by their teachers and the classroom assistants who work with them. Number charts on the walls promote basic counting skills and are used to show what the spoken number looks like. Past work shows that in the reception class this learning is extended and all children are taught how to record information and develop bar charts, for example showing the different colours of eyes in the class. They link this area with creative development as they print with their hands and feet and count the number of toes and fingers. Children begin to develop a satisfactory understanding of mathematical vocabulary such as 'smallest' and 'biggest' as they decide who has the biggest feet in the class. Progress is good and most children are likely to reach the expected levels, with some achieving higher.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71 Teaching is good and the children make good progress because activities are topical and well planned and resourced. All adults effectively interact to develop children's basic vocabulary and speaking and listening skills. For example, displays to promote an understanding of autumn allow the children to use their senses to touch, feel and smell objects that have been collected, such as leaves and seeds. Adults in both classes set up displays to encourage children to 'investigate and discover' how things work. Stories, which they are told enhance this area, for example in the nursery the children have learnt about the life cycle of a butterfly after listening to the story about a hungry caterpillar. Planning shows that as they get older children learn about past and present as they compare photographs of themselves now and when they were babies. Displays in the classrooms reinforce ideas discussed. Most children confidently select materials from a limited range to develop skills needed to cut stick and join materials together. By the time they leave the reception class most children are likely to reach the expected standards with some exceeding these levels. In both classes the children are given opportunities to develop skills by using the computers. In the nursery, children were seen painting pictures using a computer program, and in reception they moved the cursor to dress the teddy.

Physical development

72 Each day the children in both classes have good opportunities to develop physically using the sound range of equipment in the safe and secure outdoor play areas. In the nursery, children ride wheeled vehicles confidently as they interact well with each other. Most share the apparatus such as the plastic climbing apparatus or the playhouse well. From an early age they use the school hall for physical development lessons. Adults develop personal and social skills consistently as they encourage the children to have a go at undressing and dressing themselves. By the time they reach reception, children develop a satisfactory awareness of space and the necessity to listen carefully to all instructions. In both classes children work well together as they build with construction toys. When weather permits, the outside space is used well for these activities. The children enthusiastically use soft materials such as dough to develop rolling and cutting skills and develop their skills in using pencils, paintbrushes and scissors safely. The children make good progress in this area. By the end of reception most children are likely to reach the expected levels in this area and many will exceed these levels.

Creative development

73 Good support and consistently good teaching enables most of the children to make good progress in this area as they move through the Foundation Stage. Well-organised music lessons enable the children to learn songs and the names and sounds of percussion instruments. Classes have satisfactorily resourced role-play areas where they are encouraged to express their own ideas and communicate their feelings through well-organised sessions, for example in the 'home corner' in the nursery and in the 'doctors clinic' in reception. Children in the nursery have confidently used five different colours and painted their 'first' painting. Past work shows that these children made three-dimensional pieces of food after learning about what the Hungry Caterpillar ate. In reception, previous work shows that as they get older the children develop more control when using paints and have used paint carefully as they have painted pictures of themselves. Artwork in both classes is created using a good variety of materials and techniques such as collage, printing and painting and is displayed well to enhance the learning environment. By the end of Reception the children are likely to reach average standards with some exceeding these levels.

ENGLISH

74 Currently the pupils in Year 2 are achieving standards that match the national average. In Year 6, pupils are achieving standards above the national average. This reflects the judgements made at the last inspection. National test results in reading and writing for seven year olds have been quite variable in recent years. As a consequence of this there are some variations in attainment in the lower classes of Key Stage 2 where there are weaknesses in basic skills of reading and writing for lower attaining pupils. This reflects the considerable fall in national assessment test results for Key stage 1 in 2001 when boys performed particularly badly. In this year group, the current Year 3, there was and there remains, a wide spread of attainment, but on the whole the attainment of pupils is lower than is usual at Mill Lodge and classroom support has been targeted there.

75 Rates of learning vary across the key stages. Progress is much better in the upper years of Key Stage 2 where the teaching is very good. Elsewhere progress is usually satisfactory. There are a group of lower attaining pupils, not identified with special educational needs, who do not make sufficient progress in the odd lesson, for instance when a group of pupils are unable to complete a written task successfully in a year 3 class because they do not have the basic skills or understanding to do so.

76 Where there is targeted support, good progress is made. For instance, to help a pupil with special needs who takes notes while watching a video about Henry VIII. Pupils with English as an additional language and other pupils with specific learning needs, make satisfactory and often good progress. This is because they receive focussed support through precision teaching or additional literacy support programmes.

77 Pupils' speaking and listening skills at the end of both key stages match with those expected from pupils of a similar age. Generally across the school, pupils listen attentively to adults and each other, responding appropriately to instructions. Good listening is shown by a Year 5 pupil, who, after listening carefully, was able to identify that a character in Hamlet was a ghost, because the character said 'I am thy father's spirit'. Throughout the school most pupils are keen to answer questions and join in discussions. Year 6 entered into a mature and thoughtful discussion offering their opinions about segregation and prejudice while studying the life of Martin Luther King. Preparation for a visit to nearby houses by Year 2 pupils prompted enthusiastic and lively exchanges and recall of similarities and differences between houses. When given the opportunity, pupils, successfully express themselves 'in character'. While reading a play script, Year 3 pupils mimicked a 'moany' and 'worried' voice effectively. Year 5 pupils made good attempts using their voices to create an air of intimidation whilst acting a scene from Romeo and Juliet. The lower attaining pupils often have difficulty expressing themselves and need to be prompted by the teacher. Pupils in Year 2 receiving support needed plenty of encouragement to answer questions in sentences about their reading.

78 Standards of reading at the end of Key Stage 1 are average. Higher and average attaining pupils are confident, fluent readers. They use several strategies to read unfamiliar words. This includes applying their phonic knowledge to word build. They willingly offer opinions about their books and name the author and illustrator. One girl reacts to the humour in her book in the text and pictures. She is able to discuss why it amuses her. Another pupil volunteers that her favourite stories are 'fairytales'. A poor match of reading book, together with underdeveloped phonic knowledge the lower attaining pupils resulted in mistakes being made too frequently when reading the text.

79 However, good support is provided for a below average group of pupils in a Year 2 class, enabling them to develop their phonic skills with the use of a 'spelling wheel'. They successfully read several words ending in 'at'. Pupils are heard to read regularly by an adult, and their reading progress is monitored frequently. Pupils take books home and are well supported by their parents. The dialogue in the reading diaries does include a comment about the particular skill being worked on and further support that may be needed. Whilst records are kept of pupils' progress it does not highlight the hierarchy of reading skills to work through and build on to promote maximum progress.

80 Most pupils make satisfactory and often good progress in Years 3 and 4. For the lower achievers, learning and progress are sometimes more limited. In Year 3, a group of below average attaining pupils during a guided reading session, find difficulty reading a version of *The Pigs and the Wolf*, the chosen text. The well below average group in this class cannot read the text, *The Shoe Maker and the Elves* very well and need easier books to read together, that help them to feel confident, but challenge them and move their learning on.

81 Pupils make much better reading progress in the older year groups of Key Stage 2. Pupils make steady progress across Key Stage 2, but not at the same rate. Nevertheless, standards are above average by the time they are eleven. Year 6 pupils learn about the purpose of an etymological dictionary, all ability groups successfully locate words such as

alcohol, bankrupt, antonym and anvil, and read their origin to the class confidently. Above average and average pupils read fluently statements like, 'second hand dealer in cars' and have a secure understanding of the word 'delicate', though they have some difficulty explaining 'egg him on shamelessly'. A girl chooses a book of short stories by her favourite author, J K Rowling, but admits the book is too easy for her. The below average reader, on the other hand, finds his book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* quite hard. They have good library skills. The monitoring of reading at this level is not sufficiently focussed on what pupils need to do to improve. Even so, the majority can read very competently by the time they leave. Pupils have opportunities to use reading as a tool to extend both their knowledge and skills, when researching in the small but well organised library. Year 5 read an extract from *Romeo and Juliet* in character, with good expression.

82 Most pupils make satisfactory progress as writers across Key Stage 1, though no pupils achieved the higher level 3 in tests in 2002. Pupils develop a sound foundation of basic skills in handwriting, spelling and sentence construction. Although early in the school year, average and higher attaining Year 2 pupils write about their holidays using sentences accurately punctuated in well-formed handwriting. They are able to spell or make good attempts at spelling common words. Identified pupils with special needs in this year group, with support, write a sentence, making good attempts to form printed handwriting correctly.

83 By the age of eleven, writing skills are well developed. Good standards of handwriting and spelling are demonstrated in extended writing on history topics about the Victorians. Pupils use a wide variety of approaches to develop their writing. They use skills they have learnt so that by the time they are in Year 6 they can plan and write stories with a detailed plot using paragraphs and punctuation correctly as shown in 'A Cloud of Smoke'. They use their well developed skills in a range of different forms of writing including diary, letter, persuasive, descriptive report and instructional writing. The school provides opportunities for pupils to write at length and write accounts and reports in subject areas other than English. In this way, pupils are able to use their skills and understanding in context.

84 Overall teaching is good. The best teaching is in Years 5 and 6 where it is always very good. These teachers have good subject knowledge and a clarity about what they want pupils to learn. Their expectations of work and behaviour are high. In a year 6 lesson, very good progress is made because the well chosen text, 'Chaucer's Prologue', provided challenge for the pupils and the teacher had a good knowledge of the origins and pronunciation of the Old English words used in the extract. As a result pupils made sensible suggestions for the meanings of, 'soote', 'veyne', 'licour', and 'swich'. Throughout the school, teachers manage pupils well and relations are positive. All teachers refer to the class targets. However, these are general, for example, 'improve punctuation' and do not provide focus to meet the needs of individuals. Teachers plan using different formats. Currently, day-to-day assessment of pupils does not have a high profile, especially for those pupils of below and well below average ability. The absence of planned work based on assessments, which accurately matches the learning needs, is hindering the progress for this group of pupils in some lessons. Whilst work is marked in books, there are very few suggestions made to help and guide pupils to move their learning forward. Whilst speaking and listening is part of all lessons specific planning for teaching and learning of these skills is not a focus.

85 The English curriculum provides a range of learning opportunities, and the recent development of identifying opportunities for pupils to use and further extend their literacy skills in other subjects is profitable. Whilst the literacy hour is firmly part of the curriculum, additional curriculum time is given to develop skills in reading and writing. The short term planning format, currently under review, does not provide good support for teachers to plan

lessons well matched to pupils' abilities. Comprehensive systems of monitoring and tracking pupils' performance are in place. However, the use of the analysed data following the monitoring process is not impacting upon curriculum planning and feeding through to teachers' short term planning quickly enough. Teachers track pupils' progress through regular testing. They also periodically evaluate pieces of work. This represents sound practice but the results are not yet analysed closely enough to determine specific strengths and weaknesses, and though the school recognises, for example, that writing standards at Key Stage 1 need to improve, the specific weaknesses have not been clearly identified.

86 The co-ordinator, who has been well supported local authority's inspector, should continue developing skills of observing lessons and scrutinising teachers' planning so that she has a clear view about standards. Currently insufficient emphasis is placed on close scrutiny of pupils' work to assess how the curriculum is being delivered to all pupils, and to generate targets that are clear and achievable, but demanding, to guide all pupils' learning and progress. ICT is used well in English enabling pupils to edit their own work and present it in interesting styles.

87 Pupils have opportunities to use persuasive, descriptive report and instructional writing. The school should continue to provide opportunities for pupils to write at length and write accounts and reports in subject areas other than English. In this way, pupils will be able to use their skills and understanding in contexts other than English and literacy.

MATHEMATICS

88 The results of the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds were close to the national average and also average when compared with similar schools. Taking the results of the last three years into account, pupils' performance in mathematics has exceeded the national average for their age group. There is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys. Unconfirmed results of the tests taken in 2002 indicate a sharp fall in standards to well below the national average. This group of pupils had been identified as being particularly low attaining when they started school. The finding of the current inspection is that the attainment of pupils in the current Year 2 class is broadly average. Close examination of previous work indicates that most pupils are making satisfactory progress in their learning and are achieving satisfactory standards. However, there is a small group of lower-attaining pupils who are not making the progress they should. Standards of attainment are similar to those recorded at the last inspection.

89 The results of the 2001 national tests for 11-year-olds were well above the national average and also well above average when compared with similar schools. This group of pupils made good progress since taking the national tests when they were in Year 2. Taking the results of the last three years into account, pupils' performance in mathematics has exceeded the national average for their age group. There is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys. Unconfirmed results of the tests taken in 2002 indicate a fall in standards to broadly in line with the national average. There was a fall in the number of pupils achieving the expected levels as the year group contained more than the usual numbers of lower ability pupils, but the school provided well for higher-attainers, with two pupils achieving at a very high level. Close examination of previous work indicates that most pupils are making good progress in their learning and are achieving well. Standards of attainment are similar to those recorded at the last inspection.

90 In lessons in the Year 2 class, most pupils accurately counted in tens from a given number. Higher-attaining pupils achieve this, using mental calculations, whilst others use their fingers. Most pupils have a good understanding of non-standard measures, for example using hands and feet to measure distances. In lessons, higher-attaining pupils

successfully use rulers and measure accurately in centimetres. These pupils also understand the importance of using standard units of measurements. Most average-attaining pupils have some understanding of measuring in centimetres and use a ruler quite accurately to measure lengths. Lower-attaining pupils find this work particularly difficult. A close examination of pupils' previous work indicates that most have a satisfactory understanding of number, they know the names of common geometric shapes and collect and display information on graphs. A few average and lower-attaining pupils have weaknesses in their number skills.

91 Most pupils in the Year 6 class use mental recall of multiplication facts in solving number problems. They multiply and add two two-digit numbers mentally and understand the value of numbers over 1000. Pupils use a range of methods to help them to solve problems explaining clearly how they came to their answers. Lower-attaining pupils do not have well-developed mental skills and this inhibits the progress that they can make. A close examination of pupils' previous work indicates that most pupils confidently use the four number operations and have a clear understanding of the value of percentages, decimals and fractions. Lower-attaining pupils find this work difficult. Higher-attaining pupils confidently multiply decimals and use a range of strategies to check the accuracy of their answers. Most pupils calculate the perimeter and areas of shapes and measure the size of angles using a protractor. They construct straight-line graphs and use them to convert pence into Italian lire.

92 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is particularly good in Years 5 and 6 and pupils often learn very well in these classes. In the best lessons the work is well planned and organised so pupils of all abilities are able to learn well. These lessons begin with a rigorous mental session or game to engage the pupils in their learning. In a very good lesson in the Year 6 class for example, the teacher began with a number game that engaged the pupils in their learning and promoted their mental skills. The teacher effectively questioned the pupils, challenging them to explain how they had calculated their answers. He used a range of questions that were carefully chosen to check the understanding of individual and groups of pupils. He effectively assessed the progress the pupils were making during the lesson and supported pupils' learning very well. As a result of his clear explanations and very good support the pupils made very good progress in their learning. In a very good lesson in the Year 5 class for example, the teacher presented the lesson in a lively manner that engaged the pupils' interest. The enthusiasm she displayed encouraged the pupils to become involved in their learning and work hard. The pupils were well motivated and responded very well to her high expectations of their concentration and behaviour. Even though the work was very challenging the pupils tried hard and persevered well.

93 Teachers' questioning of pupils at the beginning and end of lessons is good at times, but in a minority of lessons it is not used sufficiently well to assess what pupils understand or have learned. Support staff are often used effectively to support pupils' learning, in particular those with special educational needs and the occasional pupil who has English as an additional language. They support these pupils well at the beginning and end of lessons as well as with group work, using initiative and questioning effectively to clarify the understanding of these pupils. In lessons that are not so successful, the work provided for lower-attaining pupils is sometimes too difficult and is not sufficiently tailored to meet their needs. On these occasions, in spite of the good support that they receive from classroom assistants, these pupils do not learn as well as they should. It is clear that assessment information is not being used sufficiently well to provide appropriate work that builds on pupils' previous learning. The quality of teachers' marking is variable. In the best examples it informs pupils of the quality of their work and provides pointers for further improvement. Most teachers have high expectations, but close examination of pupils' previous work shows

that this is not always the case. The presentation of some work is untidy and can lead to pupils making errors in their calculations.

94 The curriculum is satisfactory overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school uses the National Numeracy Strategy appropriately to plan the curriculum and uses a published scheme to underpin the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding and practise their skills. Teachers provide some opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects, for example, science and history. There are particularly good examples of pupils measuring and recording the results of their experiments on charts and graphs. There are a few computer programs being used to support pupils' learning, but the school recognises that this area of its work requires further development.

95 Procedures for checking pupils' progress are satisfactory. Teachers record pupils' progress against 'key objective' statements for the elements of mathematics covered. In the best classes teachers use these records well to guide them in the provision of appropriate work for all pupils. Observations in lessons and careful analysis of pupils' previous work shows that this is not always the case, with some lower-attaining pupils not being provided with work that is sufficiently tailored to meet their needs. The school analyses pupils' performance in national tests and uses these and the results from the annual non-statutory tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 to set targets and to check pupils' progress. This information is being used well in these years and the targeted additional support is helping to raise standards.

96 The subject is well led by the subject co-ordinator. She is very knowledgeable and has a detailed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and where improvements need to be made. She monitors the quality of planning and teaching and checks the standards that pupils achieve. This year, time has been allocated to the co-ordinator to support children's learning in the nursery and reception classes. This action has been taken because the school has identified that the attainment of children joining the school has fallen. The school has introduced a lending library of mathematics games for parents in the reception class as one initiative to help tackle this issue. The co-ordinator is aware that a rigorous process of monitoring and support needs to continue, particularly with the intention of raising standards in the infant classes. The co-ordinator recently organised a well attended mathematics evening where parents learned more about the National Numeracy Strategy.

SCIENCE

97 In teacher assessments carried out in 2001, standards in science in Year 2 were average. Results in similar assessments in 2002 are as yet provisional, but reveal that most pupils reach the expected level 2 by the end of the year. This is supported by work in pupils' books for the same period. Current Year 2 pupils are likely to attain average standards by end of the year. They demonstrate an understanding of the work they did in Year 1 and already have some knowledge of work more commonly seen in Year 2, like the conditions needed by plants to grow. Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory.

98 Standards in Year 6 were average in tests carried out in 2001 and provisional results in 2002 indicate above and possibly well above average standards being achieved. Scrutiny of the work carried out in Year 6 last year, supports this above average attainment in knowledge and understanding, but indicates that in practical skills pupils were about average. National tests do not take this into account. Scrutiny of the work carried out in last year indicated that current Year 6 should reach above average standards by the end of the year. Most pupils were already achieving level 4 in most areas of the curriculum last year

and if their good progress continues many will exceed this by the end of the year. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged above average throughout the school.

99 Progress in Key Stage 2 is good. Work in Years 3, 4 and 5 is good quality in all respects. The quality of some practical work is very good. For instance in Year 3 in their work on forces pupils investigate how the distance rubber bands are stretched affects the distance they can fire paper pellets. The work must have been fun for pupils, but it had a real cutting edge of science within it. Pupils measured bands and then the distance travelled by pellets, considering variables like weight and the affect of gravity. Another very interesting example is the work in Year 5 on crater formation, as part of their work on the solar system. This is usually a fairly dry topic from a practical point of view. But here, pupils drop balls from different heights into sand and then measure the resulting crater. They also explore other variables like the effects of different types of balls. This is very good science and it means that pupils' practical skills in measuring, observing, planning and predicting are being developed well. This quantity of practical work is not as prevalent in Year 6, and a challenge for the school is how to continue the good practical work here, whilst justifiably revisiting topics to prepare pupils for tests at the end of the year. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make the same progress as other pupils.

100 No lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 as they take place on Thursdays and Fridays. Nevertheless the scrutiny of last year's work reveals that teaching is at least sound and has some strengths. For instance, the methods chosen for pupils to record their work on materials is very interesting, comparing man-made and natural fabrics, and in their work on toy cars and how far they travel off ramps. Good links with mathematics are forged as pupils create graphs of their results. There is also evidence of good development of literacy skills as pupils write paragraphs about their work and findings.

101 Two lessons were seen in Key Stage 2 and the teaching was good in one lesson and sound, with some strengths, in another. However the quality of the work seen in Years 3, 4, and 5 reveals that teachers have a real understanding of science as a practical investigational subject and that they enable pupils to make good progress. Though marking could be used to probe pupils' understanding more effectively, and to help pupils to improve, teaching in Key Stage 2 is good.

102 The coordinator for science leads the subject well. Assessments of pupils' knowledge and skills are effective in producing information about pupils' attainment. The coordinator's monitoring of the subject has already led to the generation of targets to improve teaching and learning and this is good. As yet, monitoring has not been carried out to see if this information, and that generated by assessments, is being used by teachers irregularly, in their teaching. Resources are adequate and though the use of ICT in science is as yet limited, the overall provision for science throughout the school is good.

ART AND DESIGN

103 Pupils reach an average standard by the ages of seven and eleven, and this is similar to the previous inspection. Throughout the school pupils make satisfactory progress. One lesson was seen in Year 1. Judgements have been made by looking at teachers' planning, past and present work, and discussions with pupils and teachers.

104 By the age of seven pupils have many experiences of painting, printing, working on collages and three-dimensional art. In Year 2 they are currently making 'Beautiful Bowls' using papier-maché. Pupils spoke confidently about how they were going to decorate these. Past work shows that pupils in Year 1 have looked at the idea of printing and after looking at

the work of William Morris, have created repeated patterns using polystyrene press-prints. This work has been closely linked to their history topic, which is about the Victorians. In Year 3 pupils link their art with history as they use chalk to develop 'Egyptian landscapes' whilst studying Ancient Egypt. Geography was linked to art in Year 4 as pupils developed a class 'tie and dye quilt' after looking at the country of India. They placed wadding behind the material, which they had tied and dyed, and then, using either backstitch or the hand sewing machine, they created an interesting quilted effect. Present planning and work shows that they are currently looking at 'Camouflage' in art and most understand that for this to be successful, colours and patterns on objects need to be similar to their surroundings. Past work shows that pupils in Year 5 have worked with an artist during 'Big Art Week' and produced a huge textile collage of 'The Rainforest'. They then developed an attractive batik border to enhance this colourful picture further. Artwork in Year 6 is currently linked with their history topic as they design Victorian samplers. The good link with a local special school shows pupils in Year 6 working very enthusiastically alongside a number of pupils from the special school as they make puppets using papier-maché. Planning shows that they will eventually develop a puppet show, using the finished product and perform it in both schools. By the age of eleven pupils have explored ideas using a satisfactory range of materials and tools.

105 There is too little evidence to make an overall judgement on teaching. However in the lesson seen in Year 1 teaching was judged to be good. Support staff were used effectively to help each group as they worked safely developing hot iron crayon prints. All adults interacted well, enabling pupils to succeed whilst maintaining an element of independence as they printed from paper to fabric. The lesson was well thought out and the pupils were well managed. Learning was good because the pupils listened attentively and were enthusiastic about the task they had been given.

106 Teachers use guidelines published by the local education authority to plan for art. This should ensure the progressive teaching of art skills, knowledge and understanding. However, the design and technology co-ordinator who is overseeing the subject is aware of the need to develop assessment procedures and to monitor what is actually being taught throughout the school. For example sketchbooks are not used well and do not clearly show that art skills, in particular drawing and sketching, are developed consistently as pupils move through the school. Work in these sketchbooks is often not dated and literacy skills are not well promoted in many instances, as pupils label or explain their efforts. Resources are satisfactory to teach the subject, but there is little evidence of ICT being used to support the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107 Standards are average by the ages of seven and pupils make satisfactory progress. By the age of eleven standards are above the expected levels and as pupils move through Key Stage 2 they make good progress. These standards are similar to those reported in the last inspection.

108 In Year 1, pupils make jointed figures and then make clothes for them. One girl excitedly said that she had 'made her mum!' Past work shows that pupils in Year 1 made scarecrows after learning how to use tools such as scissors and saws safely. Pupils in Year 2 develop satisfactory plans of stick dolls with padded heads, but literacy skills are not well promoted. Lower ability pupils spell basic words incorrectly because they are not given enough guidance when completing the labels on their designs. For example words such as 'nose' and 'mouth' are not spelt properly. By the age of seven pupils have a satisfactory idea of planning, designing and making and use a variety of materials and tools.

109 Pupils in Year 3 develop a good idea of food hygiene and safety. They make chutney and learn how to prepare and chop ingredients and how to preserve food to keep it fresh. This task is cleverly linked to Ancient Egypt, which is their history topic. Planning for design and technology shows that pupils in Year 4 are due to make photograph frames. In Year 5 the class have previously investigated how everyday objects such as tin openers work. Planning shows that they are due to measure, mark and cut accurately, to make models out of wood and card. Pupils in Year 5 drew satisfactory plans for this task, although many had difficulty actually explaining what they were going to make because they found the vocabulary, such as 'cranks', 'axles', 'levers' and 'gears' which is specific to the subject, difficult to remember. In Year 6, pupils visited a local drawbridge and sketched it. They then worked in groups and drew plans before making it. All worked very well in groups as they develop their models and use all tools safely and sensibly. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 clearly show the high level which most achieve. They use vocabulary, which is specific to the subject such as drills, clamps, drive wheels and motors accurately as they describe how they work and how they have incorporated them into the models they have made in the past. Design and technology links with many other subjects, for example the pupils in Year 6 spoke about how they made torches and used their science knowledge of circuits to make them light up. As they worked on their drawbridge models, they used skills they had learnt in mathematics to mark and measure wood accurately.

110 A specialist teacher who has very secure subject knowledge manages the subject well and teaches in all year groups. Teaching is good, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. A good selection of resources has been collected and is used to illustrate how things work. This is good practice and enhances pupils' enthusiasm and understanding for the subject. All instructions are clearly given and groups are managed well. Relationships are well developed and all pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and work with enjoyment and with good regard for safety.

111 The co-ordinator has developed good guidelines, which are linked to the national guidelines and ensure that each year group builds on the previous year's skills as they experience textiles, construction and food technology. In addition satisfactory assessment procedures have recently been devised which enable teachers to track progress as pupils move through the school, and identify the levels which the pupils are reaching. The co-ordinator has developed satisfactory links with ICT but there is little evidence of these being used. Resources are good to teach the subject. They are suitably stored in the well-equipped design and technology room, which includes an area for food technology and displays of past work.

112 There are good links with a local engineering factory that has been developed to interest pupils in engineering from an early age. A small number of pupils who have reached high standards in the subject, including some with special educational needs, have been selected to visit the factory to see some computer-aided designing. The result of this was that they made up an aluminium van with stainless wheels and axles. An after school club called the Imagineering Club has evolved from this visit, and as they work on decorating their vans, the pupils work with an engineer each week. The school has good links with Land Rover, who visit and talk to pupils in Years 2, 4 and 6 about safety and the different parts of vehicles.

GEOGRAPHY

113 Only one lesson of geography was observed throughout the inspection as the majority of classes were studying history as part of their topic work. However the school had retained examples of work from last year in all age groups and scrutiny of these indicates that standards are average throughout the school and the progress made by pupils is

satisfactory as was the case at the last inspection. Pupils in Year 1 draw simple imaginary maps and consider the likely occupations of people who live there, linking occupation with location in a meaningful way. In Year 2 the work becomes more formal as pupils compare their own area with the seaside town of Mawgan Porth in Cornwall. The work is enriched with maps of Great Britain to identify the countries of Wales, Scotland, England and Ireland. Pupils in year 2 also carry out a survey of buildings in the immediate locality, and this work was in progress during the inspection. Pupils were encouraged to observe closely features such as brickwork, garages, doors and windows, noticing similarities and differences. Pupils sketched buildings and discussed their observations sensibly. The quality of teaching in this session was good as the teacher was both very clear in her objectives and her instructions to the pupils.

114 The work in Key Stage 2 takes on a new level of sophistication. In Year 5 the topic on rainforests is very well covered in a very interesting and sometimes novel way. Pupils are encouraged to consider different layers of vegetation in the forest and the life that each layer supports. They link their work with literacy by writing letters to each other about the rainforest that also consolidates their learning. There is some good marking of work of pupils' work that responds to what they have written and helps them to improve. This kind of marking provides a good example for other areas of the school where it is not such high quality.

115 In Year 5 pupils follow a topic on holiday destinations which is a rich vehicle for developing all sorts of geographical skills and knowledge. Pupils look at the location of common resorts and calculate the distance to them, also considering the quality of road links between destinations in Great Britain.

116 In Year 6, pupils study the small Scottish town of Stromness, on the Isle of Orkney. They look at relief maps and make good use of the Internet to find out more about the life of the community who live there. There is good work merging text and images using computers, and the whole topic has the feel of a modern approach to getting information and presenting it. From the evidence provided it is clear that teaching in geography is at least satisfactory and there are strengths within it such as in Year 3. Resources are adequate, and on the whole the provision for geography is satisfactory.

HISTORY

117 By the age of eleven, pupils reach the standard expected for pupils of a similar age. They use their literacy and ICT skills to research and record information linked to their project based on the Victorians. They have developed an understanding of chronology placing Victorian inventions on a timeline. Pupils study the local area using the 1871 census material to investigate the changes over time.

118 Pupils make satisfactory progress across Key Stage 2, gradually developing their skills of enquiry while pursuing their topics on Egyptians in Year 3, Greeks in Year 4 and Tudors in Year 5. Year 5 pupils recall facts about the Tudors well. They know that the Tudors began when Henry VIII's father defeated Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth and became king. Pupils made sensible suggestions when investigating the symbolism of red and gold clothing worn by Henry VIII. Pupils used their literacy skills, taking notes while watching a video about the life of Henry. At the end of the lesson their knowledge had increased; that at least six hundred sat to dinner at Hampton Court, the kitchen was very large, Henry liked to eat and hunt, and of course he had six wives and was desperate for a son and heir.

119 The teaching was very good in this lesson and pupils made very good progress. Strong links were made with literacy, a good variety of resources were used during the lesson, including wallcharts, timeline, books, video and a limerick, the teacher moving swiftly from one to another, whilst providing a good balance of direct teaching, discussion and investigation. Behaviour management was excellent, the teacher keeping pupils focussed on the lesson all the time by enthusiastic and knowledgeable delivery and very clearly expressed expectations.

120 In Year 2, pupils investigate Victorian times, concentrating on schooling and homes using the well equipped 'Victorian kitchen' role-play area as an imaginative resource. This knowledge is deepened in Year 6 when cause and effects of events during the Victorian era are studied.

121 Resources in the environment are used well. Pupils benefit from visits to Blakesley Hall in Year 5 and Hartlebury Castle in Year 2 where pupils learn 'in role' as Victorian pupils. There are useful book and artefact displays in each year's topic, which supports learning well.

122 A strength of the teaching is the subject knowledge of the staff which influences learning. An additional strength are the links, which have been formalised recently, with English, giving pupils the opportunity to use and extend their literacy skills.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

123 In Years 2 and 6, pupils are attaining standards in line with nationally expected levels for their age. Since the last inspection the school has made significant improvements to the curriculum and the provision of resources and the training of teachers. A computer suite has been installed and teachers have undertaken specialist training both in school and from external agencies. As a result standards are better than at the time of the last inspection, when they were judged to be unsatisfactory. Both in lessons and over time pupils make at least satisfactory and often good progress in their learning.

124 Pupils in Year 2 know how to 'log on', save and print their work. They word process simple sentences using capital letters, full stops and the space bar, using drop down menus to changing the font size and style. They create pictures and patterns using an art program, selecting colours and using facilities, for example 'spray', 'pad' and 'infill'. They collect and display data on, for example, the ways that pupils travel to school, and enter simple commands to control an on screen 'turtle'. Pupils have satisfactory keyboard and 'mouse' skills and have some insight into the use of computers out of school. They are confident and enthusiastic and readily talk about the work that they have done, for example explaining in great detail how to import a picture from clip art and manipulate its size.

125 Pupils in Year 6 save, retrieve and print using a range of programs and use correct subject specific vocabulary, such as 'log on' and 'enter'. They readily change the font style, size and colour and combine pictures with the text, for example when writing newspaper articles. In an article about 'Hazeloak School' pupils used word art to create the title and incorporated pictures to enhance their work. When they undertake investigations and surveys, for example on food and healthy eating, they use databases and spreadsheets to record and analyse their results. Similarly, results of experiments using a temperature sensor are entered into a spreadsheet and graphs are created. Examination of pupils' previous work shows that creative use has been made of an art program to produce photographic images. Pupils access the Internet independently and successfully extract, edit and save information on various subjects, for example rainforests, Greek gods or the island of Stromness. They understand the need for care in framing questions when using search

engines. Technical problems have limited the opportunities for pupils to send e-mails, but pupils in Year 3 have sent electronic messages to a teacher in Taiwan and pupils in Year 6 have sent them to each other.

126 In the one lesson observed in the Year 1 class the teacher provided good guidance and intervened well to support the pupils' in their learning as they sought to dress and undress teddy. The teacher was supportive and encouraging and as a result pupils developed in self-confidence and enjoyed their work. They were polite when they asked for help and behaved well. At the end of the lesson the teacher consolidated the pupils' learning through systematic questioning and by providing them with time to reflect on what they had learned.

127 There is a policy and scheme of work to underpin the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Computer programs are being used to support pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy and other subjects, for example geography, but not in others. There is little specific guidance on how computer technology can be used to support and enrich pupils' learning in other subjects of the curriculum. In the past progress has been inhibited by the lack of computers in classrooms and insufficient programs to support pupils learning in each subject. There are now computers in every classroom and the school recognises that improving the curriculum is an important area for future development. Procedures for checking pupils' progress are satisfactory. The school has an Internet safety policy and parents have been informed. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has been instrumental in improving provision and raising standards. He has a clear view of how and where the school needs to move forward in the development of the curriculum, staff training and the provision of new computer programs.

MUSIC

128 Standards in music are similar to those expected for pupils by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress. Evidence was gained through looking at teachers' planning, observing in lessons, discussions with the specialist teacher and pupils, and listening to pupils sing in assemblies. During assemblies the singing was satisfactory but although music was played as pupils entered and left the hall it was not always effectively promoted.

129 The quality of teaching is good and this has been maintained since the previous inspection. The specialist teacher has secure subject knowledge and explains clearly what is expected at the beginning of each lesson. Listening skills are promoted well and the teacher has high expectations regarding behaviour and completing the tasks. In most cases pupils respond well to the challenges they are given. The teacher manages the few pupils who have difficulty concentrating, and because they are dealt with firmly, but kindly, they respond satisfactorily. Planning is satisfactory and activities are interestingly thought out which results in most pupils concentrating well, showing interest and enthusiasm in the subject and working well together.

130 Planning indicates that in Year 1 pupils explore the different range of sounds they can make with one instrument, Pupils in Year 2 sing songs such as 'Pease Pudding Hot' and show a satisfactory idea of the rhythm. They begin to use the vocabulary related to music such as 'pulse' and 'rhythmic' patterns as they listen to different tunes. Most pupils work satisfactorily together but a few have difficulty listening for the expected periods of time. When this has to be addressed by the teacher learning is hindered because the pace of the lesson slows down. By the end of Year 2, pupils have many opportunities to learn the words and sing different songs and how to breathe properly when singing. As they move up the school pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of vocabulary related to music

because the teacher reinforces words that are specific to music well, such as rhythmic patterns, pulse and speed and the names of the percussion instruments that they used. Displays in the music room promote these well but there is little promotion of music in classrooms and around the school. Planning shows that in Year 3 pupils continue to develop their singing skills and use musical instruments to make sounds which represent something else, such as animals in the forest. Year 4's planning shows that art is linked to their lesson as they study Turner's picture entitled 'The Fighting Temeraire'. They create sounds to describe a visual effect. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 work in groups well and develop their idea of how different rhythmic patterns fit together. All pupils work hard to improve their efforts and listen well as each group performs. Composing and performing skills are satisfactorily developed.

131 The subject is led well by a specialist musician. She has a secure idea of standards within the subject and is aware of the need to develop assessment procedures. Resources are good and are stored in a well-equipped music room where the specialist teacher teaches each class. There is no evidence of pupils using ICT to support the music curriculum. Pupils have the opportunity to learn how to play a number of musical instruments and join the small orchestra. The choir sing at local concerts, the local garden centre and at carol services at Christmas and are involved in the school's annual productions. Musicians are invited into school and enrich the music curriculum further. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit, which has high emphasis on music and results in pupils performing for parents.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

132 At the time of the last inspection standards were judged below average in Key Stage 1 and average in Key Stage 2. Current standards are average in both key stages. Pupils have regular access to the full ranges of experiences such as gymnastics, dance, games and they have swimming in Year 2. Standards in swimming are at least average and many pupils exceed the expected 25 metres proficiency.

133 Three lessons were observed throughout the inspection. The teaching in two of these was good and satisfactory in the other. In Year 1 pupils, new to the key stage and new to their teacher, behaved and responded very well to a well conceived and delivered lesson. The teacher began with a very energetic warm up that got the class breathless. The teacher managed pupils well using her voice skilfully and delivering clear instructions. The hall is a good size and this allowed the pupils to run at speed with safety. Eventually, after this very demanding warm up, pupils moved on to the main element of the lesson developing ball skills. Pupils threw and caught balls, counting the number of successes and extending the distance between themselves. This meant the lesson had both pace and progression built into it. The teacher also managed to add more challenge for the more able pupils, encouraging them to aim higher and setting target for successful catches.

134 In Year 4 pupils ball skills were developed using small plastic rackets and balls outside. The organisation was good and good use was made of resources. Pupils made progress, getting better at timing their strokes and more accurate in hitting the ball. More could have been done to match the tasks to the different abilities in the group, some of the more able were managing rallies of fifteen strokes and needs something to challenge them further, but on the whole all pupils made satisfactory progress.

135 In a Year 5 dance lesson the teacher made reference to the week's target at the start of the lesson, establishing the need to respond to the beat of the music and to move fluently. The music chosen was both stimulating and interesting so that pupils responded with a range of individually chosen movements. In this lesson pupils who have special

educational needs worked well alongside other pupils and progressed at the same rate. When pupils had explored their own ideas they then moved on to working in pairs, cooperating well and sharing ideas creatively.

136 Lessons in physical education are enriched through a good range of after school clubs and a programme of competitive sport against other schools. The coordinator for PE is relatively new to her post, but is well qualified and keen to make the provision for physical education even better than the satisfactory levels now in place.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

137 By the age of seven, pupils achieve satisfactory standards that meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress in their learning and by the time they are 11 are achieving standards that exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Since the last inspection the standards achieved by seven-year-olds have been maintained while those achieved by 11-year-olds have improved.

138 By the age of seven, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of important festivals in the Christian and Jewish religions, for example Christmas, Easter and the Passover. They know important characters and stories from the Old Testament of the Bible, for example Samuel and Eli, and they know about Moses helping the Israelites out of Egypt. In a lesson in a Year 2 class, pupils recalled the story of Abraham and remembered the promise that God had made to look after his family if he believed in Him. Pupils made 'Challah' bread, they knew that it was special and that it was eaten at the beginning of 'Shabbat'. Pupils know about the birth of Jesus and that He had friends who were His disciples. They have opportunities to reflect on their experiences, for example responding to the light of a candle. Some pupils felt that it made them feel at home while others felt 'joyful' and 'happy'. Pupils write prayers of thanksgiving and are beginning to develop some insight into the symbolism of the cross and the poppy.

139 By the age of 11 pupils have a developing understanding of the beliefs and practices of some of the world religions, for example Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism and Islam. Pupils know about key events in the life of Jesus, how he was baptised in the river Jordan and performed miracles. They understand about the symbolism of baptism and the concept of change that it demonstrates. They know about the importance of the Qur'an to the followers of Islam and that many make pilgrimages to Mecca. Close examination of pupils' previous work reveals their perceptions of 'good' and 'evil' and death. One pupil from the Year 6 class describes death as "A mysterious hand snatching life. Holding it tightly, never letting go." And later continues with "To some the beginning. A new life, a second chance." Another pupil describes death as "a courtroom judging." They write obituaries of famous people, for example Father Damien, recording the sort of person he was and the difference Jesus made to his life. Pupils write sensitive prayers that capture the problems of people across the world. Pupils reflect on events in the Bible, for example the plight of the Israelites in the desert, considering how they deal with disappointments in their own lives.

140 Pupils are provided with good opportunities to reflect and respond to events from the more recent past. In a good lesson in the Year 6 class for example, pupils studied and thought about the practice of apartheid in the southern states of America in the 1960s. During the introduction to the lesson they recalled key facts about the life of Martin Luther King, making reference to 'injustice', 'segregation' and 'hypocrisy'. One pupil compared the discrimination suffered by black people with that experienced by the poor people at the hands of the rich in Victorian England. Pupils recalled the story of Rosa Parks and the bus boycott. The lesson caused at least one boy to reflect on his own ethnic origins and consider

whether he would have been made to stand up on the bus. The teacher provided pupils with copies of the newspaper of the day and questioned them sensitively, drawing their attention to key facts in the articles. The lesson was presented in a stimulating manner that engaged and maintained the pupils' interest and enthusiasm.

141 The curriculum is good and provides for the study of all of the major world religions with many opportunities for pupils to reflect on their place in the world. It is based on the locally agreed syllabus and provides good opportunities for pupils to use and extend their literacy skills as they present their work in a variety of forms, for example narrative and poetry. Little use is made of computer technology to support pupils' learning in this subject. Pupils visit a local church and Birmingham Cathedral to support their learning in this subject, but these visits are not extended to places of worship of other religions. This subject is used well to support the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils in the school. Pupils undertake assessments at the end of each unit of study to check their understanding. There are plans to use these assessments to monitor pupils' progress. This subject has not been a priority for development in recent times, nevertheless the co-ordinator has worked effectively, supporting staff informally and ensuring that resources have been improved.