

INSPECTION REPORT

BLUE COAT CE AIDED JUNIOR SCHOOL

Walsall

LEA area: Walsall MBC

Unique reference number: 104230

Headteacher: Mrs J A Smith

Reporting inspector: Mr D Speakman
20086

Dates of inspection: 14th – 17th October 2002

Inspection number: 246364

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school: | Junior |
| School category: | Voluntary Aided |
| Age range of pupils: | 7 - 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Springhill Road Walsall West Midlands |
| Postcode: | WS1 2LP |
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| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mrs J Hitchcott |
| Date of previous inspection: | 14 th – 17 th October 2002 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|------------------|----------------------|--|---|
| 20086 | Mr D Speakman | Registered inspector | Science, Design and technology, Information and communication, technology. | What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? |
| 9173 | Mrs S McDermott | Lay inspector | | How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 31334 | Mrs B Atcheson | Team inspector | Mathematics | Pupils' attitudes values and personal development |
| 4099 | Mr R Braithwaite | Team inspector | Geography, History, Physical education. | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| 11402 | Dr T Gorman | Team inspector | English, Provision for pupils with English as an additional language. | |
| 21547 | Mrs P White | Team inspector | Art and design, Music, Special educational needs, Educational Inclusion. | |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated close to the centre of Walsall, in an area of ethnic diversity and social mix. Pupils who attend the school come from an area much further afield than the immediate vicinity. Their backgrounds include Black Caribbean, Black African, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, white European, White UK heritage and pupils of dual heritage. There are 303 pupils on roll: 145 boys and 158 girls aged between seven and eleven. The school experiences an extremely high level of pupils joining or leaving the school at times other than the beginning of Year 3 and the end of Year 6. Many of those who join the school during the year have poor English or special educational needs. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is therefore below average. About 15 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, and this is below average. There is a small number of refugee pupils and 116 pupils have English as an additional language. Of these, 58 are at an early stage of English language acquisition. All are supported through additional funding. This proportion is very high in comparison to schools nationally. The main language groupings are Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, Gudjurathi and Mirpuri, with smaller numbers of pupils speaking languages deriving from Europe, Africa and China. Half of the pupils with English as an additional language have been assessed as needing a measure of additional support in language learning. There are also some pupils who speak Standard English as a second dialect. Twenty-four pupils are identified as having special educational needs and four of these have statements. Most of the identified special needs are for moderate and specific learning difficulties and a few with behavioural problems.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Pupils achieve well and starting from a low base, attain satisfactory standards in most subjects. The school achieves its realistic targets for the results in English and mathematics tests at the end of Year 6. Pupils make good progress because they try very hard, behave well and are taught effectively. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and the headteacher, staff and governors are committed to the full educational inclusion of all pupils regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability. Resource allocation is efficient and funds are managed well. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher and her management team provide strong and determined leadership that sets a very clear educational direction, which is shared by all adults working in the school.
- Pupils from different backgrounds are fully included in all school opportunities and given equal opportunities to succeed and make good progress, including those with English as an additional language and special educational needs.
- Teaching is good overall and enables pupils to attain satisfactory standards and achieve well starting from a below average base.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and their attitudes are very good. Relationships between pupils are very good and their respect for the feelings and beliefs of others is of an excellent quality. This arises from the very good provision for pupils' personal development.
- The school cares well for its pupils. Assessment procedures are good in English, mathematics and science.

What could be improved

- Monitoring and developing further the quality of teaching and learning.
- Use of assessment procedures to support learning in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.
- Standards in geography.

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 a good level of improvement since it was last inspected in 1998. The key issues for improvement included making sure the school met all requirements of the National Curriculum; improving provision for pupils with special educational needs; improving provision for pupils' multicultural awareness and making the work of the governing body more effective. Good progress has been made in tackling each of these issues through effectively implementing new curriculum guidance.

There is a new special needs co-ordinator and much work has gone into improving this aspect of the school. Provision for pupils' cultural development, including their multicultural awareness is now good. There is a new governing body, whose work is now more focused and effective. These developments have also led to improvement in many major aspects of the school's work, including pupils' attitudes and personal development, provision for pupils personal development, assessment and leadership and management.

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 | | | | Key |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|---|
| | all schools | | | similar schools | |
| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2002 | |
| English | D | D | C | D | well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E |
| mathematics | D | E | E | E | |
| science | D | C | D | E | |

When pupils start Blue Coat Junior School, their attainment is below average. During their time in the school they make good progress and attain average standards overall. This inspection shows that by the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics, science are average and in art and design, design and technology, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education are as expected for pupils of this age. Standards in geography are below those expected for pupils of this age. The school has implemented a rigorous action plan for improvement in mathematics and this is beginning to be effective. Standards in Literacy and Numeracy are satisfactory in English, mathematics and in other subjects. The school has set realistic targets for the results in National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Year 6, which it has met. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, pupils with English as an additional language and those from the wide range of ethnic backgrounds, including refugee pupils, represented in the school make good progress. Attainment depends upon the time pupils have been attending the school. Those who have been there longer attain higher standards. When all of the above is taken into account, pupils achieve well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Pupils' attitudes toward school and their work are very good. They enjoy school. In most lessons they show high levels of interest and are enthusiastic in their tasks. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | This is good. Pupils behave well in lessons, assemblies and around the school. Pupils organise themselves with a minimum of fuss and bother. |
| Personal development and relationships | Pupils' personal development is very good. They become very responsible and reliable. Relationships between pupils are very good. They co-operate very well with teachers and apply themselves to their work. Their respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others is excellent. |
| Attendance | Attendance is good; it is above the national average. Punctuality of a significant number of pupils is not good enough. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and physical education and promotes the good quality of learning in these subjects. It is satisfactory in all other subjects. Teachers are fully aware of the pupils’ diverse learning needs and plan to meet those of pupils from the wide range of backgrounds represented within the school. They are committed to the full inclusion of all pupils in what the school has to offer and therefore all pupils are given the opportunity to make good progress. Basic skills are taught well and this gives pupils from all backgrounds a sound basis on which to learn effectively. Teachers plan effectively and the activities are well designed to meet the needs of all pupils in the school. The management of pupils in some lessons is not firm enough and the behaviour in these lessons is therefore unsatisfactory. Homework is used to good effect and supports and consolidates pupils’ learning effectively.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The quality and range of opportunities for learning provided by the school are good. Good provision is made for pupils’ personal, social and health education and a satisfactory range of extra curricular activities is laid on. There are very good links with other schools and the school uses the community well to enrich pupils’ learning. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Clear procedures are in place to support the identification and assessment of pupils. Individual education plans are carefully and thoughtfully prepared. The targets are matched closely to individual pupils’ needs and this helps teachers plan precise teaching and assessment procedures. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | This is good overall and enables these pupils to be fully included in all aspects of school life and make the same levels of progress as other pupils. It is very good when pupils are withdrawn to work in small groups, but only satisfactory in some classes when no special provision is made. |
| Provision for pupils’ personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | This is very good. It is very good for their spiritual, moral and social development. Provision for pupils’ cultural development is good. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school cares well for its pupils. The arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of all its pupils are effective. Day-to-day personal support and guidance for pupils is good. There are good assessment procedures, which are used well in English and mathematics and science, but their use in other subjects is not yet fully developed. |

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | This is very good. The headteacher works very effectively with her senior managers, and together they have established a very clear vision regarding the development of the school. This is clearly communicated to, and shared by all members of staff who work well together to create an effective learning environment. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Governors have good levels of involvement in the school. They are conscientious, well organised and fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Satisfactory. The headteacher, key staff and governors work well together to identify the school's strengths and areas for development. The headteacher and senior managers monitor standards and pupils' progress well. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning could be improved. |
| The strategic use of resources | The financial management of the school is good. The school takes care to ensure that spending is targeted well and directly linked to priorities in the school improvement plan. Close monitoring of spending decisions reflects the careful consideration given to the impact of financial commitments on standards. |

The headteacher and the governing body take good measures to ensure that their money provides good value. Although the school is adequately staffed, it has experienced some difficulty with establishing a stable staffing situation in recent years. However, through good leadership and support for new or temporary staff, the school has managed to maintain standards and an effective learning environment. Learning resources are satisfactory and the adequate accommodation supports the delivery of the curriculum satisfactorily.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school. • The teaching is good, pupils are expected to work hard and are making good progress. • The school is well led and managed. • Behaviour of pupils in school. • The school is helping their children become mature and responsible. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra curricular activities. • Homework. • Information on how their children are getting on. • Working closely with parents. |

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views on the school. However, they feel that the provision for extra curricular activities is satisfactory. Homework is used well to support pupils work. The team feels the information parents receive is good and the school tries hard to work with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Since the time of the previous inspection, standards have been maintained in most subjects and most weaknesses have generally been improved. Curriculum development and staff training in both music and information and communication technology have led to improved staff confidence and expertise and consequently standards have been lifted to satisfactory levels. Learning opportunities are still limited in geography and standards remain below those expected from pupils of a similar age. Standards in English, mathematics and science and in art and design, design and technology, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education are average and as expected for pupils of this age.
2. The school's performance in National tests for eleven-year-olds shows that standards are improving at the same rate as those nationally. Test results in 2002 were average in English, well below average in mathematics and below average in science when compared to schools nationally. When compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils with free school meals, results were below average in English and well below in mathematics and science. These reflect the important factors that impact upon pupils' results in tests. When they start school, the attainment of pupils is below average overall. Added to this there is an exceptionally high level of pupils who join the school at different times. Some of these have little or no English, some have had no schooling at all and a high proportion have special educational needs, including some pupils with behavioural difficulties. For example, in last years Year 6, only 64 of the 95 pupils registered at the end of Year 6, started the school at the beginning of Year 3. This is typical of most other year groups.
3. Within these circumstances, the school does well and all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, gender or special educational needs, achieve well. Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics, science and in information and communication technology. The organisation of pupils into learning sets for Literacy in Year 6 and for Numeracy in all year groups enables teachers to focus on different levels of attainment. Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress.
4. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Their needs are assessed at an early stage and results in them being set specific and suitable targets to achieve. Clear and appropriate work programmes, together with additional, good quality support from the teaching assistants, enable them to achieve well. Pupils with statements make good progress because of well-focused targets and good support in achieving them. For example, one pupil's reading skills had improved well since the beginning of the year. In January the pupil was reading familiar words in simple reading matter. This term the pupil shows more confidence in reading sentences and understanding what has been read.
5. The overall rate of progress in learning English of pupils who speak English as an additional language is good. The rate of progress made bears a direct relation to the relative length of time that pupils spend at the school. Three factors mainly account for the good progress made. The first is the informed commitment of the headteacher and staff to this aspect of provision and the Governor's support for it. The second reason is that the quality of the teaching of individuals and groups by the specialist EAL teacher is good. Thirdly, the majority of staff plan their lessons well to take account of the learning needs of pupils of different levels of attainment.
6. Pupils of all abilities, including those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well in English. Satisfactory literacy standards are also seen in the other subjects of the curriculum. This is because of the good quality teaching. Pupils generally listen carefully to their teachers and respond well to their questions. Throughout the school and in different subjects, pupils are given opportunities to work in pairs and groups and this helps to develop their capacity for taking a constructive part in discussions and for coherent expression. Pupils are often able to share and speak about what they have learnt in review sessions at the end lessons. The majority of pupils

in Year 6 are capable of expressing their ideas and opinions audibly and clearly. By the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils are able to write in different styles and for different audiences satisfactorily. Standards of spelling are as expected. The quality of handwriting has improved since the last inspection. Assessment shows that the rate of progress accelerates during their time at school, so that by the end of Year 6 the large majority of pupils are making better progress in writing. Pupils make good progress in developing reading skills. Some lower-attaining pupils in Year 3 have too few strategies for reading new words. In addition reading books were not matched well to their ability. Pupils are developing satisfactory research skills and most are able to use a contents page and an index to find information they need. Pupils have an adequate knowledge of famous authors. All the pupils who were heard to read, except the lower-attaining readers in Year 3, were able to make effective use of a page of contents or an index to find specific references in information books.

7. In mathematics, pupils make good progress from a standard of attainment on entry, which is below the national average. The school has implemented a rigorous action plan since the last inspection and this is beginning to raise standards. The impact is particularly evident in the current Year 6, where an average number of pupils are expected to attain the higher Level 5 in their National tests at the end of the school year. All pupils show knowledge and understanding of numeracy that is appropriate to their age and ability and this is also reflected in other subjects. They have also developed satisfactory levels in shape space and measures and in handling data. A good feature of older pupils' work is their ability to use and apply what they have learned in mathematical investigations and in problem solving.
8. This is also the case in science. By the time pupils are in Year 6, they are able to make up and conduct fair tests, using their satisfactory knowledge and understanding in each of the science Attainment Targets. Pupils make good progress in information and communication technology and develop secure routine operation skills such as word-processing, using the Internet and accessing a good range of programs, in both information and communication technology and in other subjects.
9. Standards in geography remain below this expected from pupils of this age. When pupils enter the school in Year 3, they have a limited knowledge of their local area, the United Kingdom and the world. Learning opportunities enable pupils at all levels and from all backgrounds to make satisfactory progress in developing their knowledge of geographical facts, but their progress in skills development is unsatisfactory. Progress in history and in music is good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes towards school are very good. Behaviour is good and personal development and relationships are very good. Pupils are keen and eager to attend school and are glad to be there; "It is interesting, important and exciting". Parents agree that their children like coming to school and that the behaviour is good. Pupils come into school calmly at the start of the day. They hold doors open for adults and each other, bid visitors 'good morning' and initiate conversation.
11. In most lessons, pupils enjoy learning and are actively involved in all activities. They listen attentively and contribute to the lesson. In a few lessons where the task is too long or pupils are inadequately resourced, they do become restless and lose concentration. There is no difference in the attitudes of different groups of pupils to the school. Pupils from different backgrounds and those who start school in the middle of the year all have positive attitudes to school. In the dining room there is a lot of noise but that is due to the number of pupils in there and pupils are generally well behaved. They queue patiently and in an orderly way without supervision as they wait for their lunch. During the inspection, when pupils had to use another playground, they continued to play without incident, despite the fact that there were large numbers of pupils on a smaller space. When the whistle went for lunch they lined up immediately in an orderly manner. In the corridors and classrooms during wet playtimes most pupils know how to behave. There were nine exclusions in the year prior to the inspection but the number is now much reduced. Younger pupils say that there are odd occasions when there is some bullying but pupils who have

- been at the school for some time say that it is very rare and that the teachers deal with it immediately.
12. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to school. The caring nature of the school ensures that all are fully integrated and included. They form very good relationships with the teaching assistants and teachers. They behave well in lessons and can remain focused on tasks when supported and this is especially so when they work in small groups within the classroom. They are well supported by other pupils within the class. For example, they all clapped when one pupil had reached the target set as this had appropriately been shared with the whole class. As a result pupils try hard and are proud of their achievements.
 13. The quality of relationships throughout the school is very good. This is an improvement on the findings of the last report. Staff, and in particular the headteacher, set pupils very good role models. One of the strengths of the school is that all pupils have learned to respect differences and understand the feelings and beliefs of others. This is clearly demonstrated in the very powerful assemblies at the start of every day, which make a significant impact on the caring attitudes that the school fosters amongst its pupils. This is reinforced with posters in the corridor reminding pupils to respect one another not to fight and to care for one another. Pupils make positive comments about each other's work and work well together irrespective of gender or ethnicity.
 14. Personal development is good. This is an improvement on the findings of the last report. Pupils are involved in the daily routines of the school. All take their responsibilities very seriously. Lunch monitors help younger pupils to play games when it is wet play. The bell monitors are always punctual. The library monitors are very proud of their library and take great delight in inviting visitors to view the library. Pupils' initiative is not always seen in lessons where pupils are not given responsibility for their own learning. Too often pupils line up to ask or check their work with the teacher when it is not necessary. Where the teacher condones this it does not sufficiently set good practice for the pupils in becoming independent learners and coping for themselves.
 15. The attendance levels of the pupils are good and have improved since the last inspection. The school frequently reminds parents to notify school when their child is absent and rigorously chases up unreported absences. Consequently unauthorised absence is minimal. The marking of registers meets legal requirements. The good attendance levels are a positive benefit to the pupils' learning.
 16. A significant number of pupils are late each morning because several families, who need to travel a distance to school, are often delayed by traffic problems. However, there are also some pupils who live close to the school who are persistently late. The office staff maintains an accurate record of latecomers and the school works closely with the education welfare service to try to improve punctuality. However, the late arrival of these pupils disrupts the smooth start to the school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching is good overall. During the inspection teaching was at least satisfactory in 60 of the 63 lessons observed. It was good in 27, very good in 10 and in 5 lessons, the quality of teaching was excellent. Most of the very best lessons were taught in the upper school, particularly in Year 6. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was seen in Years 3 and 5. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, history, music and physical education and promotes the good quality of learning in these subjects. It is satisfactory in all other subjects. This is similar to the judgement made at the time of the previous inspection.
18. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Teachers generally give clear explanations in their teaching and answer any questions that pupils asked. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning and the progress that they make. They are able to use their knowledge and

understanding of the subjects they are teaching to ask questions that are appropriate to pupils of different ability, and that are effective in furthering pupils' progress. The best questioning was vigorous and made pupils think carefully about answers to their questions. For example, when Year 5 pupils were re-designing the canteen area, they were posed problems to consider, which required them to think for themselves. This immediately engaged pupils' interest and ensured that they focused on their tasks.

19. The teaching of basic skills is good. In a school where there are such diverse needs because of the different backgrounds of pupils, teachers rightly prioritise the teaching of language skills. They introduce important vocabulary at the beginning of lessons, and ensure that all pupils are clear about important words, their meanings and their relevance to the work they are doing. Skills taught in literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology effectively support work in other subjects. For example, in science numeracy was used well in investigative work and in recording the outcomes of their investigations. Skills of independent work are effectively encouraged and as a consequence, pupils develop the confidence to be adventurous in their work.
20. Planning is good. In all classes, teachers make plans for pupils with special educational needs, for pupils who learn English as an additional language, for those from all ethnic backgrounds and for those pupils who may join the school mid-year. Teachers' expectations of pupils are therefore realistic and appropriate. Teachers often share the learning objectives with pupils at the beginning of lessons, and this is good because pupils know what is expected of them as a result. The use of assessment to inform planning and support learning across the school is satisfactory. In mathematics and English it is good and teachers have a secure understanding of National Curriculum levels and what skills and understanding pupils need to make progress. They use previous learning to identify next steps and this is reflected in their lesson planning. Although lesson planning provides well for the learning needs of all pupils, teachers do not use assessment well enough in other subjects in providing guidance on how pupils can improve their work. Marking is generally satisfactory and mostly gives pupils sufficient information on what they are doing well.
21. Teachers have generally good expectations of pupils' behaviour. Where these are evident, the results are effective and behaviour in class is good. In these classes, the relationship between pupils and teachers is very good and they work well together. Where class management is weaker, a few pupils take advantage, are disruptive and this leads to unsatisfactory teaching and learning. Homework is used effectively and supports well the work pupils do in school. This does not support the parents' negative views on homework.
22. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the additional support given to them, and learn successfully as a result. Learning is enhanced by the committed and professional teaching assistants who support pupils with special educational needs well, both in class and when withdrawn to receive individual or small group support based on the literacy strategy. As a result pupils make good progress towards the targets on their individual educational plans. Pupils with statements make good progress in relation to their Literacy needs. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, who also have special educational needs achieve as well as other groups of pupils in the school. This is because of the good support and precise planning that help them learn in the small steps required. Teachers generally match activities well to pupils' needs, however teachers do not currently write pupils' individual education plans as they are written by the special needs co-ordinator. As a result when pupils are not supported teachers do not always refer closely to them in lessons. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection.
23. The quality of the teaching of individuals and groups of pupils with English as an additional language by the specialist teacher is good. In the lessons and activities observed there was evidence of good classroom management, good relationships between teacher and pupils, appropriate methods for second-language instruction and the imaginative and effective use of teacher-made resources. The good quality of questioning encouraged pupils to respond and participate fully in the activities, which were pitched at a level appropriate to the language attainment of the pupils. In Years 3 and Year 6 literacy classes for pupils with English as an

additional language, who have been classified as needing extra help are run in parallel with literacy lessons for the year-groups.

24. In most lessons observed, therefore, including lessons in Years 4 and 5, in which there was no specific EAL teaching, all pupils were able to participate fully in class activities. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson, the class teacher made good use of an interesting story, *The Mouth-Organ Boys*, in teaching reading and related writing skills. Her skilled questioning ensured that all pupils were able to respond to the text at an appropriate level. As a result all the pupils, including the EAL group of five pupils, made good progress in developing interpretation skills in reading. Again, in an Art lesson in Year 3, skilled preparatory work ensured that all pupils in the class were able to communicate their ideas linked to an imaginary story. However, not all staff show equal awareness of the need to take account of pupils with limited English proficiency. For example, in a Maths lesson, some pupils found difficulty in describing the process of visualisation, mainly because the necessary terminology had not been reinforced.

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

25. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils in the school are good. All statutory requirements are met. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the last inspection when the requirements of the National Curriculum were not being met and some subjects had ineffective programmes of study. Schemes of work are now in place for all subjects and are regularly reviewed. The school allocates an appropriate amount of time for each subject, which is systematically audited by the Deputy Headteacher. As a result there is a good balance in the breadth and relevance of the whole curriculum. The use of information and communication technology in other subjects across the curriculum is still an area for development.
26. The school takes every effort to make sure all pupils, irrespective of background, ability or ethnicity are fully included in all aspects of the school's work and they have full access to the entire curriculum and to extra curricular activities. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra curricular activities open to all. They include football clubs, a recorder club, a choir, a spelling club and a sewing club. The school is seeking active ways to extend these activities.
27. The quality of provision for children in the school with special educational needs has improved greatly since the last inspection and is now good. This is due to the influence of the good co-ordinator. The policy is good and has clear aims and objectives. All statutory requirements are met. Pupils are supported well within class and this is beneficial to learning. Positive programmes of support for literacy in small groups have been particularly successful. They not only assist in improving pupils' basic skills, but participation in the programme has developed pupils' confidence. Currently, the special educational needs co-ordinator writes pupils' individual education plans; these are relevant and shared appropriately with pupils and parents.
28. The school's strategy for literacy is good. As a result, reading, writing and speaking skills have shown consistent improvement, particularly by pupils whose first language is not English. However, the use of writing in other subjects, including history and geography is not good enough. Their strategies for teaching numeracy are satisfactory. The use of the specific teacher expertise in Mathematics, by the subject leader, has proved beneficial to the needs of pupils receiving extra support.
29. Occasional visits are made to places like Science Parks and Museums, which enrich the curriculum, although the school finds difficulty in funding these outings. The school has received visits from outside agencies such as theatre groups, which has benefited the learning of pupils, in history particularly. Pupils have gained much in the appreciation of art through visits to the exciting New Art Gallery in Walsall, but there are insufficient visits into the neighbourhood to enliven learning in geography.
30. Good provision is made for pupils personal, social and health education. Issues such as bullying, relationships, personal safety, health and crime are discussed in lessons. The school has good and clearly understood policies for sex and drug education taught within science and providing pupils with a growing awareness of their own health.

31. The school makes good use of the local community to benefit the pupils' learning and have maintained these good relationships since the last inspection. Links for music are particularly strong and pupils perform in local concerts on regular occasions. Pupils often visit churches to help their understanding of Christian belief, but there are insufficiently recent links with places of worship of other faiths to promote an understanding of the wealth of other cultures in the locality. The study of history is given an added dimension through the visits of the Timezone team to the school and the "Maths Trail", set around the town centre and designed by a current teacher, takes mathematics out into the local community. The school raises its profile effectively in the locality by hiring out its facilities, such as the school hall, to nearby schools and clubs. The pupils are conscientious in putting something back into the community, by raising good amounts of funds for local hospices and supporting the Harvest thanksgivings.
32. The school has very good relationships with partner institutions. In particular, the strong bond with the other schools in the Blue Coat foundation is of great benefit to the staff and the pupils. Facilities, such as the food technology room at the high school and the swimming pool at the local grammar school are shared well to promote subjects such as design and technology and physical education. Not only do the three headteachers meet regularly, but also the co-ordinators discuss curriculum requirements at regular intervals and the separate governing bodies share training. The transfer from infant to junior and then to the comprehensive school is made smoother by the thorough preparation of the pupils who move on confidently to the next stage of education as a result. The school works very closely and supportively with the local education authority on musical events.
33. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This is a very good improvement on the previous report when it was judged to be satisfactory.
34. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. In assemblies music sets the right atmosphere and as a result pupils enter in a relaxed but orderly way. A cross, flowers and three candles on the altar provide a visual focus and as the pupils enter assembly those who have family, friends or pets who needs to be remembered or events to celebrate write them down in the 'candle book'. Whilst pupils, irrespective of gender or ethnicity, light the candles pupils listen in and reflect on the items that are read out. This gives all pupils the opportunity to think about who we are, why we are here and our place in the world. All pupils take a very active part in the 'worship dance', which is very emotional by moving together in response to rhythm and words.
35. Each year there is a focus on a specific religion in each year group. Pupils who are part of that religion become the 'experts', bringing in artefacts and sometimes their parents as they help each other to explore and develop insights into the values and beliefs of others. In a well-planned movement lesson, Year 6 pupils lit candles and then created a flame-like dance, which flickered and moved like the flames on the candle. A very appropriate piece of flute contributed well to their spiritual development.
36. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. A clear moral code consistently promotes principles, which help pupils to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong. Consequently, they are developing common positive values and good behaviour. Rules for the classroom, playground, school and dining hall are on display in every classroom and this reminds pupils of the expected conduct. Every member of staff provides a very good role model. They help pupils make moral decisions based on reason and the values of honesty, fairness and a respect for truth and justice. Therefore pupils are empowered to make decisions independently. Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively and they work well together when, for instance, researching current topics. Pupils are taught to respect social similarities and differences so all pupils get along very well together and are building very strong relationships. This ensures that pupils who join the school at different times of the year and from different backgrounds, fit into the school very quickly. From an early age pupils are given opportunities to participate actively and responsibly within the school. By age eleven pupils are taking on responsibilities to look after younger children during lunchtime, particularly when it is wet.

37. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The school plans opportunities for pupils to begin to explore their own cultural assumptions and values and those of others through half-termly studies such as those of famous black people and role models. Provision for extending pupils knowledge and understanding of the attitudes, values and traditions of diverse cultures is good in art and design, music and literature. For example, Caribbean texts and multicultural songs and music are used frequently in lessons. Pupils get the opportunity to explore different cultures through food. For example, in a lesson on making sandwiches, pupils learn that some people do not eat bacon and other foods because of their religion. At school parties children have the opportunity to taste food from different countries. A French lesson seen on inspection was excellent and served as an excellent way of extending the cultural awareness of the pupils with respect to Europe.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school's procedures for assessing attainment and progress are good. They are used well in mathematics, English and science, but in other subjects, procedures are not yet sufficiently established. The school has a clear and thoughtful policy, which provides good guidance for assessment; however, this has yet to make improvements to standards and achievement across the whole curriculum. The school has recognised this and is making considerable efforts to make the necessary improvements. The school tracks the progress of all of its pupils individually, and identifies differences in attainment. As a result, there is clear information about the progress of all pupils, of all abilities and backgrounds, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, those who begin in Year 3, and the significant number who enter the school in later years.
39. Assessment information is used effectively to agree targets for improvement with all pupils in English, mathematics and science. The assessment information provided in other subjects is at present far less and so subject co-ordinators do not have sufficient records to level pupils work consistently and monitor their progress. This means that in these subjects, regardless of any pupil data that is available, teachers are often unable to plan for the needs of higher attaining pupils or other individuals in lessons, and pupils are frequently all attempting the same task regardless of their ability. Assessment records do not often show what pupils can do and where they need to improve, but frequently simply list coverage of the curriculum. Since the last inspection the school has improved its use of assessment information in planning for the delivery of the core subjects, but has yet to fully implement this in the non-core subjects.
40. The school monitors the achievement of all groups of pupils and finds that the Black Caribbean children who speak fluent English are progressing well. There are also a number of pupils from both the Pakistani and Black African communities who are entering school with very limited English. The achievements of these pupils are being tracked and they achieve well in relation to their starting point. For example, a group of Pakistani pupils who speak English as an additional language made rapid progress last year, achieving national averages in the end of year test. The school analyses statutory assessments tasks and end of year tests to identify pupils who are achieving well, they are then given appropriate support in a small group session to extend their knowledge and understanding in writing. Boys and girls from Asian, Black and White backgrounds are represented in this group. One pupil has been identified as exceptional and attends a 'centre for excellence' to extend his knowledge and understanding in mathematics.
41. The use of assessment in planning for the needs of pupils with special educational needs is good. Effective use of assessment identifies, at an early stage, pupils who may have special needs. For example, pupils who are identified as having 'cause for concern' have individual targets, which are monitored appropriately by the class teachers. The co-ordinator writes the targets included on the individual education plans. Individual education plans are written clearly, with specific and attainable targets. Action is taken to address them, with specialist external agencies involved as necessary. They are reviewed regularly, involving both pupils and parents.

42. The school has a strong ethos of care for its pupils, backed up by effective practices and procedures. Support and guidance of the pupils has improved since the time of the last inspection.
43. The systems for the health and safety of the pupils are good. Since the last inspection, when a key issue was raised about a range of safety procedures, the school has worked methodically to address these and ensure all aspects of health and safety are thoroughly checked. The new caretaker is able to draw on expert advice as he learns to maintain the site and the swimming pool. The governors' health and safety committee and the staff representative regularly walk around the site to assess risks and check that there are no hazards. Currently some work needs to be undertaken to improve the uneven surface in the playground.
44. Procedures for child protection and ensuring the pupils' welfare are good. An agenda item on pupils causing concern is also included in staff meetings. All staff have good practical knowledge of what to do should they be suspicious of child abuse. With the current high turnover in staff the head teacher, as the person named to co-ordinate child protection, should ensure that there is sufficient training to update all staff with the latest guidelines. The day-to-day welfare and first aid procedures are good. Staff are aware of any pupils with special medical conditions and know what to do in an emergency. The school has correctly made sure that a block is in place on the computer network to prevent access by pupils to inappropriate Internet sites.
45. The school has very good systems to monitor and improve attendance. Registers are marked promptly and properly at the beginning of each session. The headteacher and her office staff are rigorous and quick in chasing up the families of pupils who are away without notice. The computerised system is used very well to track the attendance of individual pupils. This enables the school to give effective support to pupils with absence or punctuality problems, through visits from the home school liaison teacher or contact with the education welfare service. This effective monitoring is reflected in a marked improvement in the school's attendance figures.
46. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour and discipline. These have been well maintained since the previous inspection. Whole school rules, that reinforce safety and the need to get on with each other, are displayed prominently around the building. Each class has also taken on the responsibility of agreeing their own code of conduct. Good monitoring exists via the weekly class-tracking sheet, which identifies pupils who are misbehaving or not trying hard enough. Those pupils who are causing concern are given a 'Behaviour Diary' to share between the school and home and this helps pupils concentrate on improving their own behaviour. The school has many effective ways to reward pupils and bolster self esteem, ranging from Tidy Class awards to individual Centurion badges for reading 100 books in a year. The management of behaviour is inconsistent in some classes as teachers struggle to find the most effective way to maintain satisfactory levels of discipline. House points are often given out too liberally with little impact on improved behaviour. Insufficient support is given in these classes to reduce the amount of disruption to learning. In general the good levels of behaviour are the result of the effective management strategies based on the school's very strong moral and Christian foundation.
47. The school is very quick to deal with any instances of bullying. The very good relationships and excellent way the pupils respect each other's differences proves that the school is most effective in promoting harmony and stamping out any harassment.
48. Systems to monitor and support pupils' personal development are good. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is well established across all classes so that each pupil receives appropriate lessons in sex, drugs and healthy living education as they move up through the school. Out of class the older pupils have a good number of opportunities to take on responsibility and contribute to the school community. As there is no school council, there is no regular and formal way for other pupils to air their views or put forward suggestions in a democratic way. However, pupils have had the chance to be consulted on particular issues, such as girls wearing trousers and playground activities, and they know that they can write to the head

teacher in confidence if they have concerns. As the class based PSHE currently is delivered in isolation from other citizenship activities across the school the promotion and monitoring of personal development is not as detailed as it could be. In some classes teachers do not give pupils sufficient encouragement to be independent in their learning, by improving their presentation and increasing their research skills. However, by the time pupils leave Blue Coat Junior the school has worked well to develop mature pupils who are responsible members of society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. The partnership with parents is satisfactory as it was at the previous inspection. Parents are generally supportive of the school and all that it does to educate and care for their children. The few parents (12) who attended the parents' meeting were very appreciative of the school. The much higher number of parents who returned questionnaires (96 out of 299) particularly liked the good behaviour, the quality of teaching, the ease with which they could approach the school and the expectations of hard work and high achievement. However, they also expressed significant concerns about the levels of homework and the range of activities provided outside lessons. Also some parents felt that they do not receive sufficiently clear information on how their child is progressing and think that the school does not work sufficiently closely with families. The inspection team finds that the school runs a satisfactory amount and variety of clubs at lunchtime and after school.
50. Parents express appreciation of the support provided for pupils who learn English as an additional language and the supportive stance of the school generally in dealing with the needs of pupils of different cultures and language backgrounds.
51. The school provides good quality information to parents about their children's progress. End of year reports include plenty of information about what the pupils can do and need to do to improve, although precise targets which parents can share, are not always clearly listed. The attached pupil and parent comment sheet allows useful dialogue between home and school. Parents have good formal opportunities each term to discuss their children's learning with the class teacher. On an informal basis the teachers are open and willing to arrange to see parents at other times. The Home School Diary is a particularly effective method of communication. Parents and staff are regularly consulted about what is useful to include. As a result the current version includes details on the role of parents in their children's learning, information on homework, the curriculum for the year and books being read. The school uses homework well to consolidate learning, especially in the older classes. A few parents have justifiably been concerned about the inconsistency of homework when class teachers have changed mid year or supply teachers are used. Information to parents on general school issues is satisfactory. The school sends out sufficient letters, but there is no regular newsletter to celebrate achievement and build up a sense of belonging between the parents and the school. The annual report from governors to parents is exemplary in its attractive design and content. The prospectus meets legal requirements, other than omitting admission details, but does not give clear information on what the school does well.
52. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at school and at home is satisfactory. However, many parents do not become sufficiently involved in supporting homework or in attending events to find out about what their children are learning. The attendance at the secondary transfer and the annual governors meetings has been poor. The teacher responsible for home school liaison works well with families who are reluctant to approach the school. The improved involvement of these parents benefits their children's education well. Parents are good at supporting fundraising fairs and pupils' productions but rely on these being organised by the staff. The school carries out a satisfactory amount of consultation of parents. Most is undertaken informally at the school gate. Although parents are not officially asked for their views on the school development plan, they have contributed to surveys on homework, tuck at break time and the wearing of trousers by the girls. The school has an effective link with parents and is working well to remind them that they are important stakeholders in their children's education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The headteacher and other key staff lead the school very well and the management of the school is good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when leadership and management were in need of some improvement. Then, much of the strength in the leadership and management of the school relied on the headteacher. The governing body and deputy head teacher did not give sufficient support to the headteacher. The deputy headteacher was not fulfilling his role and did not exercise a sufficiently strong role in the leadership and management of the school. Governors' involvement in school development planning was at an early stage of development and they did not visit the school enough to raise their awareness of standards and quality. The governing body did not meet statutory requirements in relation to health and safety, National Curriculum requirements, omission of information in their publications.
54. Since the time of the previous inspection, there has been significant change in the leadership and management structures in the school. The headteacher remains in post and her strong leadership still influences the success of the school. A competent deputy headteacher, whose skills complement those of the headteacher, now supports her and they make an effective leadership team. The senior management team is equally effective. This consists of the headteacher, deputy head teacher and curriculum co-ordinators for literacy and numeracy. Since the last inspection, the governing body has also changed in constitution. At that time they had joint responsibility for both Blue Coat Infant and Junior schools. Two years ago new governing bodies were formed and now this group have sole responsibility for this school. They are keen, enthusiastic and very well focused on the work of Blue Coat Junior School. They are an active group and now give good support to the headteacher and her senior management team.
55. Governors make a good contribution to the leadership and management of the school, and their contribution to establishing the successful future of the school is significant. They visit the school regularly to make themselves aware of what is happening. Those responsible for specific areas are involved in monitoring. They meet with the link teachers, share in the plans for improvement and now have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of their subjects and how improvements will take place. All governors speak with knowledge and understanding about their role, responsibilities, and what they see in school. In this way governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas of concern. The management structures within the governing body soon became well established and effective. In addition to governors' meetings, there are other committees that meet and report back to the full governing body. The chair of governors meets with the headteacher frequently, on an informal basis. There is also much formal and informal contact between other governors and the school. Governors are considered to be an important part of the school management by the school. Statutory requirements are now fully met.
56. Together, this group of people forms a very strong team and together they ensure that the vision for the future of the school is very clear, shared by all staff and influences the work of the school. They also make sure that the aims, which underpin the school's Christian foundation and its commitment to educational inclusion and equal opportunities for all pupils, are very evident in all its work.
57. The headteacher and other staff with management responsibility work well together to ensure effective provision and accurate identification of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school uses a commercially produced and approved model for self-evaluation, which has proved to be effective. The headteacher usually monitors effectively the performance of teaching staff and knows them well. She normally uses the outcomes of her observations effectively in continuously seeking improvement in the quality of teaching. She has a clear picture of where individual teachers' strengths and weaknesses lie. Much of the responsibility for this has been transferred to the deputy head teacher, who has completed some effective lesson observations. However, staffing problems in the last 18 months have meant that he has had to stand in for absent teachers for much of the time and he has not been able to support teachers' development

as much as he would have liked. However, the school has still managed to maintain the good level of teaching identified in the previous report.

58. Co-ordinators effectively monitor provision and standards in their subjects through analysing assessment data where available, scrutinising teachers' planning and through discussion with other teachers. Where possible, curriculum co-ordinators are given the opportunity to work alongside other teachers or to observe other teachers teach. This enables them to identify where the school needs to improve what it provides. Co-ordinators prepare relevant documents detailing where the weaknesses are, what the school needs to do and how they are going to achieve the required improvement. These form an important part of the school improvement plan.
59. The school improvement plan, which takes full account of the school's aims, policies and the overall school organisation and context, sets improvement into the school's specific circumstances effectively. It also makes appropriate reference to budget projections. The school improvement plan is appropriately based on the school's audit of areas of strength, what is improving and what the school considers its weaknesses to be. Each area for improvement is based against an honest and comprehensive review and analysis of the situation; what has been done successfully, what weaknesses have shown up and this then translates into targets for each area.
60. All staff are committed and confident in their promotion of educational inclusion. There is very effective leadership and management of special educational needs provision. The efficient co-ordinator has a clear overview of the responsibilities of the role and is successfully implementing the new Code of Practice. The register of pupils is well maintained and their progress is monitored well.
61. The management of provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is currently handled effectively by the head and the specialist teacher. Records of pupils' attainments with respect to ethnic and language backgrounds are efficiently maintained. The teacher works hard to meet the needs of the numbers of pupils requiring additional support or to provide in-class collaboration and support for teachers. The school has, however, made provision to appoint another part-time English as an additional language teacher. The accommodation and resources available for the specialised teaching of pupils with English as an additional language compares unfavourably with those generally provided. Liaison between the specialist teacher and the class teachers she collaborates with is generally effective. However, the literacy co-ordinator does not routinely scrutinise planning for English as an additional language in literacy lessons during her review of teacher's planning to ensure appropriate coverage of the Literacy curriculum.
62. Financial management is good and governors are appropriately involved in financial decision-making. Budgeting relates directly to the priorities set in the school's improvement plan. The school is making good use of all the financial resources available to it. This includes special grants, such as funding for staff training in information and communication technology, which is making a positive contribution to staff subject knowledge and confidence and an 'out of school hours' grant which supports a science club. Money allocated for supporting pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is also used well and contributes to their good progress. Although the school is always cautious in its budget, maintaining a healthy carry forward provision, it has detailed plans of how this will be spent. The governors are judicious in their monitoring of the budget but due to unexpected income they had a large carry forward in the budget last year. This is mainly committed to keeping classes at a reasonable size and ensuring pupils can be taught in small groups, particularly in mathematics, in order to raise standards. However, funds are not yet sufficiently directed towards ensuring staff retention. The planned 'carry forward' this year has decreased but proportionally it is still large for the size of school.
63. Day-to-day administration is efficient and does much to support the smooth running of the school. The school makes satisfactory use of new technology, for example, to record and analyse

assessment data to support the raising of standards. Good measures are taken to ensure that the school gets the best value from spending and other decisions it makes.

64. The school has experienced some difficulty with staffing in recent years. Long-term illness and staff leaving and joining the school has meant that there has been a difficult staffing situation within the school. However, with strong leadership and management, and effective teamwork from stable staff, who generally provide strong support for new staff, the school has managed to maintain standards and an effective learning environment for all pupils. However, the headteacher feels that the school has not been able to give strong enough support to newly qualified teachers, as she would have liked recently. Satisfactory systems for the performance management of staff are fully in place and the school's arrangements for the professional development are appropriate to their targets and to the overall targets in the school improvement plan.
65. The adequacy of accommodation is satisfactory to meet the demands of the primary curriculum. The premises are clean, bright and well maintained. There is good celebration of pupils' work in many classrooms and general areas of the school. With careful management classrooms have sufficient space for individual and group work. The library is very small and too cramped to support effective collaborative research and reference work. The school has a well-appointed computer suite, although conditions are cramped and hot when the room is used for a large class. The main hall is well used for music and physical education, and also provides an attractive and appropriate place for respectful collective worship. Outside, the school benefits from a separate annexe as a dining room, although its full potential is not realised, as it is not equipped with toilet facilities. The school boasts its own swimming pool. It is a shallow learner pool, so presents insufficient challenge to stronger swimmers, but it is very useful for swimmers lacking confidence. The playground provides adequate space for physical education and recreation, but it is uninspiring and has not been imaginatively developed to be a learning resource in its own right.
66. The school improvement plan clearly identifies financial priorities, which has particularly helped the development of good resources in a number of areas of the curriculum. This is an improvement since the last inspection when learning resources were barely satisfactory. There has been an improvement in learning resources in English and music and art and design materials that promote pupils' multicultural awareness. In physical education there is still no grassed area and the playground needs resurfacing as it is uneven and can be dangerous when pupils are playing games.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. To further improve the standards and the quality of education, the governing body, headteacher and staff should now:

1. Monitor the quality of teaching and learning to achieve more consistency in practice by:
 - Monitoring teaching more regularly and providing rigorous feedback.
 - Sharing the best teaching and learning practice amongst the staff to ensure consistency in teaching and learning styles throughout the school.
 - Providing support to develop teaching and learning where it is needed.
 - Using day-to-day assessment more effectively to plan and provide work for different groups of pupils and to track individual progress in non-core subjects.
 - Ensure that assessment records clearly indicate what pupils know, understand and can do rather than what they have covered in lessons.
(Paragraphs 17, 20, 38, 40, 41, 46, 57, 58, 86, 88, 94, 99, 104, 111, 117, 128, 135)

2. Raise standards in geography by:
 - Ensuring that geographical skills are effectively taught.
 - Implementing the new assessment procedures.
 - Improve and develop appropriate resources.
 - Rigorously monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and new initiatives as they are implemented and developed.
(Paragraphs 1, 8, 57, 58, 105 - 111)

The governors should also consider the following minor issues when writing their action plan:

- Encouraging parents to get more involved in their children's learning.
(Paragraphs 51, 52, 75)

- Improving the punctuality of some pupils.
(Paragraphs 16, 45)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 63 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 27 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 5 | 10 | 27 | 18 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 8 | 16 | 43 | 29 | 4 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

| | Nursery | Y3 – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | N/a | 303 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | N/a | 49 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

| | Nursery | Y3 – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | N/a | 4 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | N/a | 24 |

English as an additional language

| | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 116 |

Pupil mobility in the last school year

| | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 33 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 33 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|------|
| School data | 5.3% |
| National comparative data | 5.6% |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|------|
| School data | 0% |
| National comparative data | 0.5% |

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

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

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2001 | 46 | 42 | 88 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 33 | 27 | 38 |
| | Girls | 28 | 24 | 35 |
| | Total | 61 | 51 | 73 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 69 (70) | 58 (64) | 83 (78) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 71 (72) | 87 (85) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 25 | 32 | 35 |
| | Girls | 29 | 24 | 33 |
| | Total | 54 | 56 | 68 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 61 (54) | 64 (57) | 78 (63) |
| | National | 72 (70) | 74 (72) | 82 (79) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White - British | 105 | | |
| White - Irish | 1 | | |
| White - any other White background | 3 | | |
| Mixed - White and Black Caribbean | 16 | | |
| Mixed - White and Black African | 2 | | |
| Mixed - White and Asian | 6 | | |
| Mixed - any other mixed background | 3 | | |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian | 36 | | |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani | 48 | | |
| Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi | 17 | 3 | |
| Asian or Asian British - any other Asian background | 1 | | |
| Black or Black British - Caribbean | 50 | 5 | 1 |
| Black or Black British - African | 8 | | |
| Black or Black British - any other Black background | 0 | | |
| Chinese | 5 | | |
| Any other ethnic group | 2 | | |
| No ethnic group recorded | 0 | | |

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 13.3 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 22.6 |
| Average class size | 30 |

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 8 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 122 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|--|--------|
| Financial year | 01/02 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 759141 |
| Total expenditure | 749082 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2140 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 109690 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 119784 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|-----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 3.5 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 2 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 1.5 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 1.0 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 299 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 96 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 48 | 44 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 39 | 47 | 8 | 3 | 3 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 48 | 58 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 26 | 38 | 21 | 11 | 4 |
| The teaching is good. | 41 | 50 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 36 | 44 | 14 | 2 | 4 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 59 | 32 | 5 | 1 | 3 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 53 | 41 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 33 | 47 | 18 | 0 | 2 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 41 | 47 | 4 | 1 | 7 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 48 | 42 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 23 | 45 | 16 | 3 | 13 |

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

ENGLISH

68. In the previous inspection the standards of attainment of pupils in Year 6 in reading, writing and listening and speaking of eleven-year-olds were judged to be in line with expectations. This is still the case. All pupils make good progress in reading, writing, listening and speaking through the school. This generalisation applies to pupils who speak English as a first language and to those who learn English as an additional language. Overall, standards of attainment are lower among pupils who have recently entered the school or who have spent a limited amount of time at Blue Coat school, but their achievement is good, because they are quickly helped to settle into the school's routines and learn effectively as a result.
69. Standards remain in line with national expectations and progress is good because pupils respond well to the good teaching, subject leadership in literacy is very good and there have been notable improvements in the teaching and assessment of reading and writing since the last inspection. Achievement is good.
70. Pupils generally listen carefully to their teachers and respond well to their questions. For example, pupils in lessons observed in Year 3 listened with great interest to their teachers while reading stories and participated very enthusiastically in the shared reading session and in discussion about the characters in the stories as a result. Throughout the school, pupils are given opportunities to work in pairs and groups and this helps to develop their capacity for taking a constructive part in discussions and for coherent expression.
71. In the previous report it was noted that while pupils' listening skills were well developed, opportunities for them to develop speaking skills were less well structured. This is still the case. However, teachers have received relevant in-service training and the school has identified speaking as an area for development in order to maintain standards. Pupils are often able to share satisfactorily what they have written or to speak about what they have learnt in review sessions at the end of the literacy hour. Discussions with teachers indicate that opportunities provided within the Literacy Strategy to write play scripts in Years 3 and 4, and verses for performance and for reading aloud in other years are exploited. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 indicate that opportunities for them to develop the kinds of speaking skills required for drama and for speaking in public are limited, although some opportunities to use sustained talk are provided in assemblies. However, the majority of pupils in Year 6 are capable of expressing their ideas and opinions audibly and clearly. They demonstrate maturity and skill in discussion, taking account of the opinion of others. Most teachers provide very good role models for speaking and, in consequence, by the age of eleven most pupils speak confidently and make appropriate use of standard English.
72. Since the last inspection the school has made a number of improvements of standards in writing. By Year 6, the majority of pupils are able to write different types of texts coherently and, for the most part, correctly, making appropriate use of dictionaries and word-lists. Standards of spelling are in line with expectations and standards of handwriting have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. The assessment of pupil's unaided writing is now regular and systematic. Portfolios of moderated work are used effectively so that each pupil's progress can be charted. These provide a reliable source of evidence, which shows that the rate of progress accelerates over the four years that pupils spend at school. This means that by Year 6 the large majority of pupils are making better progress in writing than would be expected given their initial attainment.
73. Day-to-day assessment of pupils' work is not always detailed or informative so pupils are not sufficiently aware of how they can raise their standards even further. Marking of work, particularly in Years 3 to 5 is not rigorous enough and targets are not identified to improve accuracy and presentation of continuous original writing. The school has, however, made some

- progress in developing targets for individuals to help provide guidance about how their literacy skills can be improved.
74. Proficient use of information and communication technology is evident in imaginary newspaper accounts reporting the conflict between the families of Romeo and Juliet in a Year 6 class. However, few examples of the effective use of information and communication technology in literacy were evident throughout the school and this is a shortcoming. On the other hand, the school has been extremely successful in encouraging pupils to write poetry for publication. Between 2000 and 2001 hundreds of pupils have had poetry published in volumes devoted to work by children from Walsall. Others have had short stories published locally. Such opportunities encourage pupils to strive for excellence in writing. Literacy is used effectively in subject areas other than English such as well-presented accounts of scientific investigations in Year 4 and illustrated accounts of experiments in Years 5 and 6. Good use of literacy skills in the context of history is also evident in imaginary accounts of Victorian characters written by Year 6 pupils.
75. Pupils make good progress in developing reading skills. An effective system of issuing reading books to pupils and of recording their progress through reading schemes is utilised. Parents are encouraged to hear their children reading at home and to record their comments in the homework diaries. These initiatives help to improve standards of reading and to ensure that pupils make consistent progress; but the records show that not all parents have sufficient skills to provide consistent reading support for their children. In Year 3, some of the lower-attaining pupils who were heard to read lacked the strategies to work out how to read unfamiliar words, and there were reading books that were not well-matched to their attainment level.
76. In the previous report it was observed that many pupils did not have an adequate experience of authors and that independent research skills in reading are not sufficiently developed. Both of these shortcomings have been remedied. Pupils now have access to an adequate and varied range of fiction and non-fiction books. Pupils in Year 6 in the higher attaining literacy set demonstrate effective research skills and expertise in working independently. Most pupils have no difficulty in collating information about a preferred author from different sources, including information technology based materials. They are also able to summarise the information they gathered on the Internet and some are able to write it in their own words. The pupils in this group talk enthusiastically about the authors they like to read. This is evidence of good improvement since the previous inspection. Older pupils have the opportunity to act as library monitors and have a competent acquaintance with skills needed to locate sources of reference. All the pupils who were heard to read, except the lower-attaining readers in Year 3, were able to make effective use of a page of contents or an index to find specific references in information books.
77. Most pupils enjoy reading and writing and discussing the work they have done. They collaborate well and get down to work quickly and effectively. Their relationships with each other and with their teachers are generally good and this reinforces their positive attitudes to learning.
78. The quality of teaching and learning are good. In general, teachers have good subject knowledge so they are able to provide relevant learning situations that support the good progress that all pupils make. Most literacy lessons are characterised by good planning, clear objectives, good relationships which encourage pupils to express themselves freely and the development of supplementary tasks which are appropriate to pupils' attainment. In most cases the teachers ensure that there is a good link between shared reading and writing tasks and supplementary activities in which pupils work independently. In Year 6, in particular, homework is constructively linked to work in class. In the best lessons pupils of different levels of attainment are effectively challenged. However, until Year 6, higher attaining pupils are not always challenged to achieve the standards of performance they are capable of achieving. In Year 6, however, the very effective use of setting ensures that pupils of different levels of attainment are appropriately challenged; and they respond well to the demands made upon them.
79. The co-ordinator for literacy demonstrates a high level of subject leadership. The National Literacy Strategy and associated programmes such as the schemes for Additional Literacy Support (ALS) and for Booster classes have been successfully implemented. Evidence available

from national assessment (SATS) is analysed well to identify areas of weakness, in reading, for example. Target setting for individual pupils in reading and writing is being actively developed. Teachers' planning in literacy has been effectively monitored and the quality of teaching is also monitored. Effective use is made of national tests and standardised tests to provide evidence about pupils' learning and this information is made constructive use of in curriculum planning and in setting up groups of pupils of similar attainment levels.

80. There has been significant improvement under the leadership of the curriculum co-ordinator. Very effective action has been taken over the past two years to improve the teaching of writing and very successful initiatives are in place to raise the profile of reading. For example, the school encourages pupils to take part in presentations for World Book Day; and they have successfully participated in local competitions such as the Book Busters Area Final. To encourage pupils to read, certificates are issued as they progress through the reading scheme. The previous inspection report stated that the quality and range of reading materials available to pupils was unsatisfactory. This is no longer the case. Each classroom has a collection of fiction and non-fiction, which can be supplemented, from the library. Pupils make good use of these materials. However, the library, which has been refurbished and restocked, is now in a room which is too small for the library to function effectively as a whole-school resource for groups of pupils.

MATHEMATICS

81. In national tests in the year 2001, results in mathematics for the 11 year-old pupils were well below the national average and well below those found in schools in similar circumstances. Inspection findings indicate that this year, overall pupils' levels of attainment at the end of Year 6 will be in line with those found nationally. This is a similar picture to that found at the last inspection. The school has implemented a rigorous action plan since the last inspection. This is beginning to take effect, particularly on the present Year 6, who have a good percentage of pupils who are in line to achieve level 5 at the end of their time in school. Some pupils come into Year 3 at a very low level, still reversing some of the numbers they write and needing reinforcement of number bonds to 10. Most pupils are beginning to add and subtract to 20 and are beginning to know the properties of 2 and 3 dimensional shapes. Pupils make good progress from a standard of attainment on entry, which is below the national average. Achievement is good.
82. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs and those who come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds make good progress. As a result of the good support that they receive from teachers and teaching assistants, they achieve in line with that of the rest of their classes. There is no discernible difference in the progress of girls to that of boys. Higher attaining pupils are identified but in some classes they are not faced with challenging tasks consistently. Nevertheless, the end of Year 6 almost all pupils are achieving standards that are a true reflection of their own ability in mathematics. The subject is taught in ability groups. The introduction of the Springboard and Booster groups in mathematics (extra provision for pupils who are having difficulties with the subject) has had a positive effect in driving up standards.
83. The numeracy strategy has had a positive impact upon the quality of the teaching and learning and, consequently, upon pupils rates of progress and levels of attainment. The strategy has given structure to the scheme of work and ensures that pupils are building on previous learning experiences as they progress through the school. In a lower ability set in Year 4, pupils use their mental recall of 2, 3 and 4 times tables. Good questioning skills are used by the teacher to show pupils how knowing the 2 times table can help them with the 4 times table. They make loud exclamations of joy as they see the pattern unfolding. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported to make similar progress. The noise level of this good support does need to be kept to a minimum to avoid occasionally interfering with the flow of the lesson. Pupils in Year 6 use previously learned number facts to help them find 25% of a number and give accurate explanations for their methods. They can point to 0.25 on a measuring stick and can describe how to arrive at the equivalent fraction. Pupils build on secure previous learning as they recall with enthusiasm, working out $\frac{1}{3}$ as a decimal on the calculator, using the term 'recurring',

- knowing when to round up and when to round down. Lessons are well planned and clear learning objectives are shared with pupils. Consequently all pupils know what is expected of them and try hard to do their best. Pupils use mathematics to help learning in other subjects; for example pupils make hexagonal shapes out of rolled paper when constructing a shelter in design technology.
84. In most lessons mathematics is exciting and pupils respond positively, becoming enthusiastic about their learning and delighted in their success. Pupils listen attentively and remain actively engaged in their work throughout these lessons but where the pace of the lesson becomes slow or pupils have insufficient information or resources at their disposal they become uninterested and restless. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. There are classes where pupils are eager to contribute, are excited and interested in their learning and take great delight in achieving the correct answer to number problems.
85. The way pupils present their work is variable. In some classes there is a lack of care where pupils have drawn shapes without a ruler with little regard for accuracy, using either a blunt pencil or felt-tipped pen, whereas in other classes, careful accurate measurements are made. There are examples of interesting and exciting work being carried out in the school. Pupils use their knowledge and understanding well in a number of investigations. Year 6 discover square numbers on a grid whilst Year 5 have investigated different ways of making 200 and used information and communication technology to produce 2 lines of symmetry. The subject leader and his Year 6 have collected information for a numeracy trail in Walsall, which is now on the web. Pupils use information from the web in their investigative assignments.
86. Teaching is good overall. In Year 6 it is consistently very good. In other year groups the quality of teaching is less consistent and this is reflected in the rate of progress of pupils these classes. The pace of learning for pupils in Year 3 is slower than in other year groups and pupils make limited progress. There is insufficient consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the subject to raise standards further and there is too little sharing of very good and sometimes excellent practices seen in lessons. Expectations are not consistently high, as is the requirement for greater accuracy and neater presentation. Marking, target setting and assessment are also areas where good practice is not adequately shared. Mathematical terminology is used well by teachers but the words are often not on display nor directly referred to in the lesson.
87. The interactive white boards are used to good effect by the teachers who have them in their classrooms as they involve all pupils in mental activities at the start of lessons. Mathematics is made enjoyable as pupils reinforce their multiplication facts in a creative 'round the world' game in which all the pupils are actively engaged and enthusiastic. There was a 'pin drop' silence, despite noisy workmen working right outside the classroom, as these Year 5 pupils watch the teacher model a bar line graph. Such good involvement means that pupils make good progress.
88. The subject leader has very good subject knowledge and understanding of the subject and sets himself very high standards in his work. He is highly organised and has put some very good systems and practices into place. He has had to work hard against a culture that is unused to change and some of these good practices are only just beginning to make an impact. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is still inconsistent. Similarly, there are good procedures for the assessment of pupils' work, which are used satisfactorily.

SCIENCE

89. Standards are average by the time pupils are eleven. This represents a similar picture to that of the previous inspection and indicates that the school has securely maintained its standards over the last four years. This reflects the standards achieved in the national tests. Achievement is good.
90. Pupils in Year 3 are currently attaining below the level expected for seven-year-olds. During the inspection, much of the work for these pupils was book based and did not enable them to develop good investigation and research skills and build effectively on previous knowledge and

understanding. When learning about teeth, pupils showed limited knowledge of how to keep teeth healthy and had little understanding of poor dental hygiene. A few pupils knew that nerves felt pain “because she reads it from the book”. During Year 4, pupils’ achievement is better. During lessons about the moon, pupils showed good knowledge of facts about the moon and described some of its general features accurately, such as the moon reflecting the sun’s light rather than creating its own and the time of its orbit around the earth. They applied this knowledge and understanding well when discussing the different shapes of the moon they see at different times of its cycle. They progressively build sound levels of knowledge and understanding across a wide range of scientific topics. In Year 5, pupils carried out an investigation competently to find out how much air was trapped in different samples of soil. They confidently developed a fair test to measure this accurately. They were able to use measuring instruments, such as measuring cylinders, accurately and read the scales competently. They appreciated that the amount of water put into the sample forced the air out and these two quantities were equal. In Year 6, pupils investigated dissolving solids in water. They developed fair tests, varying one element of the test, such as the amount of sugar, the number of times they stirred the solution or the temperature of the water. They made appropriate conclusions through discussing their work with each other. The scrutiny of work completed by pupils in last year’s Year 6, indicates the average standards achieved in all aspects of science; materials, the human body and taking good care of it and of physical processes such as forces and properties of sound. The scrutiny also reveals that investigative and experimental science is a theme that runs throughout all work, particularly that of older pupils.

91. Sound standards of literacy and numeracy are evident in the work. Older pupils use graphs and a good range of tables to record their work in an organised manner and pupils with a wide range of language and literacy skills and knowledge, use scientific vocabulary accurately. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily in recording work. For example, in Year 3 pupils recorded their hand span measurements using a simple graph programme. Interactive whiteboards are used to good effect by teachers to add quality to their presentations in lessons.
92. Pupils of all abilities and from the wide range of ethnic groups represented in the school make good progress. Those pupils with English as an additional language learn the vocabulary well and make significant contributions to class and group discussions. Those with special educational needs contribute well and build effectively on their knowledge and understanding of science. In most lessons, those of higher attainment are given good opportunity to discuss what they know and to justify their hypotheses. These pupils are however, given insufficient chance to develop their own way of recording and organising their own work. Those pupils who join the school mid-year settle in quickly and soon make as good progress as other pupils.
93. The quality of teaching and learning is good. However, some unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. Most teachers plan their lessons well with an emphasis on practical and investigative work, ensuring that pupils have ‘hands on’ experience. This enables pupils to use and apply their knowledge and understanding of science and develop this further. Pupils are given good opportunities to work collaboratively and those from different backgrounds mix and support each other well. This makes a positive contribution to their social development. They pay particular attention to promoting opportunities for pupils to explain their ideas so that they clarify their thinking, thus addressing the language needs of the wide range of ethnic backgrounds represented and the associated learning needs of all pupils. Their sound use of day-to-day assessment of pupils’ work ensures appropriate challenge and focused work with good explanation. Teachers’ good subject knowledge supports the development of basic skills well, such as correct use of scientific vocabulary and investigation skills. Pupils respond well to their often probing questioning. Teachers generally have good relationships with their pupils and have high expectations of work and behaviour. As a result, pupils’ behaviour is good and they show independence in practical aspects of their work. They have very good attitudes and most behave well in lessons. However, when teaching is unsatisfactory, behaviour management is weak, acceptable standards of behaviour are not really established and an effective learning environment is not created. This leads to an unsatisfactory quality in learning. Better aspects of teaching have a positive effect in enabling all pupils to achieve well.

94. Leadership and management of this subject are satisfactory. The curriculum co-ordinator is new to the post and has maintained the secure base for development she took over. She has had some release time in which she has been able to monitor standards and the quality of what the school provides in science. This information is used effectively to inform future development planning and the curriculum co-ordinator has some good ideas about how she would like to see science develop in the school. The scheme of work provides appropriate guidance and the curriculum is broad and balanced. Assessments are made effectively through end of topic tests. The results of these and data from national tests are analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in the standards.

ART AND DESIGN

95. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and in Year 6, standards are average. This is the same as the last inspection. The good work displayed in Year 6 emulating the skills of Turner, in using paint and chalk to create a sea landscape, show that pupils achieve well when using different media.
96. Displays in school and portfolios of work show that all pupils irrespective of background, ability or ethnicity make satisfactory progress. In Year 3, pupils use pencil crayons appropriately to create their own self-portraits. These show that art and design makes a good contribution to pupils' self-esteem, particularly when the Black-Caribbean girls skilfully draw their individual hairstyles. Pupils make good progress in observational drawing and by the time they are in Year 6, the majority of pupils use their sketchbooks well to gather ideas and test particular techniques. For example, when exploring 'people in action' pupils are able to sketch a first draft of a figure skateboarding, which they later refine and develop well into an interesting collage. Pupils use print blocks, texture pads and sponges developing suitable printing techniques. In Year 4, they use vegetables and paint skilfully to create 'scary faces' inspired by the work of Achlmboldo. In Year 5, pupils show that they are able to mix different types of media in producing their own works. For example, they were able to select and use paint and a variety of materials to create scene culminating in an imaginative display depicting a favourite story or poem. They develop appropriate skills when working on three-dimensional models such as clay pots.
97. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. However, excellent teaching was seen when very good planning skilfully linked the design of a 'storyboard' and the use of the digital camera to capture images that pupils later included in role-play. Teachers use resources well, which is an improvement since the last inspection. For example, in a very good lesson pupils handled and shared resources well when creating a colourful, textured collage of the story 'The Enormous Crocodile'. The majority of teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject, which is reflected often in well-timed and helpful interventions. Teachers manage pupils effectively and so pupils enjoy their art activities. For example, two boys excitedly described how they had chosen and selected appropriate materials to depict 'the sky at night' illustrating a story they had read. Pupils work with interest and perseverance, taking care with their work. They are very involved and support each other well. This was seen when the more able pupils assisted children with special educational needs when discussing what materials were needed to texture their pictures. The teaching assistants effectively support pupils with special educational needs. For example, when being encouraged to review their work, one pupil encouraged by a teaching assistant was able to say that she preferred sponges to vegetables as 'they printed better'. However, as yet teachers only give pupils limited experiences in the use of clay and textiles.
98. Art and design makes a good contribution to other areas of the curriculum and in particular literacy when stories and poems are used as a stimulus for design, and history when good sepia pictures are created linked to the Victorians. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily, as seen by the computer-generated pictures, inspired by the work of Lowry, incorporate colour, shape and lines. Art in the school makes a satisfactory contribution to cultural development as pupils made skilful Islamic patterns linked to their work in religious education. Good links are made with local artists with pupils being regularly taken to art galleries and museums to enhance their understanding and appreciation and this makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development.

99. The co-ordinator, who leads the subject well, is knowledgeable and keen, ensuring that the planning takes good account of national guidance. She monitors teachers' planning, and advises and supports teachers well. However, as yet she has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in order to ensure consistency of teaching across the school. New assessment procedures have only recently been introduced and as yet do not show what pupils can and cannot do.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and continue to meet expected levels by the end of Year 6. All pupils achieve satisfactory in all aspects of the designing and making process. Pupils with special educational needs and those from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds, make receive an effective level of support from staff. This helps them to make satisfactory progress in the development of their designing and making skills.
101. Pupils plan their tasks properly and their work takes full account of the recommended design process. Initial plans are detailed and include decisions on how their products will meet specific the requirements of the task. They also decide which materials they are going to use for the different parts. Pupils label their designs appropriately and draw what they think the finished product will look like. An ongoing feature of the work is the evaluation and development of their models and products so that there is an improvement in quality.
102. Pupils use an appropriate range of materials, including fabrics, wood, card, food and other recycled materials to make a satisfactory range of products. Pupils learn develop sound designing, making and evaluation skills throughout their years in school. In Year 3, pupils make some interesting sandwiches based on links well with other subjects; collecting data in mathematics and healthy eating in science. In Year 4, pupils analyse commercially made torches to see how they work, building a sound knowledge of the design of products they can buy in a shop and also in designing something for a specific purpose. Pupils in this year group also look at commercially produced purses and from ideas gained, design and make their own money containers, of a satisfactory quality. They use fabrics and papers and chose a joining method appropriate to the material they are using. Linked with their work on sound in science, pupils in Year 5 designed and made musical instruments. These instruments include guitars made from tissue boxes and elastic bands, and percussion instruments. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have learned sufficient skills and have a sound knowledge of different materials and products to apply these to larger and more complicated products. They make sub-frames of a satisfactory quality, from wood, axles and wheels on which they build fairground models such as merry-go-rounds. They have made slippers based on their investigation of how commercially produced footwear is made. Pupils study different types of shelters, such as bus shelters, tents and structures with central support poles and evaluate their suitability for different purposes. During the inspection they were seen practising the different joints they were planning to use in making their designs of shelters.
103. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good features. The teachers have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the designing, making and evaluating elements of the subject. They give pupils good opportunities to evaluate both their own and commercially produced products. This enables them to build on their knowledge and evaluate their own designs and products. The co-ordinator is aware that some teachers lack confidence and knowledge of some of the more recent development in design and technology, such as control technology. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of all other elements of the subjects is satisfactory. The planned work provides a suitable level of challenge for all abilities and achieves a good response from most pupils.
104. The policy and scheme of work give clear guidelines and effective support for teachers' planning. The planned curriculum for design and technology is effectively linked to science, to make tasks meaningful and purposeful. The subject is thoughtfully led. The curriculum co-ordinator has produced a good subject improvement plan, which outlines the development of

assessment, staff training for teaching control technology, integrating multicultural elements and opportunities into tasks and developing teachers' planning further to ensure that all of these meet current requirements.

GEOGRAPHY

105. When pupils enter the school in Year 3, they have a limited knowledge of their local area, the United Kingdom and the world. Although during their time in the school a satisfactory geography curriculum guides their learning, by the time they are in Year 6 they are still below the nationally expected standards in the subject. This applies to all pupils, whatever their background, gender or special educational needs. The opportunities they are offered do enable them to make satisfactory progress in their knowledge of geographical facts, although their progress in skill development is unsatisfactory. Their overall achievement is unsatisfactory. This is because throughout their daily lives pupils have too few practical opportunities to develop their own views and opinions through investigation or experience. This is the same judgement as that of the last inspection. The school has for some time been aware of the difficulties for pupils in the subject, and has already identified geography as an urgent priority for improvement in its development plan for the coming year.
106. The development of pupils' mapping and atlas skills is weak. In Year 4, pupils learn about places and countries outside Britain but this sometimes confuses them. Some think that 'Europe is a country near Spain'. They are unsure as to how to find places and countries in an Atlas. They also learn about water and its use in the home and school, again with some confusion e.g. 'A puddle is not safe, it's only safe to play and jump in'. Their work in books is often disappointing with many punctuation and spelling mistakes and some limited marking.
107. Year 5 pupils study their local environment through what they find as the interesting topic of studying their own school grounds. They come up with a number of sensible ideas about developing the grassed area around the dinner hall; 'a flower bed with daisies, buttercups and daffodils'; 'a crocodile bench' and 'a fish pond where I can sit quietly and watch the fish coming to the top'. They then wrote to the headteacher with their plans and suggestions and this provided a good link to literacy. This exercise has been repeated for two years, but none of the pupils' ideas have yet been put into practice.
108. By the end of Year 6, pupils' geographical skills are still limited, although their knowledge is developing satisfactorily. Pupils in Year 6 recall their work the previous summer on comparing Llangollen with Walsall - 'they have smaller schools there, more countryside and barns and things'. Pupils know a little about climate change through different countries, and name accurately the 'imaginary lines - the Equator and the Tropic of Cancer'. They are accurate in their knowledge of places in Europe, the continent and the UK. However, their learning is limited in mapping and using grid references, and they firmly believe that they 'don't do much geography'. They have written simple postcards on the subject of 'Wish You Were Here' from their holiday destinations in the summer. In both Years 5 and 6 pupils have presented their own topic books, which indicate that some of them have been encouraged to work independently at home. In topics such as the World Cup 2002, Japan, The Amazon, the Tudors and the Queen's Jubilee, some pupils show originality and pride in their work.
109. The quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was satisfactory, but because it does not yet lead to pupils achieving higher standards, it is unsatisfactory overall. Teachers' planning and delivery of lessons was satisfactory, and on one occasion good, but resources particularly in information and communication technology are limited, and consequently pupils have too few practical experience or outside visits to help their learning. The marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory and does not give pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve their work.
110. Although the pupils have limited background knowledge, they always show interest in learning about geography but have to rely on teacher direction most of the time. Their investigation skills are limited and until they reach the later years of the school, their literacy skills do not match up to the demands of the present curriculum.

111. It is intended that a new subject leader will take over the subject shortly after the absence of the present co-ordinator. It is planned to implement new assessment procedures, develop appropriate resources and begin effective monitoring of teaching and learning to improve standards.

HISTORY

112. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment and from all ethnic groups make good progress in their learning of history due to the generally good quality of teaching they receive, particularly in Year 6. By the time they leave the school at the age of eleven they are attaining standards in line with national expectation. This judgement is similar to that of the last inspection. Achievement is satisfactory.
113. Pupils are developing a wide knowledge of people and places in history. In Year 3 pupils learn about Romans and Vikings. Older pupils have a good recall of Viking longships and know that they came from Scandinavia. They know that the Romans established many towns in this country and built 'long, straight' roads. They also look at the life in the time of Alfred the Great. They have, though, difficulty in having a sense of historical time, very few having any idea when the Romans lived. Their work in their books, often on worksheets, is sometimes rather careless and untidy.
114. Pupils satisfactorily further develop their knowledge and understanding of life in other times and different cultures. Year 4 pupils study the history of Ancient Greece and Egypt. They know about famous Greeks such as Plato, Pythagoras and Archimedes, and discuss the importance of Egyptian gods and burial practices to a depth that is expected for pupils of this age. Their written work is generally accurate in its answers to questions and identification, but is often untidily presented. Pupils in Year 5 learn about the Tudors lifestyle and about the political situations that led to The Wars of the Roses. Pupils in Year 6 enthusiastically recall this work, naming all the wives of Henry VIII and what happened to them, why Henry wanted a son, and that he 'fell out' with the Pope over religion. They know of the importance of Tudor exploration through men like Sir Francis Drake.
115. In an outstanding lesson in Year 6 many pupils used their writing skills to recall the daily life of a millhand, sometimes movingly and occasionally gory. Nevertheless they appreciated that many Victorians were 'just grateful to have a job earning only a very small amount of money each day'. This is taken to a logical conclusion when they write letters to Lord Shaftesbury asking for reform of working conditions.
116. Teaching and learning are good overall, and an excellent lesson was seen in Year 6. This example of highly motivating teaching was characterised by good knowledge of the subject, very good pace, total involvement of pupils and high expectations. This resulted in all pupils producing good imaginative and factual writing, which linked well to their development of literacy skills. During the lesson they talked at length about life in Victorian times for less advantaged people, showing good levels of understanding of the need to have jobs such as 'scavengers', 'piecers' and 'knocker-uppers'. Due to the excellent stimulus, that raised high levels of interest, pupils were interested to find out about the desperate daily lives of children of their own age. Scrutiny of pupils' work throughout the school indicates that whilst they are learning factual knowledge of Britain and other countries, their presentation of these facts is sometimes sloppy and untidy, with teachers marking, (sometimes very limited) not often offering developmental points for improvement or understanding. The main weakness in their learning is that they are mostly directed in tasks by their teachers, and have insufficient opportunities to select information from a variety of sources for example through information and communication technology.
117. Due to staff absence, there is no co-ordinator to lead and manage the subject. Consequently, the monitoring of teaching and learning in classrooms is not sufficient at present to address some minor weaknesses in teaching and approaches to learning. The school's own resources are just adequate in provision of books, but there are insufficient artefacts and challenging information technology software. The school's adequate range of resources is supplemented well by visits to places of interest, which grabs pupils' attention fully. On a recent visit to Walsall museum,

pupils show considerable interest and enthusiasm for the subject, which benefits their social and speaking skills when they share their ideas and opinions with each other. The school has, in the past, managed to give pupils opportunities to live the lives of Vikings and Tudors with the help of visiting actors. These opportunities support pupils' social and cultural development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

118. Pupils' attainment is in line with that expected nationally for pupils by the time they are eleven and their achievement of all pupils is good. This is an improvement on judgements made at the time of the previous inspection, when standards were below expectations and National Curriculum requirements were not met. There has been significant investment in developing and improving the resources for information and communications technology since the last inspection to good effect overall. The school now has a suite of computers, to which all pupils have regular access. There are four interactive whiteboards, one in each year, which effectively enhance the quality of teachers' presentations.
119. Younger pupils are able to edit text satisfactorily and are developing sound, basic word processing skills. They add appropriate punctuation, such as capital letters, full stops and question marks to text displayed on the screen. Samples of pupils work in Year 3 show that they competently use a good range of fonts, print sizes and some use different colours in their work. Pupils also combine a good range of graphics with their writing to make it more interesting. They record some of their work in science on spreadsheets and turn these into graphs to represent different hand spans, for example. In Year 4, pupils 'cut and paste' sentences and place them into the correct order to make a plant-watering device. Pupils in Year 5 assemble symbols and move them around in designing a bedroom for example. During the inspection, these pupils were seen using this technique to design an improvement in the area surrounding the canteen, linked with their work in geography and developing mapping skills. They used different symbols to represent features, such as trees and stretched circles into ovals to represent grassed areas for example. Higher attaining pupils worked out for themselves the solutions to complicated difficulties, which they encountered. This involved working out how to place some hidden objects on top of others. By this stage they are also using the Internet for research and communication purposes in a range of subjects. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils bring together these skills and produce interesting copies of the 'Verona Times' linked with their Literacy work on Romeo and Juliet. They combine different styles of text and graphics creatively.
120. In all of their work, routine skills develop well. Pupils control the mouse accurately to locate the position of alterations and type these in appropriately. They locate letters on the keyboard with appropriate speed and accuracy. Routine skills in accessing their own files within the system, opening programs and saving their work into their own files is well developed. A high proportion of pupils joins the school mid-year, and some of these pupils have had little or no experience of computers. Teachers support these pupils well and soon they are able to cope with the work using English keyboard and instructions. Pupils of all levels of attainment, those with special educational needs and those from different ethnic backgrounds all make good progress.
121. The quality of teaching and learning is good. There is good provision in direct teaching of the skills of information and communications technology. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to learn as a class and to practise their routine skills, such as word processing, computer-generated artwork, research and using spreadsheets. Pupils find the opportunities interesting and consequently they develop positive attitudes towards their work in information and communication technology. They enjoy working at the computers and most show pride in their achievement. They sit patiently and listen to teachers' instruction carefully and the great majority confidently put their knowledge and understanding into good practice. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is good and supports pupils' learning well. They plan their lessons effectively and make good provision for pupils to have sufficient practical experience each week. Teachers also plan sufficient opportunity for pupils to further develop and consolidate their computer skills in the classroom. Their organisation of groups is sound and teachers manage pupils well, ensuring that pupils treat the equipment with care and concentrate throughout lesson.

122. Information and communications technology has been a major area development over recent years. Co-ordination of the subject is good, and development has been planned well within financial limitations. Computers in the suite are of a good specification and software loaded into all computers in the suite is up-to-date and of a good specification. Provision in the classroom is good and there is an inter-active white board for each year group. These are used well in many lessons and this stimulates learning and keeps pupils' attention focused. The current curriculum co-ordinator has held this responsibility since 2001 and has led and managed a good level of development and improvement, especially organising different opportunities for staff to improve their knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence in teaching information and communication technology. The school's current plans are appropriate to establish a good provision for both the teaching of specific information and communications technology skills and for information technology to be used to support work in other subjects.

MUSIC

123. Standards are higher than at the time of the previous inspection. By the end of Year 6, the standards achieved by pupils now match those expected for their age. All pupils, irrespective of background, ability or ethnicity, meet this satisfactory level of attainment. This shows good improvement since the last inspection.
124. Standards in singing are good throughout the school and are often very good in assembly, contributing very well to pupils' spiritual development through the atmosphere created in the hall and pupils' enthusiasm in singing. Pupils respond enthusiastically to very good quality teaching offered by a teacher with specialist musical skills. Pupils are taught good techniques, are challenged to do their best and to improve. The choir, which reflects well the cultural diversity of the school, gave a creditable performance of 'The Lord is my Shepherd' in a two-part round. In lessons, pupils are able to match words to the tune and are able to follow the musical signals provided. All pupils sing enthusiastically, showing a growing sense of rhythm and dynamics. Singing is clearly enjoyed and voices are mainly well controlled, showing pleasing evidence of good practice.
125. The recently adopted planning based on national guidance, together with good support from the co-ordinator, has helped non-specialists to be more confident in teaching music. Consequently, standards are rising, and pupils are now achieving satisfactorily and are enthusiastic in music-making activities. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. For example, pupils in Year 3 are able to identify instruments from around the world, such as 'guiro', 'castanets' and 'cabasa'. In this year group, they are able to use the untuned instruments appropriately, copying the teacher's rhythms. Year 4 pupils build successfully on previously taught skills and have satisfactory understanding of how different patterns of notes represent different rhythms. In Year 6, pupils compose their own rhythmic patterns, recording them appropriately using the correct notation. They are then able to maintain their own rhythm by using the simple notation whilst performing together.
126. Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school. Younger pupils are being satisfactorily introduced to simple notation and are learning to recognise musical patterns. Year 4 pupils are being taught appropriate vocabulary such as 'quaver', 'minim' and 'crochet'. Older pupils are being given appropriate opportunity to work on a simple composition and suggest ways to improve their own work and that of others. The management of pupils is generally satisfactory, however in one lesson there were insufficient demanding activities and the pace of the lesson was too slow, with pupils losing interest and wandering off task. Pupils' skills in commenting upon pieces of music they hear are generally underdeveloped. Pupils cannot easily describe the mood and feelings that different pieces of music depict. Whilst pupils know that they listen to music at some assembly times they do not easily recall the names of composers. However, when incorporated into a lesson, listening to music promotes pupils' awareness of cultures other than their own. For example, when pupils listened with interest to African music a group of Black Caribbean boys stated that they liked the rhythm of the drums. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily with the use of the tape recorder.

127. A good contribution to musical development is the very good link with outside agencies and in particular the local education authority music service. The opportunity provided to perform at both local and school events enriches their musical experience outside the formal curriculum. The good links with Black singing groups in the area assist in developing the self-esteem of the Black Caribbean pupils. It also gives them an insight into their musical heritage and contributes well to all pupils' cultural development.
128. The co-ordinator leads the subject well, monitoring teachers' planning, advising and supporting teachers effectively. However, as yet, she has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in order to ensure consistency of teaching across the school. New assessment procedures have been introduced only recently and as yet do not show what pupils can and cannot do.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. Pupils attain standards in line with those expected nationally by the age of eleven. Their progress irrespective of their background, gender or ability is satisfactory. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection.
130. In Year 3, pupils are beginning to develop their skills satisfactorily through invasion games such as hockey. They develop adequate skills to control and dribble a ball, tackle each other fairly and try to score and save goals. Their combination of these skills enables them to play a reasonable game. Pupils in Year 4 warm up vigorously and safely and effectively prepare their bodies for physical exercise. In gymnastics pupils choose their own actions and ideas when working individually or with a partner, to devise a travelling sequence using different heights and points of the body. However, they do not always use space to full effect. In Year 5 pupils continue to develop their sequences of movements when they incorporate rolling and balancing into symmetrical and asymmetrical demonstrations of a sound quality. Many show good control in these movements, but a minority find this difficult and sometimes collide with others or lose co-ordination.
131. By the end of Year 6, pupils soundly combine the skills they have learned to produce some thoughtful and carefully executed performances. Two very good lessons observed in Year 6 showed firstly pupils developing imaginative dance creations to music when imitating a flickering candle; secondly, pupils made themselves into tall, small or large shapes which their partner had to jump over, starting and ending with a balance position. In both lessons most pupils showed imagination and skills in their preparation and performance. The dance sequence made a significant contribution to their spiritual awareness. A minority of pupils, though, do not use the hall space effectively and are not accurate in their control and techniques of movement.
132. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 develop their swimming skills well with the help of a dedicated instructor, in their own very good learner pool. Pupils develop confidence in the water and start to progress in their stroke skills before they can move on to the large pool in a local school in Years 5 and 6. Progress in swimming is good and when pupils leave the school about 70 per cent of them are able to swim 25 metres or more, which meets the national expectation.
133. Teaching and learning in physical education is satisfactory overall, although during the inspection teaching was uniformly good, with the occasional very good lesson. Teachers plan lessons well and nearly always are very effective in managing their classes indoors, at the pool or outside. During the inspection, in most classes a small number of pupils forgot kit or had notes excusing them from lessons. Although they attended the lessons anyway, being fully included through observation, all of them merely watched and were not really gainfully occupied, although teachers occasionally asked them questions. Four pupils stood in a wet and humid pool area for half an hour during a swimming lesson. This was not a particularly pleasant experience. There are currently insufficient strategies put into practice through which these pupils gain sufficient educational benefit. Most teachers give pupils opportunities to evaluate verbally the

movements of themselves and others, which helps their learning. Nearly all pupils are enthusiastic, energetic and cheerful in their activities. Two boys in Year 3 were beside themselves with enjoyment when learning hockey skills for the first time.

134. The physical education curriculum is hampered by the lack of a field and a playground, which is badly in need of resurfacing and remarking. It is a safety hazard with depressed manholes and very uneven areas. The high expense of repair is a limitation to the school, but its pupils deserve a much better environment in which to play and learn new skills. The main hall is a good size and used well. Resources are adequate.
135. The leadership and management of the subject by the deputy head are satisfactory. The school has highlighted physical education as a priority improvement area and plans to develop outdoor education, such as using a 'maths trail' for orienteering, and organise further training for teachers. Pupils are given the opportunity to join football clubs run by outside coaches and the subject leader, which are open to all pupils, irrespective of age or gender. There is no meaningful assessment of pupils' progress and skills at present, which the school is intent upon remedying. Monitoring of teaching and learning in lessons rarely takes place and is unsatisfactory.