

## INSPECTION REPORT

**PETER'S HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Dudley

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103791

Headteacher: Mrs S Mardel

Reporting inspector: Mr D Clegg  
4341

Dates of inspection: 9th – 12th June 2003

Inspection number: 253897

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school:              | Primary   |
| School category:             | Community   |
| Age range of pupils:         | 4 – 11 years  |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed   |
| School address:              | Peters Hill Rd<br>Amblecote<br>Brierley Hill<br>Dudley<br>West Midlands |
| Postcode:                    | DY5 2QH   |
| Telephone number:            | 01384 816740  |
| Fax number:                  | 01384 816741  |
| Appropriate authority:       | Governing body  |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mrs J Mills   |
| Date of previous inspection: | 18th June 1998  |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members |                  |                      | Subject responsibilities  | Aspect responsibilities  |
|--------------|------------------|----------------------|---|--|
| 4341         | Mr D Clegg       | Registered inspector | Information and communication technology  | What sort of school is it?<br>How high are standards? <i>The school's results and pupils' achievements</i><br>How well are pupils taught?<br>What should the school do to improve further?             |
| 11096        | Ms M Davie       | Lay inspector        |   | How high are standards?<br><i>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</i><br>How well does the school care for its pupils?<br>How well does the school work in partnership with its parents |
| 16971        | Mr R Hardaker    | Team inspector       | Mathematics<br>Design and technology<br>Physical Education  |  |
| 10207        | Mr A Khan-Cheema | Team inspector       | History<br>Religious Education  | How well is the school led and managed?  |
| 14997        | Ms V Emery       | Team inspector       | Geography<br>Foundation Stage   | How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?   |
| 4343         | Ms S Billington  | Team inspector       | Science<br>Art and design<br>English as an additional language<br>Educational inclusion, including race equality<br>Special educational needs |  |
| 27777        | Mr R Greenall    | Team inspector       | English<br>Music  |  |

The inspection contractor was:

Wessex Education Ltd  
3 Greenacres  
Puddletown  
Dorchester  
DT2 8GF

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London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a very large school with 828 pupils aged 4 to 11 years. There are 452 boys and 376 girls with the imbalance most marked in years 1, 2 and 6. The great majority of pupils is White British; there is a small proportion of Pakistani pupils and a few pupils of mixed White and Black Caribbean heritage. Thirty-five pupils have English as an additional language, but very few pupils are at an early stage of acquiring English. Most common first languages, other than English, are Urdu, Panjabi and Gujerati.

Only about four per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, this is below the national average.

There is a below average number of pupils with special educational needs and a lower than average proportion with statements of special needs. The main difficulties are specific learning problems, moderate learning difficulties and speech and communication problems.

The school is involved in several initiatives. Since the last inspection it has achieved Beacon School<sup>1</sup> status. The school has been awarded Active Mark Gold in recognition of its provision for physical education. The school has also holds the Investors in People award.

When children enter the school they are attaining standards that are above those usually found.

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

This is a good school with several very good features. Standards achieved by seven year olds are very high and for eleven year olds are good and improving. Pupils have very good attitudes to work and are very well behaved. The overall quality of teaching is good. The school is very well led and managed. Overall the school provides good value for money.

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

- Eleven year olds reach good standards in English and mathematics
- Seven year olds attain well above average standards in literacy and numeracy
- Teaching is good
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school and work hard
- The school is very well led and managed
- All aspects of pupils' personal development are very well supported
- There is a very good range of learning opportunities for pupils in years 1 to 6
- There is a good level of support and concern for pupils' welfare
- A very good partnership with parents is developed and sustained

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

- The standards in numeracy and writing attained by children in reception classes
- The standards in science attained by eleven year olds

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

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

Since the last inspection in May 1998 the school has made satisfactory improvement. The standards for seven year olds have largely been maintained or improved with some well above average attainment in English, mathematics and science.

The standards attained by eleven year olds declined between 2000 and 2002 from above average to being nearer to the national average. This decline is now being successfully addressed in English and mathematics. Standards in science have declined. The overall good quality of teaching has been maintained.

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<sup>1</sup> Beacon schools are schools recognised as having particular areas of their work judged to be excellent.

The school has successfully addressed the issues identified in the last report. A forthcoming building programme will improve overall facilities. There have been major improvements to pupils' toilet facilities.

Information and communication technology (ICT) is developing in the curriculum and is now used more extensively in several subjects, although there is still some work to do.

There is a greater consistency in the quality of teaching of subjects such as design and technology (DT).

### STANDARDS

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

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

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

The evidence from the inspection indicates that standards in English for eleven year olds are improving and are currently above the national average. Standards in mathematics remain above average whilst in science standards are about average. The school has set realistic targets for 2003 and some challenging targets for the following year.

The standards attained by seven year olds are high and are consistently well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. These high standards are evident in test results and in the current standards of work.

Overall, standards attained by eleven year olds have been erratic over the past three years, although the trend in improvement has been in line with the national trend. However, pupils have not always achieved as well as they should taking into account what they attained by seven. Improving standards indicate that the majority of pupils are now achieving well and beginning to reach the standards they should in English and mathematics. Eleven year olds could still do better in science. There are some very high standards currently being attained by pupils in year 5 in English and mathematics.

There is no significant pattern of varying attainment between boys and girls. The pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils in lessons. However, it is not possible to make an overall judgment about their progress, as the school does not specifically track the progress made by this particular group of pupils and compare it with others.

Children in the reception classes make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning but they do not achieve as much as they should in numeracy and to a lesser extent, in writing.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and many attain average standards, particularly in English and mathematics, by the time they leave the school.

In other subjects pupils attain standards in line with or above those usually expected. Standards in history, geography, art and design, DT and ICT are broadly in line with expectations for both seven and eleven year olds. There is some good attainment in aspects of art and ICT. In the former, observational drawing skills are good and in the latter, word processing and multi-media work is better than usually found. Standards in religious education (RE) are very high throughout the school. In music, seven year olds reach expected standards and eleven year olds exceed them.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES



| Aspect                                 | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school                | This is a strong and in some respects, excellent, feature of the school. Pupils have very good attitudes to work and enjoy coming to school. They work hard and maintain a good level of concentration in lessons. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Pupils behave very well in lessons and as they move around the school.   |
| Personal development and relationships | Excellent. The oldest pupils are very mature and sensible. They have a highly developed sense of responsibility and are very well prepared for the next stage of learning.   |
| Attendance                             | Attendance is well above average and lessons start promptly.   |

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Overall teaching is good. In the majority of lessons teaching is good and almost a quarter is very good. The teaching in years 1 to 6 is better than in the reception classes because there is more good and very good teaching in these year groups.

Teachers plan lessons carefully, make good use of resources and establish very good relationships that are very helpful to learning. Pupils are highly motivated and successfully encouraged to work hard and apply themselves. Teaching assistants are generally used well. Homework is well used to supplement lessons. Occasionally, in some year groups there is a lack of challenge for the higher attaining pupils in science.

In the reception classes, there are weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics and to a lesser extent, in writing.

Overall, both literacy and numeracy are taught well in lessons in years 1 to 6. The school largely meets the needs of all pupils, although more could be done to improve the rate of progress for some of the children in reception.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment  |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | Overall this is a very good feature of the school. Pupils are offered a rich range of experiences both inside and outside of lessons. There is not enough teaching of some aspects of the basic skills in the reception classes.   |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs   | The work given to pupils with special educational needs is well planned to meet their needs and helps them to make good progress.  |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language                                 | Pupils are successfully supported and achieve as much as other pupils in lessons.  |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | This is a very good feature of the school. There is a very good range of opportunities that helps pupils to develop personally. A strong moral code about how pupils treat others underpins the work of the school and makes a significant contribution to how pupils are helped to grow and mature. |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school offers a high level of care and support. Staff know pupils well and have a good understanding of what individuals need to help them to progress. There are very good systems in place to make sure that teachers know how well all pupils are doing. |
|--|---|

The school successfully develops and maintains a constructive and beneficial partnership with parents.

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

| Aspect  | Comment   |
|---|---|
| Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff | This is a very well led school. The head teacher provides a strong sense of purpose and direction. A keen sense of teamwork ensures that there is a shared commitment amongst all staff to seek constant improvement. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities              | The governing body is knowledgeable and very committed to the school. Governors play a significant part in shaping the way the school develops.   |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                        | There is a good degree of awareness about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and effective action is beginning to address the key priorities.   |
| The strategic use of resources                                    | There are very secure financial procedures and resources are used prudently and sensibly. The school is very assiduous in seeking best value when making key decisions.   |

There is a good level of staffing throughout the school and the provision of learning resources is good.

There is scope to make better use of assessment data to track the progress made by specific groups of pupils.

There are some minor items of information missing from the governors' annual report to parents.

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

| What pleases parents most   | What parents would like to see improved  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The high expectations</li> <li>• Children make good progress</li> <li>• Children are well behaved</li> <li>• Teaching is good</li> <li>• The school helps their children to mature</li> <li>• The school is very approachable</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of interesting activities</li> <li>• The amount of homework pupils receive</li> </ul> |

The parents are fully justified in having a high level of satisfaction with the work of the school.

Overall their views are accurate. The school provides a good range of activities for the older pupils, but there is a much more limited range of extra-curricular activities available for the younger pupils.

The school provides about the right amount of homework.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Overall the standards attained by pupils are consistently at, or above the national average. Eleven-year olds, in the most recent tests (2002), attained standards in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. In English and science standards were below those of similar schools and in mathematics they were average. Crucially, not enough pupils reached the higher levels. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
2. In tests, seven year olds attained standards well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in reading were above those of similar schools and well above in writing and mathematics.
3. The standards evident in the inspection largely reflect the test results for seven year olds. Standards attained by seven year olds continue to be well above the average although standards of handwriting are not as good as they should be. However, the standards attained by current eleven year olds are improving and in English and mathematics are above average. In science, standards are in line with the average.
4. In the years following the previous inspection, the standards attained by eleven year olds declined. Pupils left the school not having attained as much as their achievements at seven would suggest they should. This decline has been arrested and the majority of pupils now achieve well and reach the standards they should in English and mathematics. Not enough information is collated about the relative performance of different groups of pupils although there is good information about how well individual pupils are doing. It is not for instance possible to give an overall judgement about the progress made by pupils who speak English as an additional language as the school does not specifically track and compare their progress with that of other pupils. What is evident however, is that these pupils achieve as well as others in lessons.
5. The youngest children in reception class reach the expected levels. They do particularly well in creative and physical development and socially are very well prepared for the move into year 1. However, many children do not attain the standards they should in mathematics and writing.
6. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the support they receive, particularly in literacy and make good progress and achieve well. Many attain average standards in English.
7. By the time pupils leave the school they have a good grasp of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. They are generally confident and articulate and listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. They are fluent readers, enjoy a good range of literature and have a sharp understanding of what they have read. Written work is expressive and generally grammatically accurate. In mathematics, pupils have a firm understanding of how numbers work, they use the four operations to calculate accurately and have a good range of strategies for working things out mentally. They use what they know to solve problems. In science, pupils have a very solid knowledge base but their application of scientific skills is more limited and this prevents them from attaining better standards.

8. In other subjects pupils attain standards that are either in line with or above those usually expected. In ICT standards are in line with those expected although for eleven year olds, skills in word processing and multi-media work are better than usually found. Throughout the school standards in RE are much higher than those usually found. Standards for both seven and eleven year olds in history, geography, DT and art are in line with expectations. In physical education (PE) some aspects are above average for seven and eleven year olds. Music standards for seven year olds are in line with expectations but are better than usual for eleven year olds.

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

9. The very high standards found at the time of the last inspection have been successfully maintained. Pupils' very good attitudes to their work continue to be a strength and make a significant contribution to their achievements. They approach their work with a good deal of enthusiasm and determination and are confident in having a go and learning from their own and each other's mistakes. This was evident in a year 6 mathematics lesson, when pupils shared their methods for multiplying a range of three digit numbers with each other; everyone had to think carefully about each step, and as a result learning was at a high rate. Occasionally a few pupils struggle to maintain concentration in the afternoon. This was particularly evident during the inspection when the afternoons were warm and pupils were static for too long.
10. Behaviour around the school is very good. Pupils throughout the school are generally self-disciplined. They are particularly well behaved when entering and leaving the halls for assembly and dinner, when a very large number of pupils is moving around. Lunchtime is a pleasant occasion, where even the youngest children behave with a good deal of social awareness.
11. Older pupils are very aware of the responsibilities they have in regard to setting a good example for younger pupils and are very good ambassadors for the school. Pupils in year 5 could not be faulted for the friendly and helpful manner with which they hosted a group of children from Chernobyl. They made a lot of effort to learn a few words in Russian in order to make their guests feel comfortable, as well as the Russian lyrics to 'He's got the whole world in His hand', which they sang beautifully to their visitors during an assembly. Pupils in year 6 are particularly mature and well prepared to move on to secondary education. They are aware of the status and responsibilities that come with their jobs as school prefects and are happy to help out with younger pupils. The roles of head boy and girl are well established and highly regarded. During the inspection, the head boy and his deputy greeted parents who were attending the 'Achiever's Assembly' very politely and helped them to find their way to the hall. There have been no recent exclusions, an improvement over the past year when there were six exclusions.
12. Pupils' personal development and relationships are excellent. From their earliest days in the school they respond well to the encouragement they are given to behave well and take pride in their surroundings. Parents are rightly pleased with the very good relationships their children have with staff and other pupils. Pupils appreciate the recognition they receive when they try hard. In an 'Achiever's Assembly' a year 3 pupil said he was chosen because his teacher said he is "a walking encyclopedia" but was also quick to point out that his friends also think he is kind and thoughtful to them. Pupils listen to their teachers and each other carefully. Throughout the school they have very well established work habits, and are punctual and always ready to

do their work. They work successfully in pairs and groups in many lessons, as was seen in an art lesson in year 6, during which they gave each other a lot of helpful advice about painting designs onto fabric.

13. Attendance is well above average and lessons begin promptly. There is no unauthorised absence and very little lateness.

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

14. The overall good quality of teaching is a key factor in the school's success. Almost 70 per cent of lessons are good and of these, about 27 per cent are very good or excellent. The teaching in years 1 to 6 is better than in reception where there are some weaknesses in the way mathematics and, to a lesser extent, writing is taught. Overall, the interesting and well planned lessons motivate pupils and encourage them to do well.
15. Teachers are very skilful in planning activities that meet the needs of pupils. This helps the majority of pupils to make good progress. The grouping of pupils according to how well they understand previous work is effective in helping them to achieve well in literacy and numeracy. Teachers identify what the key learning is in each lesson and they regularly inform the pupils at the start. This motivates pupils and helps them to think carefully about what they are learning. Occasionally, lessons are not sufficiently challenging for the higher attaining pupils. This is particularly the case in science where not enough is demanded of some pupils and opportunities are missed to apply science skills to investigations and experiments. In contrast, in mathematics lessons there is often a high level of challenge for the higher attaining pupils.
16. Resources are well used, including the teaching assistants. These make a significant impact on lessons in a number of ways. They provide good support to small groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and this helps them to do well. On some occasions they take a leading role in instructing the whole class, particularly if they have a specific area of expertise. This happened on a number of occasions in ICT lessons. For instance in one year 5 lesson the teaching assistant provided a clear set of instructions, backed up by a demonstration, about how to complete a database about game parks in Kenya.
17. Throughout the school there is a very effective climate for learning. Lessons are characterised by strong, productive relationships that are very conducive to learning. Teachers are quick to encourage pupils to work collaboratively, to share problems and to seek solutions with their 'partners'. This creates an atmosphere where pupils are very comfortable about seeking guidance and are unafraid to take a chance and make mistakes. This results in pupils working hard and covering a lot of ground in lessons. The use of humour, the mutual respect and the high expectations of teachers all contribute to the skilful management of pupils.
18. The teaching in the reception classes is satisfactory overall. However, not enough teaching of mathematics is planned and undertaken. This hinders the progress of a significant proportion of children. Some of the teaching focusing on children's physical and creative development is good with a series of well planned activities that give children good opportunities to test themselves, be adventurous and experience different environments. The teaching of reading is satisfactory but there are weaknesses in teaching writing.

19. Some lessons are particularly successful due to the exuberance and enthusiasm of the teaching and the ambitious expectations. One excellent year 6 music lesson was simply inspirational in enabling pupils to experience, compose and appreciate the 'blues'. Pupils were carried along by the teaching and learned much in a relatively short time.
20. Homework is taken very seriously. It is regularly set and marked and pupils have a very responsible attitude to making sure it is handed in on time. The work makes a good contribution to pupils' success; it supplements the work in lessons and prepares pupils for the next stage of learning.

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

21. The school provides pupils with a very good range of learning opportunities in years 1 to 6. This has been maintained since the last inspection. Statutory requirements are met for all subjects, including religious education and personal, social and health education.
22. Good programmes of work for most subjects help teachers to plan their lessons. Different approaches to teaching and learning have been explored through a school based project and are helping to raise pupils' interest in subjects such as geography, history and DT through a more practical and investigative style of teaching and learning. This is improving the quality of teaching. A weakness is the lack of direct teaching of some basic skills to the youngest children where not enough attention is given to using some of the teaching strategies in the literacy and numeracy guidance.
23. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been successfully implemented and are contributing to rising standards, particularly in mathematics. Good examples of the use of numeracy and literacy skills are seen in geography, history and science. There is some good use made of ICT across the curriculum, for example in making charts and graphs and to illustrate work. This has not yet been extended sufficiently in English.
24. Pupils are offered a rich range of experiences, both inside and out of lessons. Extra curricular activities for years 3 to 6 include a good range, such as choirs, sporting activities, art and a computer club. The activities are much more limited for the younger pupils.
25. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. It is firmly established in the day to day teaching and is effectively planned for in a range of topics and themes. Sex and drugs education have good coverage in the curriculum.
26. Very good links have been established with partner institutions. Pupils are very well prepared to enter local secondary schools through a very good induction programme. The very good links with the Early Education Centre (EEC) on the school site ensures a smooth transition into the main school for young children. The school is a very good training institution for local teacher training colleges and for students needing work experience. Sound links have been established with the local community and in particular, local churches. Pupils take part in local community events such as the swimming gala and music festivals. Many visitors from the community extend opportunities for pupils such as a Chinese visitor to talk about the Chinese New Year.

27. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The strengths in all areas of this provision have been maintained since the last inspection and there has been an improvement in cultural development. Spiritual awareness is positively promoted in many ways. In RE, where pupils compared the values and beliefs of Christianity and Islam, for example, visitors demonstrated a Muslim naming ceremony and a Christian baptism. Assemblies are also used very well to promote spiritual development. Pupils in years 1 and 2 listened in awe as their teacher told them what a special place her garden is, and then showed them saplings, beginning to grow from conkers that squirrels had buried.
28. A clear moral code underpins the school. Staff provide very good role models and parents are pleased that their children are in an environment where 'everyone respects everyone else'. There are school rules and pupils are expected to help draw up a code of conduct appropriate to their own class. Good manners are expected and evident when pupils speak to adults, wait in the lunch queue or speak to each other.
29. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to collaborate and develop their social skills. Year 6 pupils all have a chance to be school prefects, a role that requires them to help younger children throughout the school. A house points system encourages pupils from across the age range to pull together. Classes and year groups are encouraged to work together to achieve community targets set in assembly each Monday. Pupils successfully participate in many team sports. There are good opportunities for pupils in different year groups to work together for example, years 1 and 3 collaborated over 'Rock the Baby', a Christmas production.
30. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to celebrate their own and other cultures and there is a good awareness of the need to provide pupils with a view of a multicultural world. A good range of multicultural books, for example, provides information about the lives of everyday people from other cultures and about foods from around the world. During their time at the school pupils learn about ancient civilizations such as the Greeks and about modern life, for example in their study of St Lucia in geography. Year 4 pupils are sponsoring a child in Senegal, which is raising their awareness of modern life in Africa. Pupils study a good range of music from around the world, including swing, blues and jazz and have taken part in African drumming workshops. In art they paint in the style of a wide range of artists such as Van Gogh and Clarice Cliff as well as printing Aztec patterns and making Aztec headdresses. Visits and visitors also make an important contribution, helping pupils to understand about their own and other cultures. A performance by the Dudley Performing Arts Group, which included music by the Beatles, Vera Lynn and Abba. A successful local black athlete spoke to pupils about his international career. They were so impressed by this, that they organised a sponsored sports event, which has raised thousands of pounds for the charity.

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

31. The high level of care found at the time of the last inspection has been successfully maintained. The school's ethos provides a safe and secure environment where 'pupils come first' and they feel valued and develop self-esteem and respect for others. Their academic and personal support is very good. A strength is the care

with which routines are thought out. For example, because the site is not large enough for all pupils to eat and play at the same time, two age groups spend their break and meal time together. This ensures that neither the dining hall nor the playgrounds ever become too overcrowded or intimidating, particularly for the youngest children. Pupils' views are regularly sought and acted upon and a school council is in the early stages of being established. Parents are very positive about how well the teachers know their children and find the staff very approachable.

32. The head teacher and an assistant head are the designated persons responsible for child protection and she makes sure that all staff are up to date with their training. The building and grounds are regularly checked to ensure that pupils are working in a safe environment and there is good attention to pupils' health care needs, for example with a high number of qualified first aiders. Good links with support agencies within the community ensure that pupils who need it get extra help, for example from the speech therapist and there is a good number of extra adults to help out in lessons.
33. Systems to promote regular attendance are very good. Staff make good use of computerised attendance records to monitor and quickly detect any problems. Procedures to promote good behaviour are also very good. The very high expectations are well supported by rewards and sanctions. Parents are very pleased with the effective strategies the school uses to manage behaviour and pleased with the way that any problems including bullying are dealt with. Pupils are sure that there is very little bullying and aware of what to do if they feel threatened.
34. There are very good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress. Teachers know pupils very well and year leaders regularly collect and monitor records in their year groups. This means they have a very good view of how well the pupils are doing. Clear records are maintained and the information is used very well to track progress and raise attainment. Progress in English, mathematics and science is monitored regularly and the information is used to highlight areas where pupils need to fill gaps in their knowledge or are ready to move on to the next steps in learning. Meticulous records are kept for each pupil in these subjects and used to make reliable forecasts about future attainment to guide the school in raising standards. A diary is kept of all changes that have been made as a result of assessment, for example when moving pupils into different sets for English or mathematics. However, the performance data is not used to track and compare how well various groups of pupils are doing. Assessment information is generally used very well to guide teachers' planning but there are some shortcomings in the way it is used to plan work for the higher attaining pupils in science and in planning work for some children in reception classes.

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

35. Most parents have good views about the school. They are particularly pleased with the good communications between home and the school and the ready access they have to the teachers who are always willing to discuss any issues with them. They feel the school has a good awareness of the needs of working parents, providing a crèche for consultation evenings, which run through to 8.00 pm.
36. Links with parents are very good. The school is eager to work with them and every effort is made to ensure that they are kept fully informed about school life and particularly about the progress their children are making. They are consulted on a regular basis to determine their satisfaction with school procedures and their replies



are analysed and published. Issues raised by parents, for example, their concerns about the broken fencing, have been addressed as quickly as possible. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed about their progress and encouraged to support their learning targets at home.

37. There are three consultation evenings for parents, which are very well attended. Parents appreciate the privacy they are given at these meetings and the time teachers are willing to devote to them. Recently, the oldest pupils have been invited to accompany their parents to these meetings so that they too can get a good view of how well their teacher thinks they are doing and be involved in discussing their targets for improvement. Annual written reports give very good information about progress in English, mathematics and science and share pupils' targets. While some parents expressed misgivings about the computer-generated elements of the reports, these are in fact very well supplemented by detailed personal information individual to each child.
38. Monthly newsletters are well written and help to keep parents informed about school life. The prospectus is informative about school routines and gives parents very good additional information about expectations in relation to behaviour and homework. The governors' annual report gives a good update about recent events but some of the required information, such as the most recent national curriculum test results for schools nationally, is missing.
39. Many parents are very supportive of the work their children do at school and this is helping them to make good progress. Although only a small number of parents are able to help in the school on a regular basis, there is always good support for trips and one off occasions and good attendance at all school functions such as assemblies and productions. Parents are also very supportive of the Link Association, which is very successfully helping to raise extra funds to purchase additional resources for the school by organising the Christmas and summer fairs.

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

40. The school benefits from being very well led and managed. In the last two years the head teacher, working very closely with the governing body and key members of staff, has successfully put in place measures that are reversing the decline in standards at the end of year 6. The school has a very clear sense of purpose and direction. The head teacher rapidly evaluated the needs of the school and set about taking effective action to tackle the key priorities. The emphasis on teamwork ensures that everyone, throughout the school shares the commitment to seek constant improvement to make sure that all pupils receive the very best education.
41. The head teacher has established strong working teams, particularly amongst year group leaders and subject managers and has emphasised the need to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress as they move through the school. The impact of this is leading to significant improvements in the achievements of pupils particularly towards the top of the school in literacy and numeracy. The impact on standards in science for the oldest pupils is not yet evident. There are some weaknesses in the way the reception classes are managed and this is impacting on how well some children achieve. Key members of the leadership team provide good support; the assistant head teachers are particularly instrumental in driving through improvements.
42. Another key factor in bringing about improvements is the careful collection of performance data. This enables the progress of individual pupils to be carefully tracked as they move through the school. As a result pupils are targeted for extra

support if necessary or in some cases moved between different teaching groups in literacy and numeracy. However, currently the information is not used to track and analyse the relative performance of all the different groups of pupils.

43. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. Careful records are maintained so that their progress can be assessed and parents are kept well informed of their child's progress and of any changes to their needs.
44. The changes in staffing over the last two years have been very well managed. New staff are effectively introduced to the school routines and those new to the profession are given plenty of help and support in successfully meeting the challenges of their first year of teaching.
45. The governing body is a very effective group. Governors are very knowledgeable about the school and have a firm grasp of the priorities for improvement. They take their responsibilities very seriously, are well organised and take full advantage of training opportunities to remain up to date with new requirements.
46. There are robust procedures to ensure good financial management. The school has very successfully moved from a deficit budget to creating a small contingency fund. This has been done by judicious management of the resources and the determination of the governing body and head teacher to make difficult management decisions.
47. The forthcoming building programme addresses the unsatisfactory nature of some of the accommodation. The school is adequately resourced and there is a sufficient number of appropriately qualified staff.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

To continue the present trend of improvement the governing body, working closely with the head teacher should:

### **Improve the standards in numeracy and writing attained by children in reception by;**

- Making sure that all children are taught some mathematics each day
- Making more use of the teaching methods in the national strategies for literacy and numeracy
- Making better use of the assessment information to raise expectations of what average and higher attaining children might achieve

### **Improve the standards in science for eleven year olds by;**

- Providing a more consistent quality of teaching
- Giving more opportunities for pupils to develop and use practical scientific skills

Minor issues

Use the good assessment information to track and compare the achievement of different groups of pupils as they move through the school.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 104 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 21  |

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

|            | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number     | 1         | 29        | 38   | 32           | 3              | 0    | 0         |
| Percentage | 1         | 28        | 37   | 31           | 3              | 0    | 0         |

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

### Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll   | Nursery | YR – Y7 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)      | 0       | 828     |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 0       | 34      |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs   | Nursery | YR – Y7 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs       | 0       | 1       |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 0       | 73      |

| English as an additional language                       | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 35           |

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

### Attendance

| Authorised absence        | %   | Unauthorised absence      | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 4.4 | School data               | 0   |
| National comparative data | 5.4 | National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

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

|  |      |      |       |       |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|  | 2002 | 65   | 55    | 120   |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | Reading | Writing  | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|----------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 63      | 65       | 65          |
|   | Girls    | 54      | 55       | 55          |
|   | Total    | 117     | 120      | 120         |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 98 (93) | 100 (95) | 100 (97)    |
|   | National | 84 (84) | 86 (86)  | 90 (91)     |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 64      | 65          | 62      |
|   | Girls    | 55      | 55          | 55      |
|   | Total    | 119     | 120         | 117     |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 99 (93) | 100 (95)    | 98 (97) |
|   | National | 85 (85) | 89 (89)     | 89 (89) |

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

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

|  |      |      |       |       |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|  | 2002 | 67   | 51    | 118   |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 55      | 58          | 64      |
|   | Girls    | 41      | 39          | 44      |
|   | Total    | 96      | 97          | 108     |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 81 (78) | 82 (66)     | 92 (96) |
|   | National | 85 (85) | 73 (71)     | 86 (87) |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 54      | 57          | 65      |
|   | Girls    | 43      | 38          | 48      |
|   | Total    | 97      | 95          | 113     |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 82 (83) | 81 (86)     | 96 (94) |
|   | National | 73 (72) | 74 (74)     | 82 (82) |

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

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

| Categories used in the Annual School Census         | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British                                     | 763                  | 6                                 | 3                              |
| White – Irish                                       | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| White – any other White background                  | 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean                   | 13                   | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Black African                     | 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Asian                             | 6                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – any other mixed background                  | 5                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian                     | 7                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani                  | 17                   | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi                | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean                  | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Black or Black British – African                    | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Chinese   | 3                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Any other ethnic group                              | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| No ethnic group recorded                            | 5                    | 0                                 | 0                              |

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

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7**

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 35.3 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 23:1 |
| Average class size                       | 30   |

**Education support staff: YR – Y7**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 19  |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 397 |

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 0 |
| Total number of education support staff  | 0 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week    | 0 |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult           | 0 |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Recruitment of teachers**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years     | 14 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 16 |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)  | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)                           | 1 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year                             | 2002/3    |
|  | £         |
| Total income                               | 1,480,723 |
| Total expenditure                          | 1,417,982 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 1712      |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 109,870   |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 62,741    |

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

### Questionnaire return rate

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 828 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 343 |

### Percentage of responses in each category

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 54             | 41            | 3                | 1                 | 0          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 48             | 49            | 3                | 0                 | 1          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 43             | 53            | 2                | 1                 | 2          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 28             | 55            | 13               | 1                 | 2          |
| The teaching is good.  | 53             | 43            | 3                | 0                 | 1          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 37             | 50            | 11               | 1                 | 1          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 56             | 39            | 3                | 1                 | 1          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 65             | 34            | 1                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 34             | 55            | 9                | 1                 | 2          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 43             | 51            | 3                | 1                 | 2          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 41             | 55            | 2                | 1                 | 1          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 19             | 38            | 22               | 6                 | 15         |

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

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

48. Provision for the youngest children is satisfactory overall; it has many strengths and some weaknesses.
49. The children enjoy a wide range of activities and there are particular strengths in very regular provision for physical and creative play. Very effective liaison between the teachers and the teaching assistants means that all children receive the same provision of care and respect. Children also benefit from good teaching when teaching assistants lead well planned practical activities. Weaknesses in the curriculum concern insufficient teaching of numeracy and an inconsistent approach to the development of writing skills. These weaknesses are also linked to the lack of the use of the good assessment information, which is collected, to match work to children's individual abilities. There is insufficient use of the teaching approaches in the numeracy and literacy strategies.

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

50. All classes provide a welcoming secure environment, which helps young children to settle quickly. Children respond well to class routines, organise themselves and work independently. For example, they collect suitable clothes and luggage for journeys to be taken in the 'Peter's Airport' creative play area. All children have good relationships with the adults who care for them and with each other. Classes are organised to encourage children to become independent and there are frequent opportunities for children to make choices about what activity they would like to do. The teaching of this area is satisfactory and children meet the goals for this area of learning.

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

51. All classes provide an environment where children can develop their oral skills and the teaching of speaking and listening is satisfactory. Adults use clear speech in discussions and share books regularly. Children enjoy listening to stories and are quick to understand that print has meaning. Reading skills are taught appropriately with a systematic approach to letter, sound and word recognition. Children's progress is carefully recorded. Overall, children are likely to reach above average standards in reading and speaking and listening by the time they enter year 1. Early writing skills are taught systematically but there is not enough account taken of progress made by children. For example, children who can write independently are then asked at times, to do copy writing. The teaching of writing is unsatisfactory and children are not making sufficient progress overall.

### **Mathematical development.**

52. Teaching is unsatisfactory in this area because children are not taught mathematics regularly enough. Their attainment is in line with the goals for this area of learning but too many children do not achieve as much as they should. Focused teaching of mathematics does not occur every day and activities do not take enough account of children's abilities. For example, 'draw the seven items of fruit that Handa was taking to a friend' does not challenge children who clearly have accurate knowledge of numbers well beyond this. This is not so much a mathematical activity as a recall of information. When the teacher draws the class together for focused mathematical



work, there is some good use of number squares, for example, to count in 10's. However, these sessions do not occur on a daily basis in all classes.

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

53. Children are gaining an appropriate understanding of the world they live in through a wide range of activities and satisfactory, sometimes good, teaching. They meet the goals for this area of learning. For example, children talk about what plants need to grow and they plant beans to watch them grow. They explore wet and dry sand and fill different sized containers with water. In their current work, they are looking at journeys and learning about hot air balloons and rockets. Children learn how to make these, learning basic scientific facts by using a hair dryer to help the balloon to rise.

### **Physical development.**

54. Children have good opportunities for physical development. The teaching is good and children reach above expected standards. Every day children use the wheeled vehicles and have good opportunities to work with small apparatus to help them for example, to aim, throw and bounce balls. Additionally, children regularly use the indoor hall to experience such activities as balancing and climbing. During planned activities, children construct and build with a wide range of construction apparatus. A weakness in the outside play provision is the lack of clear markings on the playground to help children to extend their play; for example, by following a winding road round the playground.

### **Creative development.**

55. This is a strength of the provision in the reception classes and the teaching is good. The creative role play areas are very carefully thought out and resourced. The current airport has a large passenger base with controls and seating and a reception area. Destinations are chosen from brochures and clothes are packed and organised by the children in their play. Children were observed playing well co-operatively, using all the good resources to play out imaginative situations and reaching above average standards.

## **ENGLISH**

56. Attainment in year 2 is well above average; in year 6 it is above average. Across the school, pupils achieve well.

57. Standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection. Most notably, a very high proportion of pupils is doing better than expected for their ages. In year 2 in writing, this represents a surge in the rising trend seen over several years. In year 6 it reflects a very good recovery from a period of unsatisfactory achievement. High standards in years 3 and 5 indicate that the school has now put itself in a strong position to continue to reach or exceed its own challenging targets. Boys and girls do equally well and pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the very good support they receive.

58. These higher standards stem from better planning of the curriculum, more effective teaching and learning and improved systems for tracking and promoting each pupil's progress. The school now does most things well in English, but the factor that most decisively drives current improvement is the high quality of leadership and management. The joint co-ordinators have been particularly effective in working with

the different year group teams to build more rigorous whole school systems, both for identifying and tackling whatever is not as good as it could be and for strengthening pupils' understanding and control of their own learning.

59. Standards in speaking and listening are high throughout the school. Almost all pupils respond well to their teachers' expectations for attentiveness, courtesy and mutual support. They speak well when presenting their work formally to others. They also respond purposefully and productively to the many good opportunities they are given to talk intensely in small groups. Used in this way, pupils' discussion skills support their learning as readers and writers. The quality of such talk owes much to the school's push for more varied learning styles. However, the whole-class discussions that follow such activities, often at the end of lessons, vary in quality. Some teachers lack the skill to draw all pupils into the talk and to use their ideas to reach a coherent understanding of what has been learned.
60. Standards in reading are high. In year 2, lower attainers tackle unfamiliar words by using a secure basic knowledge of letters and sounds. Better readers use a range of skills to read quite advanced texts fluently and interpret the main qualities of a character. By year 6, most pupils detect different layers of meaning in a story text. They know how to find specific information in a library and record it in note form. Higher attaining pupils explain how to reorganise such information for a particular purpose and they quickly perceive how, in an unfamiliar story opening, the author's use of language changes the way the reader sees the character.
61. Standards in writing are rising. They are well above average in year 2 and above average in year 6. The basic skills of spelling, punctuation and sentence structure are consistently well taught and all pupils achieve well in these respects. Time set aside for 'quality writing' is well used. Teachers consistently provide high quality materials as models for writing, and teach pupils to use their reading skills so that they understand the features of the kind of text they are asked to write. Pupils are also encouraged to read each other's work critically and suggest how it could be better. Although the quality of teachers' marking is very inconsistent across the school, most teachers are responsive readers and write full and helpful comments on pupils' work. As a result, pupils write in a motivated and disciplined way, fitting style and structure to a widening range of purposes. By year 6, the written work of higher attaining pupils has impressive assurance, length and variety. They write poems, imaginative stories and factual accounts with equal control. Tasks are sometimes ambitiously extended. For instance, all pupils in year 6 were writing quest stories in five chapters and were analysing and imitating published models to learn the relevant skills. Handwriting is a relative weakness. The development of a fluent, joined style is inconsistent, as is the standard of presentation.
62. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is much better than at the time of the last inspection, particularly in years 3 to 6, where almost half the lessons seen were very good. Common and significant strengths in teaching are:
- The effectiveness of teamwork between the teachers and support staff who teach the different classes in each year group.
  - All teachers set a good tone for learning and promote happy working relationships and confidence. Their open, receptive approach encourages critical discussion.
  - Teachers' good planning makes learning interesting, coherent and demanding.
  - Teachers use assessment information well to match work to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils understand how to improve their own work.

These qualities are not yet fully consistent across the school. At times, learning falters because lessons do not develop coherently, or because higher attaining pupils are not effectively challenged, or because teachers talk too much and give pupils more information and guidance that they can use.

## **MATHEMATICS**

63. Standards of seven year olds are well above the national average. This represents very good achievement and is due to good teaching. Pupils currently in year 6, have made particularly good progress to attain above average standards. Some higher attaining year 6 pupils have made very good progress. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.
64. High and average attaining seven year olds easily order quite large numbers. Pupils have a very good understanding of thousands, hundreds, tens and units. They use their knowledge of number facts and processes to solve number problems. Higher attaining pupils confidently explain how they arrive at their answers. Lower attaining pupils have a good grasp of number facts up to ten. Some still have poor recall of the two times table and they do not use mental calculation strategies confidently. They can count on and back to thirty. They have a developing understanding of how to measure liquids but struggle to estimate how many cupfuls of water will be required to fill a litre container.
65. Eleven year olds have a good grasp of basic number operations and the high attaining pupils have rapid recall of their tables. High attaining pupils make rapid mental calculations and they quickly recall a range of mathematical facts. They think logically as they solve complex mathematical problems. Average attaining pupils successfully use a number of strategies to multiply and divide large numbers by two digit numbers. They quickly decide which mathematical processes to use in order to solve number problems. Lower attaining pupils apply the four rules when handling numbers up to a hundred but they are not completely secure in their recall of tables. A significant number of these pupils are unsure of the relationship between percentages and fractions. The work of pupils in years 3 to 5 is often well above average. The emphasis on teaching calculation strategies is paying off and older pupils confidently explain how they work things out. For example, in one very good lesson in year 6 higher attaining pupils articulated clearly how they solved quite complex mathematical problems. Pupils respond very well to their teachers. Attitudes to work are very good.
66. The great majority of teaching is good or very good. Strong features of teaching are;-
- Careful planning of work that meets the learning needs of all pupils
  - The good pace at which lessons generally move along
  - The very good use of resources to help pupils learn.
67. From year 2 onwards pupils with similar levels of attainment are taught together. This narrows the range of attainment levels in these teaching groups making planning for the needs of all pupils a less demanding task. These arrangements, and the successful implementation of the national strategy for teaching numeracy, contribute to the good and sometimes very good progress pupils are now making.

68. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. There are very good systems for getting to know how well pupils are doing and progress is checked regularly and carefully recorded. In some years pupils whose progress gives cause for concern receive teaching in 'booster classes,' being given work especially planned to help them make up 'lost ground'. These classes are successfully helping pupils to consolidate previous learning and start moving forward again. Teachers use homework effectively to reinforce learning. The subject is well managed and organised. There is a very clear approach to planning and teaching mathematics that is bringing good consistency to teaching and is fostering a shared determination to keep raising standards.

## **SCIENCE**

69. Standards attained by seven year olds are above average. Eleven year olds attain standards that, overall, are broadly average. Throughout the school pupils show a good base of knowledge in all areas but their skills in investigative aspects of the subject are not at such a good level. Higher attainers, in particular, are not challenged sufficiently to reach the levels of which they are capable. Standards in year 6 have not been maintained at the same level as they were found to be in the last inspection, but there indications of improvement in year groups lower down the school.

70. By the end of year 2 pupils show good understanding of the impact of forces and the properties of some common materials. They are aware of the types of food needed for a healthy diet and know the names of the parts of a plant. They have good observational skills and describe experiments but rarely explain why things occur. Pupils' good awareness of all areas of study is built on as they move through the school. By the end of year 6, the vast majority of pupils have good factual knowledge, particularly of life and living processes and the causes of change. They produce accurate descriptions of their observations, make predictions and draw conclusions from what they have observed. However, these rarely include a general hypothesis or a clear focus on a scientific principle. There are indications of improving standards in years 4 and 5, where work shows a stronger focus on experimentation and investigation.

71. Throughout the school pupils' work is generally well presented. They make good use of tables and diagrams to record their findings. Good links are made with learning in mathematics as pupils measure the results of experiments and show these in tables or plot them on graphs. The use of ICT to support learning in science is very limited; the school has rightly identified this as an area for improvement.

72. Teaching is satisfactory overall and some aspects are good. Planning is detailed and helpful in ensuring that pupils in the same year group have a similar range of experiences. However, there is some variation in the quality of the 'same' lesson in different classes in a year group. All lesson plans include clear objectives to help to focus teaching, but sometimes there are too many to ensure a common focus on understanding of scientific ideas. In the majority of lessons, effective use is made of resources and teachers generally make good use of demonstrations and explanations to introduce new ideas. However, there is scope to make better use of focused questions to extend pupils' scientific thinking and application of knowledge, particularly for higher attainers.

73. The school was without a science co-ordinator during 2001-2. This year, two co-ordinators have worked hard to improve resources and to implement a structured approach to planning. However, they have had no opportunity to monitor lessons to identify some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and to help to improve the overall quality of provision for the subject.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

74. Only one lesson was seen, but scrutiny of work on display and in sketchbooks and portfolios indicates that standards throughout the school are broadly in line with expectations. Some pupils, particularly in years 5 and 6, show good observational skills in their drawings and paintings. It is not possible to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching, but pupils' work and subject planning indicates that it is at least satisfactory. Pupils are offered a broad range of experiences using a variety of media and their skills improve steadily as they move through the school.
75. Pupils in years 1 and 2 make good use of pencils, crayons and paint to convey their ideas and observations. Year 1 pupils made effective use of colour in 'shades of blue', creating backgrounds for their sea pictures. In studies of the work of Van Gogh, year 2 pupils looked closely at background and foreground in order to create their own landscapes with some good detail. In years 3 and 4, pupils begin to make effective use of their sketchbooks to experiment with line and shade and to try out detail and designs for their work. Year 3 pupils have engaged in some interesting work on the environment, sketching buildings and exploring and creating sculpture. Older pupils show good skills in close observation; year 5 pupils made very good use of colour and texture in striking collages illustrating 'Jason and the Golden Fleece'. Year 6 pupils have created a range of objects in the style of Clarice Cliff with good attention to line and colour to create a strong impact. There is a limited range of three-dimensional work, for example, using clay to make tiles and pots; the school has identified this as an area for development.
76. In most year groups, work in art is linked well with other subjects. For example, year 2 have produced detailed drawings of plants in connection with a science topic. Colourful mosaic was used for Aztec masks to support work in history in year 4. Year 5's topic on Kenya has included study of African art. Displays include good observational drawings of artefacts; paintings in the style of a Kenyan artist show a careful study of style and good brushwork to convey the movement of dancers. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

77. Pupils' standards of attainment at the end of years 2 and 6 are average. Throughout the school all pupils are making good progress.
78. Teaching is good. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved since the last inspection and is now good. There is an appropriate emphasis on design and evaluation. For example, before making finger puppets, year 2 pupils looked at examples of previously made puppets. They then successfully designed their own, decided what materials they require and what skills they had to learn in order to

make them. They spent time learning how to sew, cut accurately, twist materials together and fix materials by gluing and using other means. Having completed all these tasks they then commence the making process. During this process they demonstrate sound skills as they cut, sewed and glued materials.

79. Similarly, following research into how Tudor houses are constructed, year 4 pupils made their own models. Pupils used their knowledge of how to make a wooden frame rigid, which they learnt whilst constructing similar models in a previous project. Pupils co-operate well; they cut and marked out wood to make the frames with considerable care and accuracy.
80. Pupils successfully develop a range of skills and gain experience using a variety of tools. They learn to mark, cut, join and assemble accurately. They generate a range of effective ideas and evaluate their designs and models according to their suitability for a given purpose. For example, year 6 made model bridges from their own designs and then tested them to see how effective they were at carrying heavy loads. They designed and made slippers and when the slippers were completed they evaluated them and determined whether they would consider changing the design and making process if they were to make another pair. Throughout the school pupils appropriately develop their knowledge of food technology. For example, year 3 learned to follow a set of simple instructions when making chocolate crispies. By following a given recipe these pupils applied skills and knowledge learned in mathematics lessons as they weighed out the ingredients required. They also learned a set of hygiene rules to follow when handling food.
81. An enthusiastic co-ordinator and management team have worked hard developing the subject. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. Teachers receive good support in planning lessons and they now teach the subject effectively and with confidence.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

82. As at the time of the last inspection standards by the end of years 2 and 6 are in line with expectations and in some aspects above what is often found. Pupils achieve appropriately. By year 2, pupils have a sound knowledge of the local area and use maps and plans competently. For example, they make plans of the classroom and use maps to identify the countries of the British Isles. They know their address and postcode and have investigated land use and buildings on the imaginary island of Struay. Geographical skills of enquiry are a strength in the school. The quality of teaching and learning is benefiting from the efforts to develop a more practical approach to the subject. This involves pupils doing more research and more investigations. In year 1 for example, pupils researched into the weather in Norway and Spain in order to pack suitable clothes for 'Barnaby Bear'. In year 4, pupils were investigating 'What we like to do in our own time' and in year 6, pupils were undertaking an impact study on the local environment of five different proposals to the planning department. Skills of enquiry are above average by the end of year 6.
83. Teaching is good and pupils are making good progress. The practical and investigative approach that has been adopted is impacting on standards. Pupils are interested, enthusiastic and independent. The management of pupils is good and a good range of effective teaching methods are used, for example group and paired discussion, research and pupil presentations. This was seen in a good lesson where a group of pupils researched their own leisure and recreation activities, compiled tally

charts and graphs and then presented information succinctly from their own conclusions, as a poster or as an oral presentation.

84. The subject leader is relatively new to the post. She provides sound leadership. She has built up some very good medium term planning for geography and this will be used to put in place a detailed programme of work.

## **HISTORY**

85. Standards are in line with expectations. The school has maintained provision at a satisfactory level since the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently satisfactory and often good. It is benefiting from the development of more adventurous approaches and from the good links made with other subjects. For example all pupils develop their understanding of sequencing of events by working with prominently displayed timelines in their classrooms. These timelines are effectively used by teachers and pupils during numeracy, RE, PHSE and literacy lessons. Six year olds have a time line related to the first five years of their life and their families. The older pupils have a timeline depicting events as wide apart as the birth of Jesus, the birth and death of famous artists and the scientific discoveries and other events during the periods the class is studying, for example Victorian Britain.
86. There are good cross curricular links with other subjects. While learning about the Aztecs, year 4 pupils produced some interesting art work. Similarly the reformation of churches in Tudor times is linked with RE and with DT. Year 5 pupils have written an interesting variety of views on what schooling and education was like during Victorian times in Amblecote and how that has changed over the years. Year 6 pupils are quite knowledgeable about life in Britain since the 1930s. They expressed their perceptions of the life and times during that period through their art and design work resulting in some very colourful and interesting interactive displays. Pupils are encouraged to learn about changes over time by looking at toys, artefacts, books, household utensils, tools and a variety of other familiar and unfamiliar materials.
87. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the teaching of history. During a very good lesson year 4 pupils engaged in an excellent discussion which included facts and figures about the battle of Bosworth, the Tudor Rose, Henry VIII and his wives and comparisons between the town and country life in the 1490s and now. Pupils also have opportunities to extend their literacy skills. Whilst watching a video about the Tudors, they made brief but relevant notes that were the basis of more extended writing. Using atlases and other reference books with primary and secondary sources they successfully build on what they know and what they can already do. This approach to teaching history added excitement and a sense of purpose in pupils' learning.
88. The subject is satisfactorily managed by a relatively new co-ordinator. Teachers make good use of a range of resources including videos and fictional stories that help to bring the subject alive.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

89. There has been good progress since the last inspection in ensuring that ICT makes a bigger impact across a range of subjects. This is largely due to the increased confidence of staff in using ICT and to the improved resourcing.

90. Both seven and eleven year olds attain standards that are broadly in line with what is expected. In some aspects of the subject, particularly word processing and the use of multi-media programs to present information, some work is above standards usually found. Not enough teaching in years 1 and 2 was seen to make a judgment about the overall quality. The teaching in years 3 to 6 is satisfactory and occasionally good. The school makes particularly good use of teaching assistants who successfully take a major responsibility for instructing pupils.
91. Pupils in year 1 successfully extend their literacy skills in using word processing to present poems and combine text and graphics. They produce some good poems that make use of a range of font sizes to emphasise particular aspects of the poem, so that for instance, words in larger fonts are spoken louder than those with a smaller font. They also add text to the pictures they create using an art program. year 2 pupils refine their skills, particularly those involving word processing through creating lists of instructions, for instance what you need for a PE lesson. They also get better in ICT skills by making more detailed repeat patterns using the art program.
92. As pupils move through years 3 to 6 ICT skills are used in subjects such as English, history and geography. Good teaching provides opportunities for pupils to explore alliteration using word processing. In year 4 some very good work was done on producing small books for younger children. These were very well designed with carefully chosen illustrations and texts. Older pupil use PowerPoint to present information in attractive and eye-catching fashion. One particular presentation, about the history of popular music was well put together and captured the mood with sophisticated captions such 'the Sex Pistols did not try to charm their audience'; some of this work is of a standard that is above that usually found.
93. The subject is managed effectively. A team of teachers makes sure that colleagues are well supported with a well planned programme of work and are assiduous in providing appropriate training opportunities for all staff. They make good use of resources and sensibly use a range of expertise to ensure that lessons are successful.

## **MUSIC**

94. Attainment is similar to that previously reported. By the end of year 2, pupils attain the standards expected for their age; pupils in year 6 exceed expected standards. Achievement is good, particularly in singing. The school has done well to maintain these standards through a period when its priorities have not favoured music. This is largely because of the dedication and inspirational quality of a group of teachers who are accomplished musicians and who effectively lead work in music and set the standard across the school. It is also because a well-planned curriculum, widened by two large and very active choirs and a good range of visits, ensures that pupils experience a wide variety of music from different traditions and cultures. Good links with subjects such as English, science and history reinforce pupils' learning.
95. Pupils in year 2 showed a sound understanding of tempo, pitch and dynamics as they choose and used tuned and untuned instruments to match sounds to different



episodes in 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. For example, in groups, they increased the intensity or loudness of sounds to accompany the telling of Jack climbing the beanstalk or the Giant striding into his castle.

96. Pupils in years 3 to 6 make good progress in singing. The upper and lower junior choirs are very popular and very well taught. Their good standard of performance enriches assemblies and represents the school well at various music festivals in the West Midlands. The oldest pupils sing in parts, hold their line skilfully and control their voices well to bring out changes in emotional quality. Instrumental skills are at the expected level. Listening skills are well developed and pupils have a good musical vocabulary with which to evaluate their own work or express their appreciation of a range of recorded music.
97. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and very good lessons were seen in most years. Often teachers' personal pleasure and skill in performance bring pace, variety, zest and challenge to learning. An outstanding lesson with a year 6 class engaged all pupils fully in different learning styles. The lesson introduced pupils to Blues music. By the end of the lesson, they had learned: to understand the technical features of Twelve-Bar Blues; to play the correct chord pattern on a keyboard and fit it to the pulse; to compose and perform their own 'Hard SATS'<sup>2</sup> number, based on the 'Hard Times' original and to know the historical and cultural roots of the Blues. The quality of this learning was very high because of the quality of the teacher's demonstrations, her infectious confidence to take risks and her skill in making every step clear and achievable as the level of technical challenge rose steeply. Most teachers do not have this degree of confident expertise but those who do lead and support their colleagues effectively. This development of teamwork around a strong core of musical expertise has spread good practice and thereby eased the problem of unequal opportunities that was identified in the previous report.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)**

98. Pupils, both seven and eleven year olds, attain good standards in several areas of physical education. The quality of movement of pupils in year 5 is good. The quality of dance of pupils in years 2 and 4 is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils in year 4 display above average games skills. By the end of year 6 ninety five per cent of pupils can swim 25 metres unaided. In such a large school this represents good achievement. The school continues to make very good provision for pupils in this subject.
99. There is much more consistency in the quality of teaching than at the time of the last inspection. It is now good and sometimes very good. Good lesson planning makes a significant contribution to the good quality of teaching. As a result pupils make good progress. Teachers begin lessons with interesting and effective warm up activities and the focus of most lessons is appropriately on skill development. In a good year 4 games lesson pupils were given opportunities to practise a range of hockey skills including stopping and passing a ball and dribbling a ball. These pupils have good hand eye co-ordination and above average stick handling skills. They are developing good skills because they are encouraged to evaluate their own performance and that of others, given opportunities to practise and advised on what to do to improve. In a very good year 1 lesson pupils were encouraged to start and finish a movement sequence with good shape and form. The teacher demonstrated very good control

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<sup>2</sup> Standard Assessment Tests

and poise. Very good learning took place. The pupils responded well and under his expert guidance, made very good progress in improving their own performance. Pupils are given opportunities to use their skills in appropriate contexts. For example, year 4 pupils move well in dance developing good knowledge of sequences, formations and steps in order to perform traditional country-dances.

100. Teachers generally have high expectations of both pupil behaviour and performance. This results in the overall response of pupils in lessons being at least good and often very good. Pupils work hard reacting enthusiastically to teachers' instructions and commands. They co-operate well in paired and group activities. Pupils are taught the importance of safe practice both indoors and outside and, as a result, they display very good safety awareness in lessons.
101. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic team of teachers effectively led by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. Pupils across the school receive a balanced programme of physical activities. Opportunities to take part in a wide range of extra curricular activities include competitive team games against teams from other schools. A range of clubs meets after school. These include dance, football, netball, tennis, cricket, basketball and cross-country running. They are all well attended. Pupils in year 6 have opportunities to participate in outdoor adventurous activities during a residential visit away. Overall, provision makes a very good contribution to personal development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)**

102. Standards reached by both seven and eleven year olds are very good. The main focus is on learning about and learning from Christian teachings as set out in the locally agreed syllabus.
103. All pupils show considerable awareness of the principal features of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. They recognise and name the main symbols of these world religions. Seven year old pupils name the artefacts which a Muslim visitor brought with her. They speak confidently about Halaal and Kosher meat. They know what Muslims and Jews are not allowed to eat and remember that Judaism has hundreds of laws. They accurately describe what is involved in celebrating the Jewish Sabbath with a special candle lit meal on Friday evenings using the correct terminology like challah or braided bread. One pupil described the Sabbath as 'the glue that keeps the Jews together' and another explained that 'you are not supposed to do any work but you can have a great time playing games with the whole family together'.
104. Year 6 pupils said they enjoyed learning about the main beliefs of Judaism, Islam and Christianity "...because it helps us to respect them". They name the special places of worship, the holy books like the Torah, the Qur'an and the Bible and the main festivals such as Christmas, Hanukah, Easter, Diwali, Holi, Eid and Thanksgiving. They are very familiar with the stories of Jesus and accurately retell the parable of the Good Samaritan using appropriate terminology. They point out the moral of the story in terms of the consequences of "...judging the book by its cover". Several of them said they wished they had learned more about other religions because it helps them "...to understand how people believe in different things and yet have so much in common".
105. The quality of teaching is generally good or very good. The revised approach since the last inspection is helping teachers to emphasise 'learning about' and 'learning

from' the rich diversity of faiths. Teachers with a specialist interest in RE are encouraged to team teach with colleagues in order to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils are asked probing questions to reflect on religious ideas of their own whilst learning about other faiths. During a very good lesson in year 6, non-Muslim pupils were inspired into exploring their own feelings and emotions and expressing their opinions having watched a video on the Hajj. "You might get lost or separated in that crowd" said one pupil..."You might burst out in tears of joy" said another..."feel a rollercoaster of emotions or say to yourself, I can't believe I am finally here". Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to reflect upon, think about and say how they might feel. Pupils take great pride in describing how they produced a tape-recording of their Christian raps, how they wrote these using their computers and how they recited them during an assembly.

106. The very experienced co-ordinator has provided a very good revised policy and planning documents which offer clear direction and practical support for teachers across the school. An action plan includes a review of the teaching and learning resources. This together with a well thought out monitoring and tracking policy linked to the agreed syllabus and related to key learning objectives, is likely to have a further positive impact on the quality of learning and pupils' achievement.

