

INSPECTION REPORT

BROWNHILLS WEST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Brownhills

Walsall

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104206

Headteacher: Mr J Fairclough

Reporting inspector: Mr T Elston
20704

Dates of inspection: July 7-9 2003

Inspection number: 246362

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: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Shannon Drive
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Walsall

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs A Price

Date of previous inspection: December 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Bob Miller 9619	Lay inspector		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?
Vikki Baynes 32354	Team inspector	Science, Physical education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Pauline Goodsell 29989	Team inspector	Children in the Foundation Stage, Pupils with English as an additional language, Art and design, Music.	
Keith Williams 21074	Team inspector	English, Information and communication technology, Design and technology.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a school of average size. Numbers have fallen significantly since their peak in the 1980s. Very few pupils are from ethnic minority groups, and none have English as an additional language. Over 21 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is around the national average. Around 18 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, mostly with moderate learning difficulties, and one has a statement of these needs. These percentages are similar to those found nationally. The attainment of pupils on entry is below average. Over the last two years, five teachers have left and been replaced.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a sound school where standards have improved well over recent years. Standards are, however, below average in writing, mathematics and science in the current Year 6. The leadership and management are sound. The headteacher has worked effectively with staff to raise standards, and the school has gained three Achievement Awards in recognition of improved performance in the national tests. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and good in the Nursery, Reception and Years 1 and 2. Pupils behave impeccably and enjoy school. Parents are pleased with the provision, which provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils do well in the infant classes, and their standards by Year 2 are well above average in mathematics and above average in writing.
- The stimulating provision in the Nursery and Reception classes give children a good start to school.
- The high quality of the moral and social provision accounts for pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes to school.
- The very good personal, social and health education teaches the pupils how to live healthily and behave responsibly.

What could be improved

- Standards in science throughout the school.
- The teachers' expectations of pupils' writing in Years 3 to 6
- The curricular planning, that provides too little time for art and design, design and technology and physical education.
- The use of assessment, which is not good enough to raise standards, particularly in writing and science.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected in 1997. Looking at the issues from that inspection, standards in ICT and handwriting have improved, and all subjects now have of schemes of work to assist teachers in their planning. Standards in science, however, remain too low and it is still the case that more able pupils do not achieve as well as they should, particularly in writing. In English and mathematics, standards have improved in the infants, and are improving, albeit more slowly, in the juniors. Otherwise, improvements have been made in the spiritual provision, the development of pupils' levels of responsibility and the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school is well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	D	C	A
mathematics	C	C	C	A
science	D	E	E	D

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The table shows how well pupils achieved compared with those from similar schools in English and mathematics, and also illustrates the underachievement in science. The results show an upward trend, above that found nationally. The school exceeded its ambitious targets in both English and mathematics last year. The results for pupils in Year 2 were in line with the national average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. They were below average in science. Compared with similar schools, the results for pupils in Year 2 were very high in mathematics (in the top five per cent nationally), above average in reading and average in writing. This inspection finds that standards by Year 6 are lower than last year; they are average in reading and in speaking and listening, but below average in writing, mathematics, science and art and design. Standards are average in all other subjects. These pupils achieve sound standards given their low attainment on entry. By Year 2, pupils achieve well. Their standards are well above average in mathematics, above average in writing and average in all other subjects except science where they are below average. Children make a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and most achieve the expected levels for their age in all areas of learning.

Particular strengths in pupils' standards are the speed of their mathematical calculations and the quality of their writing in Years 1 and 2 and their singing in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' main weaknesses, mostly in Years 3 to 6, lie in their writing in all subjects, their understanding of how to design their own experiments in science and their immature art and design work. Pupils with special educational needs do well, especially in their reading and number work.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school, and are enthusiastic about their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good, and has a very positive effect on the way pupils learn. All groups of pupils play very happily together outside.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities provided for them to take responsibility. The relationships between all members of the school are very good.
Attendance	Good, and has a significant effect on the standards that pupils attain.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. It meets the needs of most pupils well, but does not always extend the more able groups. For children in the Foundation Stage, the teaching is good; children have a rich variety of experiences and learn quickly. In Years 1 and 2, the lessons are planned well, and teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour so that they make the most of their time in class. In these classes, the teaching of literacy skills is satisfactory and in numeracy it is good. In science, the teachers demand too little of more able pupils who rarely achieve as well as they should. In Years 3 to 6, the good teaching in literacy and numeracy lessons gives pupils the skills to read fluently and calculate accurately. In the best lessons in other subjects, teachers make learning interesting by including lots of practical activities and good opportunities for pupils to write at length. Where the teaching has shortcomings in subjects such as science, history, geography and religious education, the excessive use of worksheets limits the quality of their work and provides pupils with too few opportunities to develop their writing skills. This is why pupils' attainment in writing is lower than other aspects of English. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Work is planned well to meet pupils' individual needs, and they are supported very well by skilled classroom assistants who make sure that they take a full part in all activities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory, but there is insufficient time given to art and design, design and technology and physical education. The literacy and numeracy strategies are working well, and have done much to raise standards in reading and number. The high quality of the provision for pupils' personal, social and health development teaches them much about how to live a healthy life. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities to extend the curriculum for older pupils but not much for younger ones.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. This is organised well by the co-ordinator, and pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This provision is good. The school does much to teach pupils about the importance of God in their lives and how to behave well. Very good social provision shows pupils how to work together and take responsibility. There is a sound range of activities to develop pupils' understanding of their own culture, as well as that of other people in the world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The staff know the pupils very well, and monitor their personal development informally but effectively. The assessment procedures are good in English and mathematics but very basic in other subjects. Assessment results are not used well enough to raise standards in science or writing.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	There are good links with parents. Parents have good information on the school, and they think highly of the provision.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Sound. The headteacher has worked effectively with the deputy headteacher and staff to raise standards in literacy and numeracy by improving the quality of teaching. While weaknesses in science and writing remain, there are good plans to rectify them. Good management systems ensure that the school runs smoothly.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	This is a sound governing body, which supports the school well. Governors do not, however, get sufficiently involved in setting targets for the school's future development. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Systematic evaluation of pupils' work and teachers' lessons is helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Very good consultation with pupils and parents gives the school clear views of how they value the provision.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school is coping well with falling numbers of pupils and the finances are sound. There are good procedures for gaining the best value from its funds.

The school's accommodation is satisfactory. The staff are well qualified, and improve their skills effectively through good training. The supply of learning resources is satisfactory, and they make a sound contribution to pupils' learning. The computer suite is working well, and has helped to raise standards in ICT.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good teaching, especially for younger pupils • The school's high expectations of their children's behaviour • The way teachers help their children to become mature and responsible • The headteacher's purposeful leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities provided after school for pupils in Years 1 and 2

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. It is true that there are few clubs after school for younger pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The analysis of pupils' national test results shows that standards in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science have improved significantly over the past four years, and at a higher rate than that found nationally. This shows the school's commitment to high standards of work and accounts for the three Achievement Awards gained during this period. For example, in English and mathematics Year 6 pupils' results were well below the national average in 1999, but by 2002 they were average. In science, while the results still lag some way behind those in English and mathematics, they still show some improvement from very low to well below average. Over time, boys and girls attain equally well in English and science but girls do better in mathematics. This inspection finds no significant differences in standards attained by boys and girls in any subject.
2. Compared with similar schools, in English and mathematics Year 6 pupils' results in 2002 were well above average. In science, they were below average mainly because of the shortage of pupils attaining the higher levels in the tests. Rising standards in English and mathematics are the result of improved teaching of the basic skills of reading and number.
3. Since 1999, the test results have risen from well below average in reading, writing and mathematics to average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools, standards in 2002 were average in writing, above average in reading and very high (in the top five per cent) in mathematics. The teachers' assessments for science are below the national average.
4. On entry to the school, children's skills are below those found nationally, particularly in terms of their language, social and mathematical development. The good teaching throughout the Nursery and Reception classes ensures that the children make good progress. By the time they move into Year 1 the majority of the children reach the expected levels for their ages in their personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, creative and physical development and in knowledge and understanding of the world, and a small number exceed them.
5. The current standards attained by pupils in Year 2 are average in speaking, listening and reading and above average in writing. They are well above average in mathematics but still below average in science. Their standards are average in all other subjects. Standards are higher than those reported in the last inspection in writing, mathematics and ICT. They are lower in design and technology and physical education because the school gives too little time for these subjects. Standards are similar in all other subjects.
6. Standards in the current Year 6 are not as high as in previous years. Their standards are average in reading, speaking and listening. In writing, mathematics, science and art and design their standards are below average. They are average in all other subjects.
7. The analysis of pupils' progress through the school shows that, by the time they leave, pupils achieve satisfactory standards given their weak skills on entry. They do well in Years 1 and 2 because of the good quality of teaching. Here, teachers have high expectations of pupils who respond very well to the challenges set for them. In the juniors, the tracking of pupils' progress shows that, while most have made steady progress by Year 6, few more able pupils attain the higher levels of which they are capable. Teachers' expectations of pupils are not always high enough, particularly in terms of their writing. Their over-use of worksheets holds back more able pupils, particularly in subjects such as science, history, geography and religious education because they provide too few opportunities for them to write at length and extend their skills.

8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets, and their reading skills progress very well as the result of good assessment of their needs and well focussed support by teachers and teaching assistants.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' attitudes to school were very good and they remain so. Pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with special educational needs, enjoy coming to school. They show high levels of interest and enjoyment in their work, especially when the teaching is challenging and inspiring. Pupils usually take an active role in lessons and in organised group activities. When the opportunities arise, they are keen to demonstrate their capacity for independent learning. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes quickly learn the routines of the classrooms. They hang up their coats, and take responsibility for their own belongings such as lunch boxes, book folders and physical education kit.

10. Pupils throughout the school are courteous and friendly and many older Years 5 and 6 pupils provide very good examples of behaviour. Pupils show pride in their school and have a responsible attitude to the building and to their own and others' property. Very good relationships exist between pupils and teachers and this is why pupils are so confident about expressing their ideas without fear of failure. Parents are pleased with the positive attitudes and values the school promotes.

11. Overall, the behaviour of the pupils is very good in lessons, assemblies and during break times. In the Nursery and Reception classes, the behaviour is very good and children respond well to the teacher's high expectations. In Years 1 and 2, behaviour is generally good, although a few pupils find it hard to remember the rules about putting their hands up to answer a question. In Years 3 to 6, nearly all pupils behave very well. No incidents of bullying, racism, sexism or other oppressive behaviour were seen during the inspection. Pupils and parents agree that bullying is not a problem and rare incidents are soon dealt with. Playtimes and lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions where pupils socialise well with one another. Year 6 pupils are given very good opportunities to show initiative and develop personal responsibility by undertaking such tasks as looking after younger pupils, getting the hall ready for assemblies and membership of school and class councils. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. There have been no exclusions during the past academic year. Pupils move around the school in a quiet and orderly manner.

12. Pupils develop very good social skills, and show great maturity when consulted about school matters. For example, Years 5 and 6 pupils recognised that their behaviour was not as good with temporary teachers as with their regular class teachers, so they drew up a list of rules to ensure that they behaved well with all staff.

13. Pupils respond very well to the school's good spiritual provision, and all show a high level of respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Their social skills are very well developed; they work very well together on joint tasks and show very good levels of co-operation and collaboration. Often, more able pupils help others who are having difficulties without prompting from their teachers. Relationships amongst pupils are very good, and inspectors witnessed many acts of consideration and kindness.

14. Attendance is good and is an improvement since the previous inspection. Punctuality is good for the vast majority of pupils, and lessons start and finish on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and similar to that found at the last inspection. The teaching is good for children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Year 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Nearly all parents are happy with the quality of teaching and the rate of their children's progress.

16. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is generally good. Teachers are confident with the national strategies and pupils' standards have improved well over the last four years.

17. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good in both the Nursery and Reception classes. In the Nursery virtually all of the teaching seen was very good. The nursery nurse is a highly skilled and experienced practitioner. The good quality of the teaching enables the children to make a good start to school. In both classes, adults make very effective use of questions and planned opportunities to use talk to promote and develop the children's language and communication skills. They set very clear rules for behaviour that children learn quickly. There is a good balance between adult directed learning activities and those children can tackle independently. The teacher and nursery nurse plan the activities carefully in both classes and this ensures that there are opportunities for the children to have good access to all the areas of learning. Very good use is made of the teaching assistant, parent helpers and students. They provide effective support to individual children and often lead group activities. The teacher and nursery nurse work hard to provide an interesting and enjoyable range of activities so that children enjoy learning and make good progress.

18. In Years 1 and 2, teachers plan lessons well, and provide a good balance of whole class teaching and independent or group work. Teachers make it clear to pupils what learning is expected of them. As a result, pupils know precisely what to do and develop the ability to assess their own learning. Teachers make good use of teaching assistants, who support individual pupils well in whole class sessions and take responsibility for groups in practical activities. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, with a firm but kind approach, and this makes the most of the time in class. Teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement are generally high, and they respond well by working very hard. In these classes, the quality of teaching and learning is good in English, mathematics, ICT and music and satisfactory in all other subjects except science, where it is unsatisfactory. The highlight in mathematics is the way teachers use the mental starter session to give pupils confidence with number. This is why they do so well in the national tests in Year 2. In science, while the teaching seen in this inspection was satisfactory, pupils' work over the year shows that teachers do not always expect enough of more able pupils, and they rarely achieve as well as they should. Many pupils find the lessons, which can last a whole afternoon, too long to maintain their concentration.

19. In Years 3 to 6, teachers mostly have high expectations of pupils who respond very well to the challenges set. The extended projects in history and geography for pupils in Year 6, for example, demanded much of them and they wrote very good extended accounts of the Aztecs and river systems. Pupils' work over the whole year, however, shows that teachers provide too many worksheets for the written work in lessons such as science, history, geography and religious education. These expect too little of pupils who merely have to record brief comments, and give too little scope for more able groups to develop themes and gain a deeper understanding of subjects. They also prevent pupils from developing their writing skills to the full. Teachers generally have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach, and have improved their ICT skills significantly since the last inspection. In art and design, however, some teachers lack the confidence to move pupils on to the next stages in their learning and the most capable artists are not fully extended. Teachers use resources well to add interest to their lessons. In a history lesson for pupils in Year 2, for example, they were fascinated when the teacher produced an old, battered evacuee's suitcase and brought out articles such as a gas mask and ration book. They examined these objects with great interest and produced work of a good quality on what it must have been like to be evacuated. In these classes, the teaching is good in mathematics, ICT and music and satisfactory in all other subjects except science. In science, as in Years 1 and 2, there is not enough to challenge more able pupils and few move on to the higher levels of which many are capable by Year 6.

20. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. The teachers are skilled at preparing material at the right level for these pupils and matching this work closely to their individual targets. These targets are well constructed, and provide good guidance to pupils, teachers and the skilled classroom assistants. The co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs works closely with all staff to ensure pupils are given appropriate support, and as a result, pupils make good progress, especially in their reading and writing.

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

21. The quality and range of learning opportunities throughout the school are satisfactory. A sound statutory curriculum is in place and the school provides a good range of learning experiences for children in the

Foundation Stage. There is satisfactory provision for religious education that meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

22. The curriculum for the Nursery and Reception classes is good in all areas of learning. The planning for all children is very well organised to ensure that children have good experience of each area of the curriculum. There is good provision of resources and equipment for indoor and outdoor play. The richness of the curriculum ensures that children make good progress in all areas of their learning.

23. Overall, the school provides a sound curriculum for the academic and personal needs of the pupils. There are equal opportunities for all pupils to take part in all activities and there are no significant differences in achievement because of gender. Teachers' questioning and classroom management is careful to include all pupils.

24. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced. A weakness in the curriculum lies in the way time is allocated to different subjects. Two years ago, the school rightly identified the need to raise standards in reading and mathematics and allocated a greater proportion of time to improving literacy and numeracy skills through the national strategies. These now work well and standards have improved significantly in English and mathematics. However, subjects such as art and design, design and technology and physical education have lost time and standards have slipped. The curricular planning sometimes has pupils working for a whole morning or afternoon on a single topic. In some instances this works well, for example when older pupils are working on a science investigation, but generally pupils lose concentration and motivation and this leads to a drop in standards.

25. The curricular planning to meet the needs of the more able pupils is unsatisfactory and contributes to the shortage of pupils who attain the higher levels in the national tests. The school has made the decision to base much of the curriculum planning, particularly in Years 3 to 6, on commercial schemes of work, many of which rely heavily on banks of worksheets. These cover the required programmes of study adequately, but too often all pupils are given the same sheet and more able pupils in particular are held back in their learning. A further important weakness in this policy lies in the limited demands these worksheets have on pupils' writing. Often, they are expected to write only a few words to complete the task and this does nothing to develop their writing skills. This explains why their writing lags so far behind their reading by Year 6.

26. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils' individual targets are well thought out, and they are reviewed regularly. Their targets include goals for literacy, numeracy and behaviour. The needs of pupils with statements of special educational needs are met well, and their annual reviews provide a good focus for further improvement.

27. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is very good. The School Council and class councils make a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils listen intently to each other's opinions, express their own fluently and clearly and then come to sensible conclusions. Pupils are motivated and encouraged by the 'praise assemblies', which celebrate and share their achievements. The good health education scheme covers drugs education and sex education very well.

28. A variety of visits, including the local museum, the Blue Planet Aquarium, Cosforth RAF station and the Birmingham Theatre enhance and enrich the curriculum. There is a wide range of visitors to the school, ranging from theatre companies to local residents, one of whom was invited to the school recently to talk about life in the Second World War with pupils in Year 3. This stimulated interest in their history and helped pupils produce some interesting work on the topic. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities but few are open to younger pupils. The effective use of visiting coaches to lead some of the sporting activities has raised standards in games, particularly in rugby.

29. The school has satisfactory links with the community. The local vicar has a good level of involvement with the school and leads assemblies and helps with parts of the religious education teaching. The school nurse visits the school and makes a valuable contribution to the teaching of sex education. The school

works well with the group of local schools; for example, the co-ordinator for physical education is working in co-operation with other schools to produce a new policy for physical education.

30. The provision for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural is good. Music, art and science lessons, and the extra-curricular activities, particularly dance club, all make valuable contributions to this provision.

31. The school makes good provision for its pupils' spiritual development. This has improved from the last inspection when provision was satisfactory. Pupils are given many opportunities to write about their feelings and they do so readily. For example, a pupil in Year 3, when asked to describe her feelings and sorrow during a Second World War topic, wrote: 'I was crying my eyes out. She was only a puppy. The best puppy in the world.'

32. Teachers provide good opportunities in science for pupils to develop a sense of wonder; one project about butterflies for pupils in Year 2 generated great awe and excitement and they cried out gleefully when they saw the insects. Assemblies, including those led by the local vicar make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development by providing many opportunities for reflection.

33. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good and ensures that pupils quickly gain a clear understanding of right and wrong. The high expectations of pupils' behaviour, made clear by 'behaviour contracts' and a 'playground charter' that pupils helped devise, have a very good effect on pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards each other. Older pupils have opportunities to act as mediators in playground disputes, as part of the Buddy system operated by the school. The school recently introduced an excellent programme aimed at finding out pupils' views of the school and asked them to suggest ways to improve any aspects of the provision. This was very successful, and led to them making very mature decisions about their behaviour in lessons taught by temporary teachers (which they felt was sometimes unsatisfactory). They now have a clear set of rules for these instances and their behaviour is much improved as a result.

34. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills and work co-operatively. Teachers have very high expectations of the way pupils work together in lessons, discuss ideas and share equipment. There are many opportunities for all pupils to take responsibility. The School Council, for example, is a very good way in which all pupils, through the class representatives, have the chance to raise issues. For example, pupils in Year 3 were unhappy with the appearance of their classroom and put in a request to the Council to have the doors painted. In each class, pupils are expected to do responsible tasks such as giving out water bottles, tidying the classroom and delivering registers. This is a big improvement from the last inspection when the provision for pupils to assume responsibility was unsatisfactory.

35. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. There are sound opportunities for pupils to learn about their own culture through visits to the theatre, a local church and school trips to local places of interest, such as the Black Country Museum. Work in art and design, religious education and music make good contributions to developing pupils' cultural awareness. However, opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures are limited. A lively, inter-active display in the school hall promotes interest in Indian culture and classroom displays for religious education celebrate a wide range of faiths. Pupils are provided with some stories from other cultures but these books are few in number.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. As at the time of the last inspection, the school has good levels of pastoral care, and is effective in ensuring the health, safety and well being of pupils. Regular risk assessments are carried out to ensure that the school is secure and safe. The caretaker conscientiously addresses any safety issues that are raised by staff.

37. The school has satisfactory procedures to ensure the protection of all pupils and staff. The designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection has a clear understanding of the role. The school also has a nominated governor who has responsibility for issues of child protection. Teachers have a sound

understanding of the agreed systems but not all mid-day supervisors have this awareness. First-aid provision is adequate and a number of staff have received useful training. The school keeps good records of any accidents that occur, and parents are informed promptly if their child is taken ill in school or has an accident.

38. The school's procedures for monitoring absence and for promoting good attendance are effective, but unexplained absences are not always followed up quickly enough. Links with the Educational Welfare Officer are good, and help to maintain good levels of attendance.

39. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating oppressive conduct are very good. The school has a clear behaviour policy, and there is an effective system of rewards and sanctions; all staff follow these consistently. Rewards are given frequently for good behaviour and this has a positive effect on pupils' attainment. Pupils and parents know that the school does not tolerate incidents of bullying and racial harassment, and incidents are very rare.

40. Formal procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. Teachers know their pupils very well and provide good reports at the end of the year on how pupils are developing personally as well as academically.

41. The care and support of pupils with special educational needs are good. Children are identified at an early stage in the Nursery and Reception classes, and adults provide good support to ensure they make good progress and participate well in the learning activities planned for all of the children. As they move through the school, pupils' progress is monitored carefully and their targets for improvement are clear and realistic.

42. The school's procedures for the assessment of pupils' skills and progress are satisfactory, and good for children in the Foundation Stage. Soon after entry to the Nursery class, a thorough assessment is carried out to establish how the children compare with national and local levels of achievement and at the end of the year, staff make good evaluations of the progress children make from their starting points. These systems work well, and provide a clear picture of children's strengths and weaknesses. On a day to day basis, the staff in both the Nursery and Reception classes compile good records of how well children's skills are developing in all areas of learning, and use the results well to plan further work. The comprehensive information gained is augmented imaginatively using digital photographs.

43. In the infants and juniors, teachers use the optional National Curriculum tests in English and mathematics well to check on the levels of pupils' skills and progress, and at the beginning of each year, the assessment co-ordinator provides teachers with accurate assessments for each of their pupils that relate closely the levels of the National Curriculum. He also provides a collection of useful assessment opportunities that enable them to quickly determine their attainment. On a daily basis, teachers make satisfactory assessments of pupils' skills and progress in English and mathematics, but in other subjects there are no whole-school systems to check on how well pupils are doing, and the lack of precise information about the pupils' attainment and progress in science is contributing to the low standards in that subject. Whilst the use of assessment to inform long and medium-term planning is satisfactory in English and mathematics, teachers do not use the information gathered effectively to rectify pupils' weaknesses or plan work for the wide range of ability in the class. For example, while the pupils currently in Year 6 have been identified for some time as having poor writing skills, too little has been done to improve their written work and few write well. In science, standards have been low for some years but assessment in the subject is still haphazard.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. The vast majority of parents have positive views of the school. Nearly all are pleased with the standard of pupils' behaviour in school and agree that bullying is not a problem. Pupils like coming to school and parents believe that the school expects pupils to work hard and to achieve their best. A very large proportion of parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with any problem they might have. However, despite the schools increased efforts since the last inspection, a number of parents do not feel that they receive enough information about their child's progress. Some parents would like more extra-

curricular activities. The vast majority of parents consider the school to be well led and managed and that the teaching is good.

45. Parents are generally well informed about the school's work. Informative newsletters are sent home at regular intervals and the school's prospectus and annual report from governors both meet statutory requirements. Parents receive good information about the curriculum and this is an improvement on the previous inspection. Annual reports of pupils' progress are of satisfactory quality and generally free from jargon, but targets for improvement are not always clear. The school does not always inform parents well enough about staffing changes, and some would have liked more communication about the use of temporary teachers in one class. Mostly, however, the school takes good account of parents' views, and makes effective use of questionnaires to see where the provision can be improved.

46. The impact of the partnership with parents on the work of the school is good. There is an active Parent-Friend and Teacher Association that raises funds to enable the school to support school trips and purchase resources. Parents are encouraged to help in school and those who do so in the Nursery and Reception classes make a very good contribution. The staff have useful meetings with new parents when children start school in the Nursery. This practice, together with home-visits, effectively enhances relationships between home and school. Most parents listen to their children reading at home, and this is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

47. The school has good arrangements in place for the introduction of the children to both to the Nursery and for when they move to the Reception class. These include good opportunities for the children and parents to visit the classes, meetings for parents and home visits. Information booklets are provided for the parents before the children start school. The teachers are readily available to the parents and carers to discuss any problems on a day-to-day basis and regular opportunities are arranged for the parents to see and hear about the overall progress made by the children. A good number of parents and grandparents help in the classes regularly and make a significant contribution to the pupils' progress.

48. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well involved with their child's support, and are very pleased with the provision made by the school. They are informed as soon as the school has concerns, and are kept well aware of the school's targets for their child. Parents meet staff regularly to discuss how much progress is being made.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has helped to develop a very good team spirit in the school where all are working to a common purpose. This follows a period of considerable turbulence, with five staff leaving over the last two years and temporary teachers covering classes during long-term absences. These changes particularly affected the progress of pupils in the current Year 6.

50. A significant strength in the leadership is the improvement brought about in standards in English and mathematics since a low point in 1999 when standards were poor in the national tests. Staff morale was low and the turnover of teachers was high. The headteacher worked effectively with staff to raise their expectations of themselves and pupils and improve the way literacy and numeracy skills were taught. Standards improved quickly, and the success of the strategies put in place was justifiably recognised by three School Achievement awards since 1999.

51. The headteacher takes a strong lead in the management of pupils' behaviour and the development of their responsibility. The school has developed very clear rules about how pupils will behave and parents see this as an important strength of the provision. The headteacher has introduced very good systems for giving pupils responsibility. The School Council works very effectively and is used sensibly by pupils, for example, to make the school more attractive. A very good initiative in recent years has been the consultation with pupils on important aspects of the provision. The questionnaire that pupils are asked to complete provides an excellent view of their likes and dislikes, and has helped make important improvements in their behaviour.

52. The evaluation of the quality of teaching is satisfactory. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior staff observe teachers regularly, and they benefit from good feedback to show how they can improve their performance. In particular, this process has helped teachers develop a consistent approach to the management of pupils' behaviour. Subject co-ordinators for literacy and numeracy have evaluated the teaching in their subjects effectively, and this has helped raise standards of teaching and learning. There is little evaluation of teaching in other subjects, however, and this restricts their further development.

53. The school has sound measures to monitor pupils' standards and progress. Pupils' performance is tracked systematically as they move through the school in English and mathematics, and the subject co-ordinators do some useful analyses of their national test results to pick out areas of weaknesses. These have led to improved standards, particularly in mathematics and reading. However, the leadership has had little impact on the low standards in science throughout the school and writing in Years 3 to 6. In science, despite poor standards in the national tests for some years, assessment procedures are still weak, and the over-use of worksheets in many subjects is stifling pupils' writing skills.

54. The headteacher is supported well by the deputy headteacher. He has a good range of whole school responsibilities and communicates well with the headteacher and staff. As the co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs, the deputy supports teachers and pupils well. Importantly, he sets a good example by his own teaching. Other staff with management responsibilities make a sound contribution to the leadership of the school, but the limited funding available restricts the extent to which they can monitor and evaluate teaching in their subjects.

55. The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provides sound support. They have a good grasp of how the school compares with others and work closely with the headteacher and staff to make improvements. Governors help to ensure that the school's funds are managed capably, and while falling numbers of pupils have left the school with steadily eroded funds over the last five years, the budget remains in surplus because of astute financial planning and well-managed staff reductions. Governors are keen to offer advice and support concerning the school's future planning, but leave the decisions about the targets to the headteacher. This denies the governing body the opportunity to put forward their own priorities.

56. The school has good procedures to ensure the best value is gained from its spending, comparing its spending with similar schools, for example, and ensuring competitive quotations are obtained for supplies, projects and services. Good use is made of national and local authority performance data to compare results and set targets. The school consults parents and pupils regularly about the provision, and makes effective use of other local schools to arrange joint training days.

57. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory. Teachers have undergone a good range of training since the last inspection and this has had a positive effect on the quality of teaching. Support staff are well trained and make a good contribution to pupils' achievement. The school has satisfactory procedures for the induction of new teachers.

58. The accommodation is adequate in size and space for the effective teaching of the curriculum. The building is kept very clean and well maintained by the caretaker, cleaner and a small number of parents, some of whom helped with refurbishment of the Nursery area. The provision of a computer suite is a significant improvement since the last inspection, and has helped improve pupils' standards in ICT. Outside, the grounds are attractive and provide well for pupils' physical and educational development. The building does not currently afford disabled access and facilities and has very limited storage space.

59. In the Foundation Stage, the furnishing, decoration and displays in both classes are lively and colourful and the classrooms provide a very good variety of activities to support learning in all areas of the curriculum. Persistent problems of vandalism have meant that in the past the school has found it difficult to develop a well-organised and resourced outdoor play area. However, it has recently installed a secure outdoor store and this has greatly added to the opportunities for play outside, which contributes well to the development of the children..

60. Overall, the school has a satisfactory range of resources. However, there is a lack of both fiction and non-fiction books and too little in the library to develop pupils' awareness of other cultures in Britain and the world. There is also a lack of multicultural instruments in music. There are good resources in mathematics and science.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. To maintain the school's improvement, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

(1) raise standards in science by:

- teachers planning more activities to challenge the most able pupils, particularly in their experimental work;
- developing effective, whole school systems to assess pupils' attainment and progress;
- making regular evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning. (paragraphs 1, 7, 18, 19, 53, 82, 94-98)

(2) improve the quality of pupils' writing in Years 3 to 6 by teachers providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in all subjects; (paragraphs 7, 19, 77, 82, 83, 112, 117, 138)

(3) raise standards in art and design, design and technology and physical education by extending the time these subjects are taught. (paragraphs 5, 24, 99, 103, 130)

(4) make more effective use of assessment to identify and rectify pupils' weaknesses. (paragraphs 43, 53, 84)

Other issues that the school may wish to include in its future planning:

- develop whole-school assessment systems for all subjects; (paragraphs 43, 97, 108, 113, 128)
- improve the range of multicultural books and resources; (paragraph 35)
- involve the governing body more in setting the school's targets for improvement. (paragraph 55)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	39
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	54

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	6	20	12	0	0	0
Percentage	3	15	51	31	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

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)	11	163
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	33

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	16

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

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
	2002	7	9	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	13	14	16
	Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above			
	School	81 (78)	88 (70)	100 (74)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	15	16	13
	Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above			
	School	94 (41)	100 (52)	81 (81)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	18	15	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	16	15
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	27	29	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (73)	88 (73)	85 (80)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	16	13
	Girls	13	13	12
	Total	24	29	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (61)	88 (71)	76 (73)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	0	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	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.4
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	112

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	37
Number of pupils per FTE adult	14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	2002/2003
	£
Total income	437995
Total expenditure	435958
Expenditure per pupil	2242
Balance brought forward from previous year	35357
Balance carried forward to next year	2037

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	174
Number of questionnaires returned	87

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	44	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	43	2	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	41	2	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	44	8	4	2
The teaching is good.	56	33	3	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	41	15	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	29	2	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	31	0	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	38	41	9	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	44	42	5	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	43	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	35	14	4	8

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

62. There are currently 25 children in the Nursery, 13 attending in the mornings and 12 in the afternoon. According to when their birthday falls, children spend between three and five terms in the Nursery. Children move into the Reception class in September and at present there are 19 children in that class. Although there is a range of attainment, assessment and inspection evidence shows that on entry to the Nursery the majority of children are of below average attainment. The good teaching throughout the Foundation Stage ensures that the children make good progress. By the time they move into Year 1 the majority of the children reach the early learning goals in personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, creative and physical development and in knowledge and understanding of the world.

Personal, social and emotional development

63. Children make good progress and most achieve the expected levels in their personal and social development by the age of five. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is very good, the teachers make sure that all the children have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. As a result, they develop positive attitudes to learning. When they come into school, the children settle quickly and happily because they know the routines on entering the classrooms. In both classes, the children enjoy the group register session when they have an opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences with the teacher and each other. They find the correct day and select the symbol for the weather. Each class has a child nominated as the 'special helper' for the day, and they enjoy the added responsibilities of counting how much fruit is needed and pouring and serving the milk.

64. The teachers have high expectations of the children's behaviour and ability to take care of themselves independently and, as a result, their personal and social skills develop well. The children take care of their personal hygiene competently, and they gradually become more confident and capable when dressing and undressing for physical education sessions. In both classes, there is a good balance of teacher-directed tasks and of children-chosen activities. These provide good opportunities for the children to develop independence and self-reliance. The children behave very well as when they move between the activities during the free-choice sessions in the classrooms. They are kind and supportive to one another. There are very good relationships between all the adults and the children who, as a result, quickly gain confidence in speaking to adults and to each other. The adults provide many good opportunities for the children to explore and express their feelings. The children like to respond to questions from their teachers and other adults, and are beginning to think things through for themselves and to give explanations for their answers.

Communication, language and literacy

65. Although there is a range of attainment the majority of children enter the school with below average language skills, and the speech of some is poor. The good teaching in this area enables the children to make good progress and by the end of the Reception year, the majority of the children achieve the expected levels in communication, language and literacy and a few exceed them. However, there are some opportunities missed to follow up very good introductory work by giving attention to the ways in which the children are taught to write independently and this restricts their progress.

66. All the children listen enthusiastically to stories; they enjoy looking at story and information books and concentrate well in the sessions that focus on language development. They respond very well to events in stories such as 'Farmer Duck'. The teacher uses the pictures well to give clues to the meaning of text, and extends the children's understanding by asking searching questions such as, "What sort of a man is this?" The teachers develop and build the children's early reading skills well through such sharing of books and stories and the teaching of word building skills. The children in the Reception class know the individual letters of the alphabet by sight and sound by the end of the year. Most recognise a range of words from the key words list by sight and recognise, read, and write their names. All the Reception children take reading

books home regularly. Children in both classes have the opportunity to take library books home to share with parents and carers and this makes a positive contribution to their achievement.

67. As the children move through the Nursery and Reception classes, they develop a sound understanding of how to write. The teachers build the children's confidence by demonstrating how to write so that they learn that print carries meaning, and that it can be used to express thoughts and ideas. Throughout the Nursery and Reception classes, the children are taught to form letters correctly and are provided with good opportunities to try and write for themselves. The classrooms have alphabet charts and labels to help the children to link letters and sounds and write words themselves. In the Reception class, the children are encouraged to spell out simple words independently. They gradually develop their knowledge of letter sounds to help them write unfamiliar words.

Mathematical development

68. The children enter the Nursery class with below average skills in mathematical development and few can count or recognise numbers. Throughout the Nursery and Reception classes, the teaching is consistently good, and enables the children to make good progress in gaining mathematical understanding and skills. By the end of the year in the Reception class the majority of the children have achieved the expected levels in mathematical development. They recognise and write numbers from one to ten in digits, and most count to at least 20. The children understand the concept of one more and one less than a given number, and the majority of them know numbers that add up to ten. They learn about these patterns by picking apples one at a time from the tree to put in the basket.

69. The teachers make the learning fun by using lots of numbers in games and singing rhymes; this helps the children build confidence in counting and recognising numbers. In the Reception class, children made good progress in one lesson when the teacher helped them build a skittle alley and demonstrated how to add by combining two scores. The children make good progress because the teachers are skilled at assessing how well they have learned and using this information to extend their number skills.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. By the time they are five, most children achieve the levels expected in knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress because the quality of teaching is good in this area. The teachers plan well to provide a good range of interesting and exciting activities to teach children about the world around them. The children have regular access to the outdoor play area. Since the recent installation of the secure outdoor store there has been an improvement to the opportunities for play and exploration outside and the area is now satisfactorily equipped.

71. There are many good opportunities for the children to explore and use their imagination. During the week of the inspection, many activities in the Nursery were linked to a travel theme, whilst in the Reception class children were learning about animals and how to care for them. The children hear stories from the Bible and celebrate Christian festivals and festivals from other traditions such as Chinese New Year. Adults use the garden area well to teach children how things grow, and one group during the inspection had great fun eating the strawberries that they had grown. The children show great enthusiasm hunting for mini-beasts under logs and gasp in amazement when they find woodlice and beetles. In the Nursery class, sand and water are always available for exploration. The children recognise the stages of change and growth in themselves and animals, and when babies visit the nursery the children carefully help to bathe them. They are fascinated by the process, and are keen to practise their newly learned skills on dolls. In the Reception class, the children watch carefully to see if their caterpillars will emerge as butterflies. Adults provide many opportunities for the children to notice and describe changes in the weather and to understand how time passes by learning the days of the week. During a topic on 'people who help us' the children were visited by two police-women and they asked them good questions about their work. The children understand how ice and snow melt when brought into a warm room. They take part enthusiastically in cooking, and make good observations of the changes that take place when food is cooked. In both the Nursery and Reception classes the children are given good opportunities to use computers together with other information and technology equipment such as the programmable robot. They are competent in using the mouse to point and click and

use a number of programs that support their learning, such as matching letters and sounds, and a graphics program to make patterns and pictures.

Physical development

72. The children enter school with below average skills in this area of their development but by the time they leave the Reception most reach the levels expected in their physical development. The teaching is good and enables the children to make good progress.

73. By the time they leave the Reception, nearly all children dress and undress themselves with some help with fasteners. Adults provide many good opportunities to develop children's hand control using paintbrushes, pencils and scissors, as well as through joining together pieces when completing jigsaws, tracks and construction kits. As they move the children show a good awareness of space by not bumping into each other. They use the wheeled outdoor equipment well, and develop their skills in throwing and catching hoops and balls and in balancing eggs on spoons. They take care when they are playing not to act in ways that may hurt other children. However, there is a lack of equipment for the children to use on a regular basis in the outdoor area to promote skills in climbing and balancing.

Creative development

74. The children enjoy a very good range of experiences in art, music, story and imaginative play. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and enables the children to make the good progress seen in their creative development. The classrooms are exciting and stimulating. The majority of the children enter the school with below average attainment in this area of learning and they all attain or exceed the expected levels before they leave the Reception class.

75. The children use paint with great enjoyment and concentration. They know that colours can be mixed and that paint can be used to depict people and scenes; they like to talk about and explain their pictures. Sand and water are available for children to explore and use on a regular basis together with a good range of creative materials. The children have good opportunities to explore the sounds that different instruments make and the adults help the children extend the experience into group playing and singing together sessions. Music sessions and a wide range of musical instruments, songs and rhymes and dancing contribute well to the development of the children's understanding and pleasure in sounds, rhythms and patterns.

76. The school provides good resources for a wide variety of role-play situations to develop children's imagination. A visit by the Reception class children to a local animal park resulted in colourful paintings of 'wild' animals and the establishment of a vet's surgery in the role-play area. In the Nursery, the children had an excellent opportunity to 'go to the seaside for the day' when a paddling pool, sunshade and sandy beach were set out. Children were delighted and learned much as they entered enthusiastically into imaginary events as they boarded the 'bus' and set off happily singing. The adults worked hard to develop the children's confidence, and even the most reluctant paddlers were soon splashing in the pool and trying out the feel of sand sticking to their feet.

ENGLISH

77. Inspection evidence shows that the pupils' attainment in English is average by the end of Year 2 and below average by the end of Year 6. The work of the current group of pupils in Year 2 indicates that the standards in reading and speaking and listening are average and they are above average in writing, which represents a good improvement since the last inspection. When taking account of their prior attainment, the pupils in the infants, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Although there has been a steady improvement in standards by Year 6 in recent years, those attained by the current group of pupils are below average; while standards in speaking and listening and reading are average by the end of Year 6, there are weaknesses in the pupils' writing skills. Nevertheless, these pupils have made satisfactory progress since their national tests in Year 2. There is no significant difference in the rate of progress made by boys and girls.

78. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening. In all year groups, teachers provide many opportunities for them to develop these skills in the discussions at the beginning and end of literacy sessions and in other subjects. Similarly, class council sessions, where the pupils share ideas and discuss problems that may have arisen, make a good contribution. Most of the pupils listen attentively when their teachers or other pupils are speaking. A strong feature is the way that the pupils are regularly encouraged to work with partners or in small groups. For example, in a design and technology lesson in Year 4, the pupils worked together productively to create money holders. There were many enthusiastic and sensitive discussions about the activity, how the jobs might be shared and the best way to improve their work. This approach is contributing to the development of their speaking and listening skills and helps to promote the pupils' self-esteem and personal development. As a result, the pupils gain in confidence as they move through the school and, by Year 6, the pupils ask and answer questions willingly and talk about their work sensibly.

79. Building on the firm foundations established in the Nursery and Reception class, the teaching of reading remains a high priority in Years 1 and 2. The Literacy Strategy has been implemented successfully, and the pupils develop their reading skills systematically. There is a good emphasis on the development of word building skills, which the pupils use carefully to help them read unfamiliar text, and they use good other strategies such as using clues from pictures and the context of the story.

80. The pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6. Most develop the reading skills expected of their age and a few more able pupils read with good levels of accuracy, fluency and understanding. They talk enthusiastically about the books they have read and read from a wide variety of texts in literacy lessons. For example, the pupils in Year 6 are using the story of 'Kensuke's Kingdom' as a stimulus for work done in preparation for their transfer to secondary school. The pupils read the text well and demonstrated a sound understanding of what they have read by recalling the main features of the story and of the main characters. Most pupils understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and use the contents and index to help them find information. Many of the pupils read at home and, where this is a regular feature, this contributes positively to their progress. Many of the books offered to the pupils are old and outdated. Whilst the pupils generally have positive attitudes to reading, a small number of pupils indicate that they do not enjoy reading. The quality and range of books available do too little to encourage these pupils to become avid readers.

81. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their reading as a result of good support in lessons and effective teaching of word building skills. The teachers provide good examples to pupils by reading aloud enthusiastically, communicating their own pleasure in reading and underlining the importance of reading as a key skill in the pupils' learning.

82. By Year 2, pupils have made good progress in the development of their writing skills and are achieving well. They benefit from good opportunities to write in a variety of styles and teachers provide lots of work for them to develop the skills and confidence to write at a length. The basic skills, including spelling, are taught systematically. Most pupils by Year 2 write neatly, independently and with accurate spelling and punctuation. Standards in writing in the juniors have been improving steadily over the last few years, but the attainment of the pupils in the current Year 6 is below average, reflecting the results they achieved in Year 2. The teaching in the Literacy Hour has ensured that the pupils develop sound basic skills of writing. They know some of the features of successful writing, including punctuation and grammar, and they have developed the skills to write independently. They take pride in their work and most write neatly. However, the over-use of work sheets, particularly in subjects such as science, geography and history means that there are too few opportunities for the pupils to develop their ability to record their work in a variety of ways. As a result, the pupils struggle when asked to think for themselves, organise their thoughts, make decisions about layout and practise writing independently. This slows the rate of progress the pupils make in writing. Although there are opportunities for writing in most literacy lessons, too little time is devoted to enable the pupils to develop and extend their skills.

83. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. This judgement takes account of the lessons seen during the inspection, the work in pupils' books over the last year and an examination of the teachers' planning. In the best lessons seen throughout the school, teachers share with pupils the aims of the lesson in terms of their learning. These are then reviewed in the

discussions at the end to see how well pupils have learned. As a result teachers and pupils have a clear idea of how well they have done and areas where they need further attention. Across the school, the teachers generally have good questioning skills and they skilfully encourage the pupils to think deeply about their responses. In Years 3 to 6, the teachers do not always have sufficiently high expectations of what the pupils are capable of achieving, particularly in writing. This is especially true of the more able pupils who, in some lessons, are required to carry out the same written tasks as the other pupils. The teachers mark the pupils work conscientiously and provide a good balance of praise and suggestions for how the pupils might improve their work.

84. Overall, the leadership and management of English are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject. Through the observation of lessons and the analysis of the work in pupils' books, he is developing a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject including the need to improve the standard of writing by the end of Year 6 and the provision of books across the school. The curriculum covers the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy and ensures that the basic skills are taught systematically through the school. However, the over-reliance on teacher-devised and commercially produced worksheets in many subjects limits the progress made by the pupils in writing. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment and for monitoring their progress. The information from these assessments is used well to produce short-term targets for improvement that are displayed inside pupils' workbooks, but the use of assessment to provide a long term strategy for improving writing throughout the school is lacking. Apart from the weaknesses in the provision of books, resources for English are satisfactory and they are well used by the teachers. There are many effective displays in classrooms to support the pupils' learning of literacy skills. Computers are used well to support the pupils' literacy skills.

MATHEMATICS

85. By Year 2, pupils' standards in numeracy and all other areas of the mathematics curriculum are well above average, and significantly higher than those reported in the last inspection. These pupils achieve very well given their standards on entry. By Year 6, standards are below average. The current group of pupils in Year 6 entered the school with poor mathematical skills and the tracking of their progress through the school shows that they have made satisfactory gains over the years. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and most come close to national standards by the time they leave. Knowledgeable teaching assistants provide just the right amount of support to these pupils and ensure that they take a full part in all activities. In one lesson in Year 4, for example, the teacher was asking pupils to add two-digit numbers together; the teaching assistant helped a pupil with poor mathematical skills to add 99 to 66 by increasing 99 to 100 and then adding 65. The pupil beamed with pride when he was the first to provide the correct answer.

86. The school has done much to raise standards over recent years, and has profited from the guidance of senior members of staff with very good mathematical knowledge. This has improved the way teachers plan lessons and raised their expectations of pupils' achievements. The benefits of this are working their way through the school, and many pupils in Year 5 are working at levels expected in Year 6.

87. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have a very quick mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to ten and order numbers correctly up to 100 and beyond. They are good at selecting their own methods for working out problems, and this increases the pace of their working. Pupils are starting to show their working out, and this is helping them to avoid careless mistakes. They have a very good understanding of shape and measure, and estimate the length of objects with reasonable accuracy. They identify correctly the characteristics of two and three-dimensional shapes, and insert lines of symmetry accurately on to figures. Pupils are very good at collecting data, and produce accurate block graphs of their favourite fruits or ice creams.

88. By Year 6, pupils have had a lot of recent practice in solving problems but they still struggle to see patterns in their investigations. They work out the cost of a school trip with reasonable accuracy but often rely on calculators to work out their results. While a few work with number with confidence, many are slow in their mental recall of multiplication tables. Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of perimeter, and recognise the properties of common shapes. Pupils represent data clearly using graphs, and are good at

working out probability problems using dice. Pupils make good use of ICT, for example, to plot the relationship between the circumference and diameter of balls, and using spreadsheets to calculate average shoe sizes.

89. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Teachers are knowledgeable about the mathematics curriculum, and have a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy. In Years 1 and 2, teachers are well organised with resources ready for use and support staff are aware of what they are required to do. There is sometimes, however, an over-reliance of commercial workbooks that do not always challenge the more able pupils. Teachers maintain good control of the pupils with a friendly but firm manner. They are very good at involving all pupils by naming them and switching the focus of their questions from one to another. Pupils respond well to this method and are attentive and willing to explain their mental strategies. Other methods, such as open-ended questioning, enable pupils to reflect and think for themselves. Lessons start well, with lively mental work, and this helps pupils' confidence in the basic skills.

90. In Years 3 to 6, teachers work hard at making lessons fun, and this is why pupils enjoy mathematics so much. In one lesson in Year 3, for example, the teacher announced that they were to play the 'Fizz-Buzz Game' and pupils whooped with delight. They had to count until they got to a number divisible by two and/or ten and say "Fizz" or "Buzz" instead of the number. They concentrated very hard to keep the pace of the counting fast enough to beat the previous day's time and learned much without even realising that they had been working. Teachers are very good at including pupils with special educational needs in their questioning, tailoring the level of challenge very carefully to give them a good chance of success. This works very well, and ensures that they contribute to lessons as much as anyone. Where some teaching has shortcomings, the pace of the mental starter session is too slow. This means that while pupils learn at a steady pace, they do not develop the instant recall of facts necessary to achieve high levels.

91. Teachers make good use of mathematics across the curriculum. For example, pupils draw graphs in science to plot the results of experiments, work out time zones in geography and calculate using Aztec numbers in history.

92. The subject co-ordinator provides good support to teachers, and has a clear understanding of what is required to raise standards. The curriculum is soundly based on the National Numeracy strategy and generally provides a good basis for teachers' planning. The use of a commercial scheme to support the strategy does not always work well, especially when teachers make too much use of worksheets that teach pupils nothing about how to set out sums. Rigorous evaluation of the quality of teaching and pupils' learning enables the school to continually raise standards. Good assessment procedures help teachers plot pupils' progress accurately and set challenging targets for the future. The supply of learning resources is good, but the school has too few ICT programs to make the best use of the computer suite in mathematics.

SCIENCE

93. The standards achieved by pupils by the end of Year 2 are below average. These are below the standards attained at the time of the last inspection. Pupils achieve well when learning about living things, but not in other areas. Standards at the end of Year 6 are below average. This was also the case at the time of the last inspection. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress through the school. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in their scientific understanding but write little in their books to record their findings.

94. By Year 2, most pupils know that plants require light and water for growth. They recognise that different living things are found in different environments. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the names of common insects and mini-beasts and a few use the correct scientific vocabulary to describe the different parts of an insect's body. For example, a pupil in Year 2 used the word 'thorax' correctly when identifying insect body parts. Most have a basic understanding of simple circuits and identify the simple characteristics of some common materials. They are beginning to record results in a common format. However, their investigational skills are weak and their recording of findings sparse. There is little evidence of more able

pupils being given tasks that would sufficiently challenge them. There are limited opportunities for pupils to develop their scientific enquiry skills.

95. By Year 6, most pupils can use the correct scientific terminology when describing parts of plants and major organs of the human body. They have a sound knowledge of basic life processes and understand that sounds are produced when objects vibrate. In Year 5, the work on sound was linked to what the pupils had been learning in music, which enabled them to effectively use their knowledge and skills across two areas of the curriculum. Pupils make some use of ICT to present their results using tables and graphs. This is an improvement from the last inspection when computers were used rarely. Only a few pupils draw accurate and properly labelled line graphs to record and interpret results. Many pupils find it difficult to draw conclusions and record them using the appropriate scientific vocabulary. Their understanding of what makes a fair test is weak. For example, even the most able pupils in Year 6 struggled to define a fair test when experimenting with different of washing up liquids to see which produced the longer lasting bubbles. Overall, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their skills of scientific enquiry and few are confident designing their own experiments.

96. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is unsatisfactory. Although the teaching seen in lessons during the inspection was satisfactory with some good use of questioning to make pupils think carefully, the over-use of commercially produced worksheets does not meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Too often, the same worksheet is used for all pupils irrespective of their ability, and they do little to develop their scientific enquiry skills. Teachers' planning does not take into account the need to challenge more able pupils, and they do not achieve as well as they could. The curricular planning is unsatisfactory. Many lessons last for a whole morning or afternoon, with pupils working on one topic. This is too long for many pupils. Often the pace of the lesson drops and this results in a decline in pupils' interest and motivation. Teachers generally demonstrate good questioning skills and sound subject knowledge.

97. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. National tests are not analysed sufficiently to see where pupils need to improve, and teachers' everyday assessments are not used well enough to inform their planning. Teachers' marking does not give clear guidance to pupils on what they need to do next to improve, and often work is not dated which makes it difficult for teachers to assess progress over a period of time. In some classes, where pupils work in groups according to their ability, it is what they can do in English and mathematics that decides the group, not in science. This results in more able pupils marking time. However, the co-ordinator has very recently introduced a system of assessment for each area of the curriculum to enable teachers to judge pupils' progress and identify areas of weakness. This is still in its very early stages.

98. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The school does not evaluate the quality teaching and learning or the rate of pupils' progress rigorously enough to raise standards. However, the co-ordinator has identified these issues and has produced a good action plan aimed at raising standards.

ART AND DESIGN

99. Pupils' attainment in art and design is average by Year 2 but below average by Year 6. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well and those with special educational needs make good progress. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. This is largely because insufficient time has been given to the provision of a challenging and broad art and design curriculum. In particular, the curriculum provides too few opportunities for the development of pupils' imagination and creativity. At the time of the last inspection, standards were found to be average throughout the school. When given the opportunities, pupils talk confidently about how they have achieved particular effects and in some cases are able to explain how they could improve the finished product.

100. By Year 2, pupils paint lively pictures of seaside scenes, and create good self-portraits showing details of facial features. They show good skills when drawing still-life pictures of flowers, and display a sound awareness of the style of Van Gough when producing collages of sunflowers. As part of their history topic on the Great Fire of London they painted houses that created a lively depiction of the scene. They use their ICT skills well to show features of interesting buildings.

101. By Year 6, pupils paint self-portraits that show satisfactory progress in observing and drawing details of facial features. They print basic patterns on cloth and consider what use the finished product would be best suited to. Pupils use different media with reasonable skill and, in some of their best work, applied chalk effectively to produce desert pictures with silhouettes of cacti and buildings as part of their topic on the Aztecs. The pupils make satisfactory progress in investigating the use of shading and hatching techniques to make drawings of a range of objects but their drawing skills are generally weak and much of their work lacks imagination. Teachers make limited use of sketchbooks to practice drawing and to try new techniques and therefore miss opportunities to develop pupils' skills further.

102. The overall quality of teaching and learning in art and design is satisfactory. Teachers make lessons interesting by providing interesting resources, and all pupils enjoy the subject. On occasions, teachers lack confidence in teaching art and design and lack sufficient subject knowledge to get the best out of pupils.

103. In recent years, the attention given to teaching the basic skills of numeracy and literacy has resulted in insufficient time being given to the provision of a suitably broad art and design curriculum. Teachers make up for this to some extent by including art and design in the teaching of other subjects, but this makes the development of skills haphazard. The school acknowledges that the scheme of work has not been suited to the needs of the pupils, and has recently introduced a new planning scheme; the impact of this is yet to be seen.

104. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic about art and design and has a good idea of how to raise standards. She works hard to ensure that the art and design work in school is well displayed and values the work of the pupils. A sound assessment system has just been introduced to check the work covered by the pupils. The school participates enthusiastically in events to enhance the curriculum. For example, at present the Year 5 pupils are involved in the design and construction of a sculpture for the town centre of Brownhills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

105. Standards are in line with those expected of pupils in Years 2 and 6. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress. These are similar to the standards reported in the last inspection by Year 2 but lower in Year 6 where the impact of the reduced time now given for the subject has been most marked.

106. By Year 2, pupils use their own designs capably to create simple meals and make sound evaluations of their results. Their plans are drawn carefully and show a sound understanding of the need to make them realistic and achievable. When handling tools they have a good awareness of the importance of the safety of themselves and others. They work systematically to gather their materials and often refer to their plans to make sure that they have included everything. In some of their best work, pupils made exciting wind-up 'Incy Wincy Spiders' with detailed, clearly labelled drawings and brief evaluations of their efforts.

107. The pupils continue to make steady progress in Year 3. They have used boxes effectively to make moving monsters, created attractive frames for photographs and designed interesting sandwiches. The pupils in Year 4 were observed making money containers, using their previously created designs. These pupils are developing a sound understanding of the limitations of different types of material and they used this knowledge to carefully select the best materials to fulfil their particular requirements. They have a well-developed sense of design and of what pleases them, but are prepared to compromise, negotiate and come to an agreement with their partners. By Year 6, most of the pupils measure accurately with a ruler and cut materials carefully. When given the opportunity, they produce some good models based on detailed designs. Their models of tents, for example, showed a good awareness of what makes a tent work well and were constructed with a good attention to detail. Their evaluations were honest and helpful. The examples of good quality work across the school, however, are limited and some of the work lacks precision, particularly amongst the older pupils.

108. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers gather a wide range of materials from which the pupils can choose and this gives them a good start. They explain tasks clearly and make good links with work in other subjects so that pupils see a purpose for their work. The lessons move at a brisk pace and volunteers are used well to support groups of pupils. The teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject and encourage the pupils to plan carefully and evaluate thoughtfully. The co-ordinator has had responsibility for the subject for less than a year and is carrying out the duties in a temporary capacity. During this time, there has been no opportunity for monitoring the teaching and learning and there is no specific budget for the subject. Despite its low priority, the teachers are committed to design and technology and, using the national guidelines, they ensure an interesting range of activities. There is little evidence that the planning takes account of the needs of different levels of ability and this restricts the progress made by more able pupils. There are no specific arrangements for assessing the pupils' attainment, although the co-ordinator is beginning to gather examples of the pupils' work to help assist with this process. There is a sound range of resources to support the pupils' learning.

GEOGRAPHY

109. Standards by Years 2 and 6 are average and pupils achieve well. Those pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior learning because they are supported well by adults in their lessons. The school has maintained the standards seen at the time of the last inspection

110. By Year 2, pupils use and make simple maps with reasonable skill. They show confidence showing the main features of a map of the world and use their ICT skills well to show the oceans and continents. They have a good awareness of how volcanic islands are formed and speak knowledgeably about how Japan and the USA are important to Hawaii.

111. By Year 6, pupils have a good awareness of how human activities affect the environment. They write knowledgeably about river systems and identify good links between rivers, climate, human settlement and farming. In some of their best work, Year 3 pupils identified different rock samples and showed a good awareness of their origin. An excellent range of samples for them to study and feel enhanced this work. Pupils have a good grasp of how rivers and mountains are formed and write knowledgeably about the 'water cycle'. They use ICT well to research their projects and their work on the Zambesi gained much from using the Internet. Pupils in Year 4 showed their concern for their local area when they took photographs of litter in their local area and wrote to the Borough Council of their concerns. The reply recognised pupils' deep concern for the environment and praised the quality of their research.

112. The quality of teaching and learning in geography is satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers make good use of the resources available to them, including an excellent range of 'real' rock samples and a good variety of web sites on the Internet. Throughout the school, however, pupils are given too few opportunities to write at length about their research. Too often, they complete worksheets that ensure that they understand basic geographical concepts but deny them the chance to develop themes fully. Only in Year 6 are pupils able to undertake extensive projects that make use of their literacy skills and these are often of a high quality. They show what they are capable of when given the chance.

113. There is no co-ordinator for geography. This is unsatisfactory, and prevents the further development of the subject. Assessment procedures are very basic and do little to raise standards.

HISTORY

114. Standards in history have been maintained since the previous inspection and are in line with those expected nationally in Year 2 and Year 6. These standards represent good achievement given pupils' weak knowledge of the world on entry to the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, but while they develop a reasonable historical knowledge their written work is often sketchy.

115. By Year 2, pupils have a sound knowledge of the past and how living conditions have changed since then. For example, when looking at how people enjoyed the seaside, pupils showed a good awareness of how their dress differed from that seen today, and a few more able pupils gave good reasons for the changes.

Pupils have a sound knowledge of the lives of famous people from the past and the importance of Louis Braille in developing a system to enable the blind to read books. Pupils know how the Great Fire of London started and some of the conditions that made London vulnerable. In their best work, pupils used some excellent resources on the Second World War to write good accounts of what it must have been like to experience an air raid. Examples of this sort of extended writing, however, are rare and pupils spend too much time completing worksheets that make little use of the literacy skills.

116. By Year 6, pupils have a sound understanding of the lives of the Aztec people and write knowledgeably about the differences between the way children grew up then and now. Their extended projects show good research skills and effective use of different sources of information. As with younger pupils, however, much of the work involves completing worksheets and is too brief to extend the most able pupils or require them to question the validity of different sources of evidence. Pupils conduct some good research into the life of John Lennon, and use the Internet well to gather more information.

117. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The teachers plan lessons well so that pupils learn important facts and also have opportunities to find information for themselves. Teachers use effective questioning to make pupils think deeply about the subject. They use resources very well to make lessons interesting and bring the subject to life. The main weakness is in the excessive use of a commercial scheme of work that relies heavily on pupils completing brief accounts of their findings. When teachers do give pupils opportunities to write at length, they achieve far higher standards in their work and show a pride in their completed projects.

118. The recently appointed co-ordinator provides sound management of the subject. The co-ordinator made a good start by raising the profile of history in the school and producing exciting displays of pupils' best work. The school has sound assessment procedures that show clearly the levels that pupils are attaining by the end of the year. The co-ordinator has also started to compile a useful collection of work so that teachers know the standards expected by their pupils. Although the co-ordinator examines pupils' work and teachers' planning, she has not had the opportunity to monitor the impact of teaching on learning through direct classroom observations. The co-ordinator is now considering the best way to improve the planning of the curriculum. The school has a good supply of interesting resources that do much to make lessons interesting. The visits that pupils make such as the trip to RAF Cosford to study the development of aeroplanes, enhance pupils' understanding of the past.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119. Standards of attainment are in line with the expectations of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards at the end of the infants and juniors were judged to be below average. Standards have improved because of the good quality leadership provided by the co-ordinator the improvement in teachers' knowledge and confidence, better provision of resources and more detailed planning of the curriculum. A big factor in the raising of standards has been the provision of a computer suite. All classes have a specific time allocated to them, and pupils gain much from immediately being able to put into practice the skills they have learned. As a result, the pupils, including those with special educational needs, have made rapid progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding.

120. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop sound word processing skills that enable them to write and edit their stories and poems. For example, Year 1 pupils have used the computer to retell the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' in literacy, label parts of the body in science and produce graphs in mathematics to show the way that they travel to school. They have a sound grasp of the computer language LOGO and are confident giving instructions to draw shapes on the screen. They use the mouse and the keyboard competently. They know that the sequence of instructions is important to get the desired effect. Pupils enjoy ICT and quickly become engrossed in their work as they share turns with their partners.

121. The pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to make good progress as they incorporate pictures in their writing. They produce accurate graphs and charts to show their favourite food and drink and the most common eye colour in their class. These pupils send and receive electronic mail with a sound understanding of the importance of accuracy and safety. The pupils in Year 3 were observed using computers well to

support their learning in history. They showed good skills as they logged onto the computers and confidently used the Internet to research letters written by evacuees. The pupils in Year 4 extend their knowledge and understanding of word processing well by writing for a variety of purposes, including writing letters. They edit the text, for example by deleting and highlighting to make their writing more interesting, and they create repeating patterns, explore databases and organise information to produce charts and graphs. This good progress is continued in Year 5, as they learn to handle and analyse data by asking questions and searching for information. They know the importance of checking the accuracy of information and create detailed plans of rooms. In Year 6, pupils use a digital microscope skilfully to observe bread, explore the use of spreadsheets, consider the use of sensors in real-life situations and create accurate graphs of temperature changes. They enter data systematically and manipulate it to produce a range of graphs. Across the school, the pupils have many opportunities to use digital cameras.

122. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The teachers are knowledgeable and confident about the work that they cover. The lessons are well organised. In one literacy session planned for the computer suite, a technical difficulty led to the abandonment of the computers in favour pencil and paper method. The teacher's quick thinking and contingency plan ensured that there was only a limited loss of pace in the lesson and no detrimental impact on the pupils' progress. The teachers' planning is clear about what the pupils will learn while they are in the suite. Their good organisation and management of the pupils ensures that there is little wasted time. The tasks are explained clearly by the teachers and their expectations of what the pupils can achieve are high.

123. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The headteacher, as subject co-ordinator, has been instrumental in securing the improvements in the subject and he has been well supported by the staff who show a good commitment to the subject. The curriculum, using the national guidelines, is broad and balanced and covers the requirements of the National Curriculum. There are sound systems for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress. Through his work as headteacher, the co-ordinator has a good idea of the work taking place across the school, but there has been no formal monitoring of lessons. The teachers use the computer suite well to support the pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy lessons. Some classes also use the suite to teach lessons in other subjects, such as geography and history, and there are many examples of computers being used to support this learning. Overall, resources are good.

MUSIC

124. By Years 2 and 6, standards of attainment are in line with those expected nationally and overall the pupils make satisfactory progress. This is a similar situation to that at the time of the last inspection.

125. Throughout the school the pupils like to sing together and they sing enthusiastically, tunefully and with expression. By Year 2, nearly all pupils sing songs with the correct tempo and dynamics and, by Year 6, their skills have improved so that most sing songs and hymns paying good attention to their breathing and phrasing. The pupils who have lessons in the various musical instruments develop good skills in the use of musical notation. The recorder players use the correct fingering, know a wide range of pieces of music and play in parts with confidence. In Year 6, pupils attain well when they compose short pieces of music to match moods that they have identified such as 'slow', 'gentle', and 'sad'. They evaluate the performances of themselves and others well, and make perceptive comments on whether the groups have achieved their purpose.

126. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are well organised and provide pupils with an interesting range of opportunities for them to sing, play and compose. Where the teaching is most effective, the teachers make the lesson's purpose very clear and have high expectations of pupils' participation and attainment. They communicate their own enthusiasm very clearly to the pupils who try hard to succeed. Where teaching has shortcomings, the teachers' knowledge of music and the curriculum is uncertain and the achievement of pupils suffers.

127. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject co-ordinator is a music specialist who promotes music and musical activities enthusiastically throughout the school. His skills are

particularly well used to teach the Year 5 and 6 pupils who respond very well to his energetic approach. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by helping to raise their self-esteem and develop their independence in learning. Pupils' singing is enhanced by the provision of a teacher from the local education authority music service who visits the school to teach the choir. An excellent session was seen in which the pupils reached very good standards of singing because of the highly effective teaching. The teacher's very high expectations and excellent teaching of skills and techniques ensured that all pupils gave of their best. As they progress through the school the pupils have good opportunities to learn to play an instrument; the recorder, violin and trumpet are available to pupils. Music and singing are positive features of the school and are enjoyed by all of the pupils.

128. The school is using national guidelines effectively to plan what should be taught in each year group. There are sound systems to assess pupils' skills and progress, but these are not used consistently through the school. There is a good number of traditional percussion and tuned instruments available to support teaching and learning but there are few that represent the music of different cultures. Teachers make little use of ICT in music lessons and therefore miss valuable opportunities to develop pupils' skills further.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. During the inspection, only games lessons were observed, as the school focuses on this area in the summer term. By Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' standards in games are in line with national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress although some struggle with the control of small balls. They take a full part in all activities and are encouraged and supported well by both teachers and pupils.

130. The school allocates insufficient time to physical education over the year. Pupils have only one lesson each week, which is significantly less than the recommended time, and this restricts their further progress.

131. By Year 2, pupils demonstrate good ball control by picking up a rolling ball in one hand while running. They work well as a member of a team, supporting each other enthusiastically and appreciating the efforts made by other pupils whatever their level of ability. They have a sound understanding of the effects of exercise on their body and are careful to warm up properly.

132. By Year 6, over three-quarters of pupils can swim 25 metres. They have the opportunity to take part in a good range of outdoor pursuits during a residential weekend. In addition, the school provides rock climbing, sailing and mountain climbing for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The pupils achieve good standards in dance, particularly during a dance club after school when they put together complex moves with good control. They use space well and show confidence in their movement. Most pupils show a good understanding of tactics, as was observed in a game of rugby when pupils realised the need to work together and use spaces. They observe the work of other pupils carefully and improve their own performance as a result.

133. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers use warm up activities well to ensure pupils are prepared for the main activities, and all pay good attention to pupils' safety. The work of a visiting coach for rugby has a positive impact on standards because of his good subject knowledge. Teachers always look for examples of good work and, in one lesson in Year 2, the teacher used a demonstration of ball control by one boy very effectively to motivate and encourage the rest of the class.

134. The leadership and management of the subject are sound. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and is currently working with local schools to produce a physical education policy. She has a sound overview of planning, ensuring that all aspects of the curriculum are taught, and she is aware of the need to provide more time for pupils to develop their skills. The assessment of pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has just introduced a workable system, but this is still in the early stages and has not yet been implemented across the whole school. A good range of extra-curricular sports activities helps to boost standards. Pupils have good opportunities to take part in competitive activities such as football against other local schools.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. By Years 2 and 6, pupils reach standards that match the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. This judgement is similar to the judgement of the school's previous inspection. These standards represent good achievement by all pupils, including those with special educational needs. In this inspection, no lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 due to the organisation of the timetable. Judgements have been based on the work in pupils' books over the year and discussions with pupils and the subject co-ordinator.

136. By Year 2, pupils show a sound knowledge of how Christians, Jews and Hindus celebrate special times such as Christmas, Hanukah and Diwali. They know some of the practices and people relating to the world's faiths, such as the meaning of the Hindu Tilak and the story of Jesus. In some of their best work, pupils looked at different symbols associated with religions and produced some excellent ones to use as the school symbol. Pupils develop their spirituality well in lessons, and their work on what made them feel happy or sad showed a good insight into their own emotions.

137. By Year 6, pupils have a sound understanding of the basis of Christianity and of other world faiths, in particular, Sikhism, Hinduism and Buddhism. They have a good awareness of the significance of some Christian festivals, such as Christmas and Easter and places of worship such as a Jewish synagogue. They are respectful of beliefs and traditions distinct from their own and write good accounts of stories such as those concerning Guru Gobind and Guru Nanak.

138. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The teacher's planning is detailed with clear ideas of what pupils will learn. These are usually shared with pupils, and this helps them focus on the content of the lesson. A strength of the teaching lies in the way teachers accept all the pupils' contributions enthusiastically, and this gives them the confidence to take risks with their answers. In a good lesson in Year 3, for example, the teacher was tackling the difficult topic of 'Faith'. She began by asking pupils to give her words that were associated with faith and they soon came up with good examples such as 'belief', 'truth', 'trust' and 'love'. By drawing a diagram that included all of their contributions, the teachers ensured that all pupils made very good progress in their understanding of a complex subject. In the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to write full accounts of their findings and these develop their understanding well. Too often, however, pupils complete commercially produced worksheets that demand little of them and teachers miss valuable opportunities to extend pupils' skills further.

139. The curriculum offered is broad and balanced and the planning is relevant to the needs of all pupils. Assessment procedures are very basic and based on the pupils' response in lessons and their written work. Themes in collective worship and in personal, social and health education are often closely linked to religious education. The leadership and management of the subject by the temporary co-ordinator are sound. Resources and books to support the teaching of religious education are adequate and well organised. They include some good materials relating to different world religions. The subject provides good opportunities for pupils to discuss and reflect on a range of issues, to develop moral and social awareness and to respect and celebrate religious and cultural diversity.