

INSPECTION REPORT

The Straits Primary School

Lower Gornal

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103827

Headteacher: Mr A Slack

Reporting inspector: Mrs Christine Field
9479

Dates of inspection: 22 – 25 January 2001

Inspection number: 185644

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Longfellow Road
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs L Downing

Date of previous inspection: July 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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9479	Mrs C A Field	Registered inspector		The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
				The school's results and pupils' achievements
				Teaching and learning
				Leadership and management
				Key Issues for action
10965	Mrs P Edwards	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
				Partnership with parents and carers
				Pupils' welfare, health and safety
22182	Ms F Robinson	Team inspector	English	
			History	
			Music	
20007	Mr T Neat	Team inspector	Equal Opportunities	
			Information and communication technology	
			Science	
			Geography	
			Physical education	
1189	Mrs S Brown	Team inspector	Provision for children in the Foundation Stage	
			Art and design	
			Design and technology	
18346	Mr R Bristow	Team Inspector	Mathematics	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
			Religious education	
			Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in Lower Gornal, a community situated on the edge of the Dudley urban area. There are 273 pupils on roll: 133 boys and 140 girls aged between four and eleven years. Pupils' attainment on entry into reception is above average. Slightly over two per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is low compared to the national average. No pupils have home languages other than English. A below average proportion of pupils has special educational needs. Three of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs and this is about average. The school aims for each person to seek the highest possible standards within an environment that is a focal point for the community and enables pupils to grow educationally, spiritually, morally, socially and aesthetically.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is very effective in providing a good quality of education for all its pupils. The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership that is taking the school forward. There is an excellent team spirit amongst staff, and very good relationships that underpin the successful and speedy improvements being made. The very good ethos is promoting a *can do* culture that encourages everyone in school to work together, to *go for gold*, and achieve higher and higher standards. The quality of teaching is good. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. Attendance and punctuality are very good and this enthusiasm for school contributes to pupils' effective learning. The school is successfully meeting its aims, and pupils are well prepared for future citizenship because of the good overall attention given to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school promotes good links with parents and the majority play a beneficial role in supporting their children's education. The school gives satisfactory but improving value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve very good standards in mathematics and writing at Key Stage 2.
- Good teaching leads to pupils achieving well throughout the school in English, history and music, and as a result, the standards they attain are above average.
- The headteacher gives excellent direction to the work of the school, has inspired and motivated staff who share his determination to press ahead with raising standards.
- Good quality provision is made for pupils with special educational needs who make good progress against their individual targets.
- Good provision is made for children in the Foundation Stage who benefit enormously from the very effective extended programme of induction that supports their successful start to school.

What could be improved

- The pace in some lessons and level of work demanded of higher attaining pupils particularly at Key Stage 1 lacks challenge, and this is limiting their achievements.
- Assessment procedures in science, information and communication technology, religious education and most foundation subjects are not sufficient to inform curriculum planning effectively, or to accurately target work to support pupils' next steps in learning.

The school has many more strengths than weaknesses though the areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Her Majesty's Inspectors took the school out of special measures in February 1999. The school has made good progress in tackling the identified weaknesses so that all are least satisfactory now. The school development plan has been refined and is being used successfully by senior managers for guiding the school forward. Teaching quality has improved considerably. The head and deputy have systematically monitored the quality of teaching, provided effective feedback to individuals and supported improvement through a very good programme of training. There is scope for other managers to become more regularly involved in this monitoring work. Good provision is now made for pupils' cultural development. There is good use made of the library and information and communication technology (ICT) suite. Behaviour in the playground reported as *too boisterous* in 1999 is now of good quality due to the good attention given to promoting playground games. Strengths identified in the previous report have been built upon. Standards are rising though they continue to be top of the school's agenda for action as there is potential for them to compare more favourably with similar schools. The school is well placed to sustain its good rate of improvement and has set realistic targets to improve performance in English and mathematics results between now and 2002, although targets should be more challenging to reflect the school's ambition.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests (SATs).

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	C	E	B	D	Well above average A
Mathematics	B	E	D	E	Above average B
Science	C	E	C	E	Average C
					Below average D
					Well below average E

Similar schools are those with up to 8% of pupils eligible for free school meals

Results have been improving and last year the school's improved performance was recognised by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in his annual report. Results in the Key Stage 2 SATs last year were above average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science. When compared to similar schools results were well below average overall. The school's data shows that an above average proportion of pupils achieved the average level 4 but that a smaller proportion of pupils than seen in similar schools achieved the higher levels. Raising standards in English and mathematics is the school's number one priority and a range of strategies have been established to promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills to the best level. Inspection findings indicate that the school's strategies are proving effective, more so in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1. Inspectors judge that standards in English are above average at the end of both key stages. Writing standards are very good at Key Stage 2. Standards in mathematics are well above average at Key Stage 2 and average at Key Stage 1. Standards in science are average at both key stages. The good use of assessment data to inform target setting in English and mathematics is not yet happening in other subjects and this is a key area for attention. Standards in ICT, religious education, art and design, design and technology, geography and physical education are at the level expected for seven and eleven-year-olds. Standards are good in history and music throughout the school. The school has set realistic targets and is making good

progress towards achieving them. Targets are not sufficiently challenging to reflect the school's ambition to be top of its benchmark group.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils work with keen interest and good levels of attention. They enjoy their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in class and at lunchtime and breaks. Pupils know what behaviour is expected of them and respond very positively.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships are very good and support positively pupils' progress and achievements. In some lessons the opportunities for pupils to take initiative and find out things for themselves are limited.
Attendance	Very good. The school has improved the level of attendance dramatically since its previous inspection.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

Aged up to five years refers to the Foundation Stage

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

Teaching is good throughout the school. This is a significant improvement since the school was last inspected. Teachers have yet to share and exchange the very best of the practice found in school.

Of the 85 lessons observed during this inspection, 28 per cent were satisfactory, 41 per cent were good, 27 per cent were very good and two per cent excellent. One per cent (one lesson) was unsatisfactory because the pupils did not make sufficient progress due to shortcomings in the way in which the lesson was taught. Teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is good and this enables them to make a confident start to their education. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and make good progress against their individual targets. There is consistently very good teaching of basic skills that enables pupils to develop their speaking, listening, reading and numeracy skills to good levels. The quality of pupils' writing at the end of Year 6 is very good. The very best lessons went at a cracking pace and teachers showed great skill in questioning pupils to tease out what they knew and through the use of challenging follow-on questions deepened pupils' thinking skills, knowledge and understanding. Teachers in most of the junior classes constantly demand, and receive, more from their pupils. The levels of challenge and pace at which pupils learn in infant-stage classes is not as demanding. The setting arrangements in Years 3 to 6 are working well and are enabling teachers to focus with good clarity on individual learning needs. Assessment and target setting are used well in English and mathematics to drive the pace of learning but less so in other subjects. Good specialist teaching in music leads to high standards of performance and good achievement throughout the school. Teachers enjoy teaching history and their enthusiasm is

infectious; pupils make good progress in lessons as a result. Worthwhile experiences in all other subjects ensures that pupils make at least satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad, well-balanced and enriched by a very good programme of extra-curricular activities. Shortcomings in the outdoor provision for the Foundation Stage have yet to be resolved.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school goes to great trouble to make sure that all pupils have effective opportunities to learn successfully.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good. The school enables pupils to grow up as thoroughly good young people, well equipped to take their place in a diverse world. The provision for their social development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The team of adults work together to provide a caring community. Assessment procedures and the use of assessment to inform planning are inconsistent. There has been no recent training on child protection matters.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good. Parents receive regular information about life at school. Some 20 parents give much valued support as helpers in school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher gives excellent leadership to the school and has ensured that key managers and staff share the commitment to improved standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors have clear insights into the work of the school and know well its strengths and shortcomings. They are a critical friend of the school and apply the principles of best value effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The headteacher makes good use of the data collected on pupils' progress to raise standards in areas of weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Good. All forms of resources, including finance are used well for the benefit of the pupils. There is some under-use of computers in classrooms.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and are making good progress. • Behaviour is good and pupils are helped to become mature and responsible. • Teaching is good and there are high expectations. • The school is approachable. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents would like to know more about how well their children are doing at school. • Some parents have concerns about homework.
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The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. Homework practice is inconsistent and this requires attention. The school provides parents with good quality information about curriculum topics and the required information about their children's progress. More information in the first two terms about pupils' progress in all subjects would be a useful addition.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The previous inspection, nearly two years ago, identified weaknesses in standards by the end of Key Stage 2. Results in the National Curriculum tests (known by parents as the SATs) have been improving and last year the school's improved performance was recognised by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in his annual report. The school has continued to give priority to raising standards in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 and standards are better than they were, though there is still room for improvement. Older pupils have not had the same consistently good quality education that is now in place throughout the school. The school has identified very clearly that results in 2003 should reflect the much improved education that pupils have received since the time it was withdrawn from special measures.
2. Pupils now learn successfully in all subjects, and are making good progress in English, history and music. The impact of good leadership, significantly improved teaching, a much better planned curriculum and the setting arrangements at Key Stage 2 are key reasons why standards are lifting. Nevertheless, standards are not yet high enough. The school is aware of this and through its action plan has set out to increase the proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels. A good range of strategies has been developed that are proving successful at Key Stage 2. For example, setting arrangements are enabling teachers to set work that expects higher-attaining pupils to learn at faster rates than they might if taught as a whole class. The grouping by ability also means that there is good support for lower-attaining pupils who can spend appropriate time consolidating their knowledge securely before moving on to the next planned activity. The school has set realistic targets for the next two years that it is currently on track to meet. These could be more challenging to reflect the school's declared ambition to be the top of its benchmark group.
3. The Early Years Co-ordinator working in the Foundation Stage visits all children at home before they start school, and has set up a very effective extended programme of induction with parents. This is aimed at assisting each child to develop the necessary skills in literacy, numeracy and supporting levels of confidence so that they are able to take full advantage of the opportunities they have in reception classes. When children under five years of age join the school their attainment is above average but covers a wide range. The benefit of the induction programme is reflected in the school's assessment data that shows value being added to the children's levels of skill at this stage. The children are well taught in the two reception classes and are given good experiences that enable them to make good, and often very good, progress in language, literacy and communication, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative, physical and personal and social development. By the time they are five years of age most are working at above average levels.
4. Results in the Key Stage 1 SATs last year were above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Over 90 per cent of pupils reached level 2 or above. Fewer pupils than seen nationally achieved the higher level 3 in science and mathematics. Results in the Key Stage 2 SATs last year were above average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science. When compared to similar schools results were well below average overall. These results were not unexpected and the majority of pupils achieved what was expected based on their prior attainment. The school's data shows that an above average proportion of pupils achieved the average level 4 but that a smaller proportion of pupils than seen in similar schools achieved the higher levels. There was no significant variation between the achievement of boys and girls.

5. Findings from inspection show a more positive picture than SATs results suggest at Key Stage 2. Inspectors judge that standards in English are above average at the end of both key stages. Standards in mathematics are well above average at Key Stage 2 and average at Key Stage 1. Standards in science are average at both key stages.
6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially in developing literacy skills, though very few have numeracy skills identified in their individual education plans. Some of them make very good progress in literacy and achieve well when their prior attainment is taken account of. This is because the gains they make in learning are closely monitored and recorded. This information is effectively used to assess progress towards existing targets and to set new ones. Individual education plans are written clearly and all staff are aware of what is in them; this ensures that work is always at the right level of challenge. These good rates of progress are seen in both academic work and behaviour.
7. The school has identified potentially higher-attaining pupils and alerted all teachers to provide extra challenge for them in all subjects. These pupils are doing well enough because of the school's desire to treat everyone as important and in so doing are responsive to individual needs. The work set for such pupils is not always demanding enough however and this is one aspect of provision that requires more focus if the potential of all pupils is to be realised fully and standards are to be at the highest level.
8. Pupils of all ages have good skills in speaking and listening and in reading. The range and quality of writing throughout the school is good and by the end of Key Stage 2 is very good.
9. This is due to the school's concerted and determined efforts over the past year to make improvements. This is one aspect of practice where high achievement is being promoted well. Pupils have good command of grammar and punctuation which they use well in the extended creative pieces of work. In a Year 3 top set English lesson one pupil wrote, "*It is a frost-bitten January morning. The bitter wind is blowing. I look out of my window, I can just see a weak sun shining in the dull dark sky....*". Teachers share their expectations of what is required for higher levels of written work and older pupils are very aware of what they need to do to reach these in their work. This strategy is having a very positive impact on raising standards in English. Standards of handwriting are good. Pupils are awarded the use of a pen in Year 3 to replace their pencil but only when their writing is joined as it should be, neat and well presented.
10. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a good impact on both teaching and learning throughout the school. For example, in the first part of each numeracy hour the majority of pupils of all ages work quickly and accurately as they develop problem solving skills at a good rate. Setting arrangements in mathematics are proving particularly effective in Years 3 to 6. A significant proportion of pupils is achieving very good standards for their age. The school is usefully providing extra support to boost the achievement of some 12 pupils in Year 6 who with extra help are predicted to attain a level 4 in the SATs.
11. Following analysis of the findings of a monitoring programme, the school has adapted the length of numeracy sessions at Key Stage 1 to forty-five minutes from sixty. Inspection observations gave a mixed picture on the effectiveness of this strategy. For example, in one lesson looking at two and three-digit numbers in Year 2 the first part of the lesson was successful in developing pupils' mental problem-solving skills using numbers up to 20. The group activities set up with well-matched tasks for the range of pupils in the class were not as successful as too little time was available for pupils, especially higher-attainers working

independently, to extend their knowledge and understanding of working with bigger numbers. In the plenary session the teacher, in recognising this shortcoming, usefully set unfinished work as homework. Targets set for the current Year 2 predict that in mathematics most will achieve the average level 2 but only a small minority will achieve the higher level. Inspection findings suggest that these targets are not sufficiently demanding and that more could be expected of the higher-attaining mathematicians in this year group.

12. Standards in science are average at both key stages. Teachers provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to choose their own resources, organise their work and to discuss what they observe. This gives pupils good quality experiences to 'learn by doing'. The level of pupils' basic scientific general knowledge is average though pupils have good command of scientific vocabulary in oral and written pieces. In some lessons, pupils are given too much direction in their report writing and this limits the chances for pupils to initiate and develop their own recording formats. Progress in science is satisfactory overall. The school does not target individual pupil's expected achievement in science in the close detail it gives to English and mathematics, and this is a missed opportunity.
13. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), religious education, art and design, design and technology, geography and physical education are at the level expected for seven and eleven-year-olds. Standards are good in history and music throughout the school. Good use is being made of the ICT suite by pupils who are given specific time each week to develop their ICT competencies. Too little planned use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning when they are in classrooms and this requires review. A success in provision across the curriculum has been the drive to promote practical aspects in subjects. Pupils are being given plenty of opportunity to 'have a go' at organising appropriate aspects of their studies, and this has led to most developing confident attitudes and a willingness to find things out without fear of failure. This coupled with the very good relationships in school is leading to pupils learning enthusiastically and with increasingly good results.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The school is calm and orderly and places children at its centre. This is readily demonstrated by the smiling faces of the school council captured in the photographic display in the main hall. Parents appreciate the ways in which the school fosters pupils' sense of social responsibility and maturity. Strengths regarding pupils' attitudes and behaviour reported at the time of the previous inspection have all been sustained. Playground behaviour is no longer boisterous as reported two years ago. The quality of play is good, and supported by the games in use that members of the school council recommended should be purchased.
15. Children in the Foundation Stage show very good attitudes to work. They work purposefully and with good levels of concentration at the many stimulating tasks set for them. The children behave sensibly and most are very mature for their age. This is in part due to the very good programme of induction that begins before the children start school. This helps them develop their personal and social skills to a good level so that they can take full advantage of the good learning opportunities.
16. Throughout the school pupils show enjoyment of their work and are very eager to do their best, as seen in a Year 2 lesson where pupils were keen to share their experiences when constructing circuits. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, listen attentively to their teachers, take a pride in their work and show a ready willingness to complete the tasks they have been set. They work well together in groups and as individuals.

17. Most pupils display very good behaviour in lessons, they are ready to learn and show respect for classroom routines. They demonstrate good self-discipline and are aware of how their behaviour can affect others. Pupils' behaviour at break and lunchtimes in the playground and around the school is very good. They play with care and consideration for others. No incidents of oppressive behaviour were observed during the inspection. There were no exclusions during the last reporting year. Most parents are happy with the school's expectations for behaviour.
18. The pupils show respect for each others' property and for the environment, as shown by the lack of litter and vandalism in the school. Relationships are very good, there is a very effective rapport between pupils and all adults working in the school which contributes well to pupils' learning and growing maturity.
19. There is good provision for personal development in the school. Pupils respond positively to any opportunity they are given to help with the smooth running of the school, for instance as prefects, helping in the playground at lunchtimes, serving as members of the school council and acting as door monitors. However there are limited opportunities for pupils to display initiative and take responsibility for their own learning in some lessons.
20. Pupils are eager to attend school and enthusiastically await the announcement of the class with the best weekly attendance during the celebration assembly. Rates of attendance are very good. Punctuality is very good and this enthusiasm for school contributes to pupils' learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. Teaching is much improved since the time of the previous inspection. The headteacher and deputy have undertaken systematic and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning, the findings of which have been shared with teachers and have been used to good effect in planning for improvement. A good programme of staff training is proving beneficial to supporting professional and personal development. For example weaknesses identified in subject knowledge such as design and technology have all been attended to. Teachers are confident to teach all of these subjects now, and the planning in place to support lessons is thorough, and gives good coverage to all the required elements.
22. The school has given a good push to setting and sharing targets between staff and pupils aimed at raising achievement in English and mathematics and this approach is helping boost standards. There is potential however, for creating time in lessons for pupils to reflect on what they have learned and to have greater involvement in setting personal targets for improvement. Satisfactory provision is made for homework, though a more consistent approach to what is set would improve practice. Some parents would like more information about homework. The next step for management is to enable teachers to share and exchange the ingredients that make up the very best teaching and learning found in school so that overall quality continues to get better and supports the school's good rate of improvement.
23. Teaching is good overall and results in pupils learning effectively, and making good progress in most subjects by the time they leave at eleven years. In the 85 lessons observed during this inspection teaching quality was of satisfactory or better quality in 99 per cent. In 70 per cent of lessons teaching was of good or better quality and in 29 per cent of very good or excellent quality. The teaching of children under five is good, and provides a firm foundation for their later learning. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and enables these pupils to learn successfully. The very good quality of relationships in the school is

successfully underpinning the standards being achieved. Teachers enjoy being with the pupils and vice-versa and this shows.

24. All teachers were observed to teach at least one good lesson. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory and that was a physical education lesson in Key Stage 1 where the style of teaching limited the rates at which pupils were able to develop their catching and throwing skills. The very best teaching observed during the inspection was in two lessons in Year 4 in mathematics and dance. There were common features to both lessons. Firstly, teachers gave very close attention to what pupils were learning and constantly set new challenges that ensured all pupils, no matter what their starting point made very good progress and achieved to a high standard. Both used time targets to assist the cracking pace set and both used questioning very effectively to enable pupils to share their learning with others in class and find out what pupils felt they could do better in the next lesson. In both lessons pupils worked with very high levels of motivation and concentration and were observed to be literally bursting to give of their very best. Excellent relationships in both lessons supported the great enjoyment that both teacher and pupils felt in working together successfully.
25. The teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs is good and these pupils make good progress. Teachers know their pupils well and plan activities that are matched to their needs. Pupils make good progress mainly as a result of well-written individual education plans which contain precise targets for improvement, usually for language and literacy. Support staff give good assistance to pupils who have statements in place and this ensures that they can enjoy the same curriculum as their class-mates.
26. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from good teaching and get off to a secure start in their education as a result. The staff work together well as a team. They understand the needs of young children well and provide a varied range of learning experiences that help children develop a good all round education and get into productive work habits from an early age.
27. Teaching is mostly good or better throughout the school because teachers ensure that pupils have good quality learning opportunities that provide a rich and stimulating diet. They are supported by effective long and medium term planning in most subjects. Teachers generally plan lessons appropriately, maintain a productive and purposeful ethos, manage behaviour well, use a good range of interesting materials and largely structure lessons well to make best use of time, resources and the accommodation. Setting arrangements at Key Stage 2 are proving to be a positive feature in supporting teaching and learning and are having a tangible impact on raising academic standards. Assessment is usefully assisting teachers' planning in English and mathematics to good effect as demonstrated by the improving standards. There is scope for the use of target setting to support improvement in science and ICT specifically and other subjects too. Teachers are making good use of the ICT suite to assist pupils in developing their ICT competencies. They are not currently making effective use of computers in classes. There were problems observed with the arrangements in place for mathematics lessons in Key Stage 1. Occasionally too much work was expected in the time available and this meant unfinished work had to be set as homework for everyone. There is variable use of time targets to aid the pace of individuals' learning when the teacher's attention is elsewhere. Marking is good overall, for example in mathematics books, the teacher sets clear goals for the pupils to aim for. In other subjects however, there is often too much emphasis on praising effort and not enough on targeting improvements. These features are impeding potentially very high quality teaching and learning.

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

28. The quality and range of curriculum opportunities, provided for pupils aged 4 to 11 has improved since the last inspection and is now good both in breadth and balance. The use of time has been evaluated conscientiously in order to ensure that national and school priorities are responded to effectively. The curriculum meets statutory requirements for all National Curriculum subjects and religious education, and has appropriate curriculum policies in place for the implementation of Curriculum 2000, which are reviewed as prioritised in the school improvement plan. The inclusion of numeracy targets and personal targets for all pupils will be an important step in striving to further refine the setting of individual and group targets for all pupils, including those with special talents or gifts.
29. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is planned appropriately on the basis of the recommended Early Learning Goals. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been fully and effectively implemented and have contributed to the raising of standards particularly in English and mathematics by the age of 11. The school is well placed to raise standards in information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum with the provision of the ICT suite that is extensively time-tabled for the teaching of skills throughout the school. The school is aware that the need for the use of computers in the classroom to support learning across the curriculum is a priority.
30. All pupils are introduced to a wide range of well-planned activities. There are good links between subjects so that skills learned in one subject are practised and extended in another. Literacy skills are applied competently and personal writing is developed well when reporting factually or expressing personal opinions in religious education and history in Key Stage 2 for example.
31. School aims include the desire to make the curriculum inclusive and consequently there is a shared commitment for providing all pupils, including those with special educational needs with the same curriculum opportunities as others both inside and outside the classroom. The response to the needs of pupils with physical disabilities is very good by both staff and pupils. A limited number of pupils are only withdrawn when there is an unavoidable need to do so when following structured programmes identified in their individual education plans. Teachers plan challenging activities to match the requirements of individual education plans that are reviewed on a termly basis. Personal and literacy targets are provided which are realistic and achievable and are shared with parents. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and has improved since the last inspection. The strategies for identifying and targeting the needs of higher attaining pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, have improved considerably and now contribute significantly to the raising of standards by the age of 11. The school has yet to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils in subjects other than literacy and numeracy, particularly for pupils by the age of 7 where pupils are not being challenged sufficiently to attain the higher Level 3 in national testing.
32. Additional staffing is used well to organise pupils of similar ability levels into sets for literacy, numeracy and science, enabling teachers to plan more closely for pupils' needs. Subject co-ordinators for English and mathematics have contributed significantly to improvements in the quality of learning opportunities by observing and then sharing good practice. Governors are welcomed into the school and as well as being attached to classes, carry out specific curricular responsibilities for areas such as special educational needs, numeracy and literacy. They then report back to the curriculum committee and the full governing body to ensure that others are well informed. Where governors have been involved in the good levels of professional development undertaken by staff and non-teaching staff, they are well placed to check that curriculum opportunities are well matched to the aptitude and abilities of all pupils.

33. The provision for personal and social education is good and includes knowledge of sex education and gives attention to the misuse of drugs in order to promote a healthier lifestyle. A broad range of purposeful visits to enrich the curriculum includes visits to Worcester Cathedral and other places of educational interest. Annual residential experience for pupils in Year 6 has a direct impact not only on educational but also personal and social development. The school has close contact with local churches and pupils use the locality well. Visitors enrich the curriculum, as during a multi-cultural day planned to give pupils a greater understanding of other cultures and values. The choir sings in the church and has entertained in the local community. Members of the local community contribute their knowledge and expertise, such as the police and the school nurse. A local minister of religion contributes to collective worship on a weekly basis and has arranged valuable experiences such as 'school weddings' and christenings to promote family values.
34. The provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. A particularly positive feature is the good contribution made by the many posters that are found all around the school. These prompt pupils to think about their behaviour, their values and their attitudes. The school works well to increase pupils' spiritual awareness, through acts of collective worship, the teaching of religious education and lessons in a variety of subjects. In one assembly during the inspection based on tolerance, some pupils were subjected to discriminatory behaviour by the headteacher in an effort to help their understanding of how the Jews felt under Hitler's reign of terror. Pupils' empathised and showed outrage that people should be treated in such a cruel way. Through the good provision for moral development pupils are learning to play an active role as citizens; are helped to put moral values into practice. Relationships show that there is a healthy respect and consideration for the values of others. Pupils are able to copy the fine example set by the team of adults who work with them, and are guided well by a clearly-understood code of conduct that is based firmly on the aims of the school. All pupils respond positively to the challenge of becoming a 'Straits' Citizen'. Very good provision for the pupils' social development includes the opportunity to join the School Council. Pupils have eagerly seized the very good chances that this gives them to take responsibility. For example, they helped to decide the kind of things that should be done to improve their playtimes. Cultural development is fostered well. The effectiveness with which pupils' awareness of the richness and diversity of cultures in society is promoted has improved significantly since the last inspection. Assemblies make a good contribution to all areas of this aspect of the school's work. A 'praise assembly', in which parents and the whole school celebrated the pupils' achievements, gave a real boost to everyone and greatly raised the self-esteem of the many individuals who received awards.
35. There are good links with a pre-school group and the extended induction of children into the Foundation Stage provides a very good start to a child's 'formal' education and gives excellent experiences on which to build. Links with secondary schools are satisfactory with a wide range of possible schools being available after the age of 11. Pupils are well prepared for the transition to secondary education. However, apart from competitive sport there are few curricular links with local schools. There are purposeful links with local training institutions, with pupils benefiting appropriately.
36. During the week of the inspection there was a very good range of well-attended extra-curricular activities, especially involving music and art. According to the season there are non-competitive sporting opportunities for both girls and boys. Additional music tuition is available for some pupils and talented artists are given opportunities to extend their skills. Staff give willingly of their time and the range of clubs including choirs, guitar, art and football, netball and dance contributes effectively to pupils' personal, social and physical development. The Breakfast Club and After School Club are well attended.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school continues to provide a caring, supportive environment as found at the previous inspection and this makes a significant contribution to the very good ethos found in school.
38. The procedures for introducing the children and their parents to the school very effectively ensure that the youngest children settle quickly into the routines of school life. Teachers, who know their pupils well, closely monitor pupils' personal development. Emphasis is placed on raising pupils' self-esteem and making them aware of their individual achievements. Pupils are able to respond to their annual progress reports and set targets for their own improvements, usually in English and mathematics. This gives them confidence in their own abilities, and encourages them to respond positively to new challenges.
39. Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is satisfactory overall. There has been a significant improvement since the last inspection with very effective procedures in place for assessment in English and mathematics. Constant monitoring and assessment throughout the school support academic progress well. Teachers check on pupils' progress through observations, questioning and tests. In English and mathematics, standardised tests are used regularly to indicate pupils' development against age-related expectations. Teachers use this information to identify pupils with special educational needs and to set targets for individual pupils. These are discussed and agreed with pupils, and teachers record what individual pupils have covered and understood. Assessment procedures are in varying stages of development following the school's move to planning in line with requirements of Curriculum 2000. However, assessment procedures in science, information and communication technology, religious education and most foundation subjects are not sufficient to inform effective curriculum planning or to accurately target work to support pupils' next steps in learning.
40. The school behaviour policy is very effective in promoting good behaviour and is used consistently by all adults working in the school. Most parents agree bullying is not a concern in the school and any incident of oppressive behaviour reported is dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. Lunchtime staff have received good training to support their supervisory role and arrangements run smoothly. Pupils', behaviour in the playgrounds is tolerant and good-natured. Members of the school council have selected magnetic board games that some pupils can play with quietly whilst others run around or practise their football skills. The problems associated with lunchtime reported on by the previous inspection are no longer an issue.
41. The recording and reporting of attendance meets statutory requirements and the school effectively promotes very good attendance. There are thorough and comprehensive procedures followed, administration is very efficient and reasons are always sought for pupils' absence.
42. The provision for promoting the health, safety and well being of pupils is satisfactory overall. Staff are fully aware of child protection procedures which are in accordance with local guidelines. However no recent training has been undertaken by the member of staff with responsibility for child protection issues. The school nurse and local police support the school's health education programme and the draft sex education policy is awaiting ratification. First aid boxes are appropriately stocked and sited. Accidents are always recorded and the school makes effective arrangements for notifying parents of any accidents

involving their children and of any treatment given. The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy and risk assessment is regularly undertaken.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. The school continues its good links with parents as found at the time of the previous inspection. Most parents hold positive views about all aspects of school life and told inspectors how much it has improved in recent years. Some would like to know in more detail about how their children are doing at school in the first two terms and some have concerns about homework not being set consistently. The team agrees with the views expressed about reporting and homework, and has identified both of these as minor areas for improvement for governors to give attention to in their future action plan.
44. The quality and quantity of information provided for parents is good. The prospectus gives useful information and a practical introduction to the school. Newsletters are informative and each term parents receive a curriculum information letter from their child`s class teacher providing details of the curriculum to be covered and of the homework expected. Most parents are happy with the information they receive and feel comfortable about approaching the school with any questions or concerns. Annual progress reports to parents are inconsistent and not all give clear information on what their children know and can do with clearly identified areas for improvement. The parent teacher consultation evenings held in October and February are to discuss English, mathematics and science. The July meeting is for the discussion of annual progress reports. A significant minority of parents at the parents` meeting and in response to the questionnaire did not feel well informed regarding their children`s` progress. The inspection supports this view and agrees the autumn and spring consultation meetings could usefully include information on all subjects taught.
45. Whilst the majority of parents are satisfied with the amount of work their children are expected to do at home a significant minority are not. Parents are provided with some information on the school`s expectation for homework in the home school agreement. However homework is not set consistently and parents are not made fully aware of the type of homework likely to be set. The school acknowledges this as an area for development.
46. Parental involvement in the work of the school is very good. The school welcomes and encourages parents to help and a significant number respond. They assist in class, on trips and with extra curricular activities. Parents have the opportunity to train for NVQ Level 3 and several parents are participating. Parental help in the work of the school is much appreciated by staff. The active Parents Association raises significant amounts of money which is well used to supplement the resources in the school. This makes a valuable contribution and adds to pupils` learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. Her Majesty`s Inspectors took the school out of special measures in February 1999. The school has made good progress in tackling the identified weaknesses so that all are least satisfactory now. The school development plan has been refined and is being used successfully by senior managers to guide the school forward. Teaching quality has improved considerably. The head and deputy have systematically monitored the quality of teaching, provided effective feedback to individuals and supported improvement through a very good programme of training. There is scope for other managers to become more regularly involved

in this monitoring work and for aspects of the very best teaching in school that are leading to high achievement to be identified, shared and exchanged.

48. The headteacher gives excellent direction to the work of the school, has inspired and motivated staff who share his determination to press ahead with raising standards. There is an excellent team spirit amongst staff, and very good relationships that underpin the successful and speedy improvements being made. The school is successfully meeting its aims and a very good ethos is promoting a *can do* culture that encourages everyone in school to work together, to *go for gold*, and achieve higher and higher standards. Inspectors saw many instances in lessons, meetings and other activities, of how the staff form a team welded together with the best interests of the pupils at heart. The deputy headteacher gives full support to the headteacher and is also an effective manager and leader. The senior management team shares the same driving ambition as head and deputy: to make the school the top of its benchmark group. This team is effective in shaping the direction and pace of improvement not least because of their own many talents that are influential across all three phases of education.
49. Senior and middle managers carry out their duties well and have made good improvements to their subjects and aspects since the last inspection. However, it is very evident that they are ready for the greater challenge that wider responsibility will now bring. This is especially the case with their monitoring role which is fairly low level at present. Elsewhere in this report there are issues of inconsistent practice flagged, these include assessment, target setting, challenge for the highest achievers, homework and the range of information technology experiences. Informal monitoring is successful, but enhanced formal monitoring would ensure that such inconsistencies are checked early and corrected quickly. Nonetheless, it is also very evident that co-ordinators have good success levels, as shown in the good quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs for example, good calibre teaching and generally improving standards.
50. The main reason why the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good is because of the good leadership provided by the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO), head teacher and governing body. The SENCO maintains the register of special needs efficiently. Pupils' individual education plans are always up-to-date and pupils are working at the right level for them. The school is aware that it has yet to turn its attention to ensuring that very high-attaining pupils are afforded the same consistently good quality provision as that of pupils with special educational needs. A first step has been made in identifying those pupils whose work suggests they require greater challenge in some subjects. Teachers have been alerted to this. A member of staff has been given responsibility for developing provision aimed at extending and enriching the experiences for potentially gifted and talented pupils. She has yet to experience at first hand the quality of teaching and its impact on the learning of these pupils and is reliant on other data to help inform developments. She is very keen to expand her knowledge of what is happening in other institutions to support the development of policy and practice in school.
51. The governors are a very effective body. They know clearly the strengths and weaknesses of the school because they are so involved and have systems and structures that link teaching, support and administrative staff to individual governors, their committees and the governing body as a whole. Information flows freely, it is interpreted very well, analysed carefully and put to good use in guiding the school. Standards are to the fore in the governors' rating of school cost effectiveness and they apply the principles of best value well.
52. School managers and governors have adopted the right priorities for the school at the right time. These centre on raising standards, particularly in English and mathematics. Everyone pursues these well, and the successes are clear. Science has yet to be given the same high

status and is an area that managers are turning to next. A strength is the way in which other things are generally held in good balance, so that, for example, an extended induction programme has been set up to support young children in developing the skills they will need for later learning. ICT has received good attention and the ICT suite is an asset. Nevertheless, more use needs to be made of ICT to support learning across the curriculum in classrooms. There is scope for target-setting work, so effective in supporting raised achievement in English and mathematics, to be extended to ICT and science. The library is being used efficiently, and its location next to the ICT suite provides pupils with a good resource base to support their learning. The requirements of Curriculum 2000 have been built into planning, but assessment procedures have yet to be established fully in some subjects.

53. The school is very well served by its staff who put in much effort to ensure that pupils receive a good quality education, and are helped to become mature and responsible future citizens. Performance management is a strength of the school. The professional development of all staff is given high priority. There are very good arrangements in place for the support of newly qualified teachers and recently appointed members of staff. The school's office manager undertakes her duties very well and has very good knowledge of school procedures and systems. The site manager and her staff ensure that the school is kept very clean and free of litter.
54. Inadequate resourcing in some subjects reported in the previous inspection has been addressed. Resources are now at least satisfactory in all subjects. On the whole, all these resources are used very effectively. The accommodation has many good features that have a beneficial effect on the delivery of the curriculum. The school is currently giving consideration, through its school improvement plan, to developing a secure area for outside play for children in the Foundation Stage. This was criticised in the previous report and has not yet been fully resolved.
55. Finance is budgeted very well and set against clearly demarcated priorities. Additional funding is targeted carefully on those for whom it is intended. Financial management and control are secure. The school has an above average amount to spend on each pupil. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are right for this school currently. Strengths identified in the previous report have been built upon. Standards are rising, though they continue to be top of the school's agenda for action as there is potential for them to compare more favourably with similar schools. The school is well placed to sustain its good rate of improvement and has set realistic targets to improve performance in English and mathematics results between now and 2003, although targets should be more challenging to reflect the school's ambition. The school currently provides satisfactory but improving value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. In building for the future, and in working towards raising standards to levels that compare more favourably to similar schools, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- (1) build on the strengths of teaching to ensure that all pupils reach their personal best in all subjects at a demanding pace by:**
- improving the sharpness of learning targets in planning and practice by making sure they focus on the gains expected of the different pupils in the class or group,
 - improving the use of time targets to increase the amount of good quality work produced in lessons so that the rates of progress match the best seen in school,

- widening the opportunities for pupils to work things out for themselves, to reflect on new learning and have greater involvement in setting personal targets for improvement,
- tying the teachers' assessments of how well pupils are learning across the curriculum more securely into the targets being projected for their next steps in learning and share these appropriately with parents,
- raising all teachers' expectations to the best level found in the school about what pupils, especially high-attainers, can achieve and how much work can be completed,
- sharing and exchanging the very best in the teaching and learning in school,
Paragraphs: 2, 7, 11, 12, 19, 22, 24, 27, 31, 44, 47, 49, 55, 77, 81, 82, 86, 92, 113.

(2) extend the good practice used in establishing assessment procedures in English and mathematics to develop assessment procedures in other subjects.

Paragraphs: 39, 49, 52, 95, 102, 108, 113, 118, 135.

(3) continue to develop tracking and target setting work in science and information and communication technology and use these to promote the very best rates of progress throughout the school.

Paragraphs: 22, 27, 28, 49, 88, 95, 118.

57. Although not identified as separate issues, in preparing their action plan, the Governing Body should also pay attention to the following:

- Monitoring the use of computers in classrooms. Paragraphs: 29, 52, 114.
- Ensuring that everyone is up-to-date with child protection training. Paragraph: 42.
- Reviewing the quality of the outdoor play provision in the Foundation Stage. Paragraphs: 54, 68.
- Ensuring that homework policy is consistently implemented. Paragraphs: 22, 43, 45, 49, 85.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

85

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	27	41	29	1	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	273
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	45

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	24	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	22	22
	Girls	22	24	26
	Total	44	46	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (96)	92 (96)	94 (100)
	National	83 (82)	88 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	22	24
	Girls	24	26	26
	Total	46	48	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (96)	94 (100)	100 (98)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	16	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	13	15
	Girls	14	12	14
	Total	28	25	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (55)	78 (55)	91 (69)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	14	14
	Girls	11	13	12
	Total	21	27	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (59)	84 (59)	81 (83)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	273
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	24.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	174

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	522779
Total expenditure	522919
Expenditure per pupil	1841
Balance brought forward from previous year	6850
Balance carried forward to next year	6710

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate: 46 per cent

Number of questionnaires sent out

295

Number of questionnaires returned

136

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	37	0	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	46	47	3	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	51	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	51	13	5	3
The teaching is good.	52	42	1	4	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	48	13	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	32	5	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	29	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	49	40	7	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	64	30	1	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	41	1	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	43	11	1	13

NB FIGURES MAY NOT TOTAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING

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

58. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage has developed well since the previous inspection. The school has responded very positively to the new provision required for children in the Foundation Stage. All the adults working with these young children have worked hard to ensure the implementation of the new Early Learning Goals. Several factors contribute to the very good start the children make to their school life. An excellent extended induction programme enables children to spend two afternoons a week in school for the term prior to them starting school. This introduces them to a range of good quality experiences and prepares them very well to take full advantage of the opportunities in reception. The programme ensures a smooth transition from home to school but also gives children a flying start when they move into school. Once in school they enjoy well-planned activities and good teaching which motivate children well. They are excited about learning and all children including those with special educational needs make good progress because learning is fun. Children are very happy to come to school.
59. Children start school in September or January during the school year in which they become five. In the reception classes, which cater for the Foundation Stage there were 44 children at the time of the inspection. All 21 children in the younger reception class were under the age of five. In the older class all but 4 children were five years of age. One child has a statement of special educational needs. There were no children with a home language other than English. Assessment information is used by teachers to group children early on and, to identify potential needs, including potentially higher attaining children. At the time of the inspection the assessment had not been completed for the youngest class. However, results for the older class and from the previous year indicate that their attainment was above that expected for children of this age. This is due largely to the very good preparation children receive through the induction programme prior to starting school. Results are used well by teachers to ensure that work is well matched to needs and abilities through carefully planned work. Inspection evidence indicates that most children will achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage and many will exceed them. The high expectations of teachers, thorough planning and effective teaching of the basic skills are key features of the good provision in the Foundation Stage.

Personal social and emotional development

60. Children settle into school very well and make good progress in the Foundation Stage. The youngest children, in school for just two weeks, are already aware of the day to day routines, share resources happily and are confident when talking to the adults. The consistently good teaching promotes this area well through all activities and this results in very good progress. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1 many reach standards that are higher than the levels expected for children of this age. Their positive attitudes to learning and enjoyment of all aspects of school are evident in the eagerness and enthusiasm shown when they tackle new challenges. The majority listen very well and carry out instructions obediently. Behaviour is very good and the children enjoy good relationships with the adults who work with them and with each other. Many work well independently and also in small groups, sharing resources and taking turns. They select activities with confidence and tidy away well at the end of sessions. All the adults promote independence and self esteem. The consistent approach to management ensures a calm, orderly and industrious environment.

Communication, language and literacy

61. The consistently good teaching promotes communication, language and literacy skills very well. Consequently children make good progress and by the time they reach Year 1 most children attain standards above what is expected for children of this age. The emphasis placed on the development of speaking and listening skills is a strength. For example, when introducing the big book 'Farmer Duck' in a literacy session, the teacher provided clues and encouraged the children to find the clues and express their ideas about the title of the text. All joined in eagerly, finding ducks hidden in various places. When the teacher put on a farmer's cap, one child said excitedly 'Its Farmer Duck', when asked how he knew, he explained that he'd read the label on the work table. Children are encouraged to explain what they are doing and to explain ideas and share thoughts with the class. The majority of children use a good range of vocabulary and a significant number are very articulate. They have good recall of information when questioned. All children enjoy listening to stories and sharing books. For example, older children followed the text of 'Farmer Duck' enthusiastically a number, joining in, and all joining in the 'quacks'. Many read the title and explained what the author does. They had a good understanding of what a 'plan' was – 'its thinking about ideas' said one child. They were encouraged to predict what might happen. More able children could read three letter words and suggest rhyming words with confidence and many others knew initial and final sounds.
62. All children in the Foundation Stage write their name independently, the majority managing their surname too. They record their ideas and experiences through drawing and early writing. In the older reception class over half write simple sentences independently, using word lists to help with unknown words. Handwriting is developed systematically, many children forming letters with reasonable accuracy. By the time they leave the reception classes, children have a good knowledge of letters and sounds and most have a good sight vocabulary. Most are reading independently with a significant proportion beyond the Early Learning Goals, reading securely at Level 1 of the National Curriculum. The most able read beyond this. Most are happy to discuss their favourite books and higher attainers enjoy the humour and show a very good understanding of their reading. Teachers provide good opportunities for these skills to develop, and as a result of the good teaching in the basic skills, the children make good gains in their learning. Teachers present a variety of texts to children and share stories and rhymes imaginatively. They devise games such as 'the telephone' game and 'pass the pebble' when children were encouraged to develop rhyming strings and contribute animal sounds to the story. These reinforce children's knowledge and understanding of words and meanings. The very good use of questioning extends children's thinking and conversation skills. Thorough planning in the Foundation Stage identifies clearly what children need to know. Planning is well informed by teachers' observations and on going assessment of children's learning.

Mathematical development

63. Teaching is very good and children make good progress as a result of the systematic development of basic mathematical skills and vocabulary. Carefully matched tasks and targeted support ensure that lower attaining children and those with special educational needs make good progress. Older children count confidently to 30 and many go beyond this. They count in two's to 20 and beyond and count backwards from 15 accurately in most cases. In the younger class two thirds count to twenty with reasonable confidence, although fewer manage counting backwards. The majority are well on their way to meeting the Early Learning Goals and many have exceeded these already. They join in number rhymes and games with enthusiasm. For example, throwing 5 bean-bags into a bin, the children explore participating and acquire early skills saying "Three in the bin and two outside-five altogether!" Higher attaining children make number sentences and record their number sums using symbols. Lower attainers share 10 candles between two fairy cakes and record the two numbers making 10. Similarly average children work in pairs planting 10 crocus bulbs

between two pots, recording the different numbers making 10. They are encouraged to explain their work. Many do so clearly and confidently and more able children use terms such as 'equals' when explaining. In group work an able girl said 'I've already made 10 – 1, 2, and 7.' Within seconds of beginning her work. Assessment opportunities identified in the planning are checked as the lesson proceeds. Most children recognise and arrange numbers to 10 in order. In a very good lesson younger children sorted and matched place settings and items for a 'Teddy Bears' Picnic'. Over half counted up to 10 candles on cakes, counted out 10 biscuits with more able children predicting then counting numbers of Smarties in a box. When teacher asked how counting a group of children could be done in an easier way, a child replied quickly 'put them in a straight line'.

64. Thinking skills and number knowledge is continuously explored and extended through exceptionally good questioning techniques in both classes. By the end of the year, most have mastered the skills and knowledge in numbers outlined in the Early Learning Goals and many have exceeded this. They recognise simple two-dimensional shapes such as square and circles and have some knowledge of solid shapes. Some younger children found this too much information in one lesson however. The children use mathematical language such as 'many' 'few' 'bigger' 'smaller' 'heavier' and 'lighter' with good understanding. Most write numbers accurately by the time they join Year 1. Speaking and listening skills are very well promoted in this area of learning. Teachers present mathematics in a lively and exciting way, making learning fun. Lessons proceed at a good pace and the well chosen resources contribute to the success of these lessons. Children actively participate in applying their mathematical knowledge to real situations and this heightens their understanding.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

65. Teaching is good and the children make good progress because exciting opportunities are created for them to investigate the world around them and to develop their curiosity. Examples of such opportunities include exploring and tasting a variety of exotic fruits following the story of 'Handa's Surprise'. This lesson contributed well to children's cultural awareness. In another lesson, children observed live pets, a guinea pig, a pigeon and fishes. The adults gave good information about the animals, answering children's probing questions well. The children showed good accuracy in classifying animals according to fur/feathers for example. The adults take advantage of all opportunities, which results in most children reaching standards which are higher than expected for children of this age. They draw and label body parts and explore the senses through practical activities. They plant cress, beans and bulbs and know that they need water air and light to grow. The children explore simple life cycles, such as the frog and the butterfly and know the names of animal babies.
66. Through their investigation of snails they know snails have hard shells, eat plants, breathe and glide along on a foot. They experiment with objects, which float and sink and explore magnets and use magnifying glasses. They recall memories and develop a sense of time through stories, and photographs showing how they have changed from birth to five years old. They select materials and equipment to make models from recycled materials and experiment with colour mixing when using paint. Well structured activities in the sand and water enable children to explore wet and dry sand, while blue-coloured water with sea creatures in it stimulate imaginative discussions about underwater. Good support from the adults, including parents, maximises learning opportunities. Children mix ingredients and bake cheese scones observing how materials change. Children in both classes learn and sing a range of songs and rhymes and investigate sounds made by shakers containing different materials.
67. The travels of 'Barnaby Bear' introduce children to maps and they learn where London is in relation to their own homes, whilst a display of dolls of different nationality highlight differences in appearance and dress around the world. Opportunities are provided for children

to develop early familiarisation with computers and mouse control in the ICT suite but the use of the computer in the classroom to extend these skills to other areas of learning are more limited.

Physical Development

68. Teaching is good and most children make good progress to reach the expected levels by the end of the reception classes with a significant proportion exceeding these levels. Good use of the hall for dance and gymnastics ensures children are confident in their use of space and awareness of others as they move about. They have a good understanding of the need to 'warm up'. Dance skills were very well promoted in one lesson observed using the story of 'we're going on a bear hunt'. Children involved themselves enthusiastically, engrossed in their movements 'swishing and swooshing through the wind'. They were quick to respond to instructions, listening carefully to their teacher. A criticism in the previous inspection referred to provisions for outdoor play. Although some improvements have been made, this remains a weakness with few resources to develop skills in climbing, pushing and pulling and too little time allocated to these important skills. This is currently a priority in the school development plan. In all lessons, teachers encourage children to work independently and to express their ideas freely. The children handle scissors, paint brushes and pencils with good control in the older class and with reasonable skill in the younger class. All children have the opportunity to use modelling materials such as plasticine, dough and, less frequently, clay. The adults support these activities very well so that all children participate fully and make good gains in learning.

Creative development

69. Good teaching and support enable many children to make good progress and to exceed the standards expected by the time they enter Year 1. The well-planned and well-resourced activities provide experiences with crayons, paint and collage. They explore techniques such as finger painting, printing and observational drawing. They acquire good skills in cutting sticking, and joining materials. Well organised role play sessions, such as 'The Animal Hospital' encourage children to express ideas and communicate feelings through imaginative play. Good intervention in this play, extended children's ideas well. They made telephone calls, booked appointments, wrote letters and addressed envelopes. They discussed pets' 'ailments' with their owners and treated them in the well-equipped 'surgery'. Children enjoy singing and exploring percussion instruments. They use construction kits to build a railway station and track and extend speaking and listening through the use of puppets in the puppet theatre. Sometimes children could be found quietly enjoying the sensory experiences of sound and light provided in the small room known as a 'special place'. Staff provide a good range of creative activities often linked to other areas of the curriculum. They value children's efforts and as a result the children have a good sense of pride in their achievements.

ENGLISH

70. Standards in English have improved significantly for eleven-year-olds since the school was subject to special measures. Though results in the 2000 SATs were below those in similar schools. Pupils achieved standards above national averages in reading, writing, speaking and listening at ages seven and eleven. Test results have risen over the past four years at Key Stage 2 and the school did well to reach its targets for 2000. Girls achieve higher standards than boys but not to a significant degree. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in writing is improving. Inspection findings reflect the test results.
71. The effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) has provided greater consistency, a good balance of programmes of study with clear objectives for teaching and

learning. The concentration on the direct teaching of skills is having a positive effect on the quality of learning. Setting arrangement in Year 5/6 are having a beneficial impact on raising standards. There are indications that a much higher proportion of pupils will achieve level 5 and a couple of pupils are likely to achieve at level 6 in the 2001 SATs.

72. Pupils' speaking and listening skills and reading skills are above average at the age of seven and eleven. Their attainment particularly in writing is much improved as a result of a very effective programme of staff training that has improved the teaching of basic skills and this has had a positive impact on learning. Pupils now use a wide range of vocabulary in writing and structure their work very well especially at Key Stage 2.
73. Pupils speak well and listen very attentively because teachers give good opportunities for them to do so. The use of questioning by teachers is particularly effective in enabling pupils to deepen their thinking skills and give considered views. Pupils know how to explain their opinions and ideas about stories and extracts from books in interesting ways as when Year 6 pupils debated 'Carrie's War'. The pupils enjoyed the debate and listened to one another's ideas carefully. They had a realistic feeling as to what it would be like to be in Carrie's shoes. Their command of standard English was good.
74. Most pupils achieve at above average standards of reading by the ages of seven and eleven. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well against their literacy targets. Good work undertaken in the teaching of phonics is supporting these pupils' reading skills. At Key Stage 1 average and lower attaining pupils have a good grasp of letter sounds and tackle unfamiliar words in a confident manner. Higher attaining pupils enjoy reading and express opinion about the genre they like best. Pupils read with improving fluency and accuracy. By eleven years of age pupils talk earnestly about different authors and develop a critical appreciation of a range of books. They are competent readers of poetry and fiction and the reading skills of most pupils are sufficiently well developed to enable them to read a wide range of texts. Some pupils, though technically competent only look at the surface of the story-line and do not explore meaning beyond the literal. The school is aware that more work is required to develop this higher order skill and has set this as a priority.
75. Writing is above average, and most seven-year-olds write well. When describing story settings they introduce excitement into their poems by using well-chosen adjectives. Year 3 pupils learn to create an air of mystery as the 'Wizard of Darkness' casts his magical spell on the sun. '*The shadowy invisibleness surrounds the mysterious clouds*', wrote an 8 year old in work observed by inspectors. By the age of eleven, pupils have a good knowledge of grammar and punctuation. They pay careful attention to characterisation and plot and use different forms of writing appropriately. The quality of their historical narrative and scientific reports include interesting and varied vocabulary. They learn to use an imaginative vocabulary as seen in Year 3 descriptive pieces of writing about a burning candle. For example '*It was a dark, dull, gloomy night so I got a match and lit the candle. It looked like a golden man surfing on a wax sea*'. Pupils are given valuable opportunities to write in other subjects, for example, Year 1 pupils write simple sentences about homes in the past, while Year 5 pupils write poignant poetry about World War 2.
76. Standards of handwriting are good in pupils' books. Younger pupils practise forming their letters correctly and older pupils develop a neat style. In Year 3 pupils are awarded a pen when their writing is neat and well-joined. This is a positive feature as it motivates pupils to take care with their presentation. Spelling is good throughout the school.
77. Pupils' achievements match the quality of teaching in English. Teaching is good across the school and there were examples of very good teaching at both key stages. Teachers

demonstrate a good understanding of how to teach reading and writing. Teaching is very good for some reception-age pupils and pupils in Years 3 and 4. Learning is consolidated very well and the success of the teaching is evident in the quality of phrases used by the pupils. For example, in Year 3 pupils wrote; 'The big sausage dog sat on the grey sofa'. Teachers use rich and wide vocabulary to promote the pupils' interest in new words such as those expressed in Year 5 pupils' 'Winter Haiku' poems and memories of the Year 2000. Teachers encourage pupils to read between the lines of stories' such as myths and legends to help them to understand the 'Mictlan Myth' and when such support is given pupils' understanding is increased successfully. Teachers set realistic objectives in planning work for the range of pupils they teach, and assessment is on-going to ensure that harder work is set next time. Some teachers use time targets to support the pace at which they expect pupils to work, especially when their attention is being focused on specific groups. This practice is inconsistent however. There is some very good teaching in English which could usefully be shared more widely.

78. Management of English is good and the literacy co-ordinator provides clear educational direction for this subject. She maintains good oversight of English through a range of monitoring activities for example sampling teachers' planning and pupils' written work. Reading books are allowed to be taken home and most pupils keep a good log of what they have read. Teachers sometimes take the opportunity to enter into a written dialogue with parents about this, but such practice is inconsistent. The co-ordinator is aware of steps necessary to improve standards, and all teachers share a vision for achieving excellence. Identified needs for improvement include a more precise analysis of data in order to plan for improvement by setting targets for all pupils including those identified as talented and gifted. English has good capacity for sustaining continuous improvement because of the successful lead being given.

MATHEMATICS

79. Standards in mathematics are rising overall and the subject is improving steadily due to good leadership and better teaching. The school is not complacent and has set its sights on ensuring results are as high as possible within two years, in consequence mathematics remains at the top of the school's agenda for action. Inspection findings indicate that the school's strategies are proving effective, more so in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1. Inspectors judge that standards are well above average at Key Stage 2 and average at Key Stage 1.
80. Results in the Key Stage 2 SATs last year were below average in mathematics. Results were much better in English and broadly at the same level in science as in mathematics. When compared to similar schools results in mathematics were well below average overall. The school's data shows that an above average proportion of pupils achieved the average level 4 but that a smaller proportion of pupils than seen in similar schools achieved the higher levels. These results were about right when the pupils' prior attainment is taken into account. For much of their education the pupils had received their education in a school subject to special measures. Raising standards in mathematics is the school's number one priority and a range of strategies have been established to promote pupils' numeracy skills to the best level. The setting arrangements in Key Stage 2 are having a positive impact on standards and an excellent lesson was observed in Year 3/4 during inspection that demonstrated just how effective learning can be when the teacher's expectations are set high. Here the teacher gave very close attention to how well pupils were learning in the lesson and constantly challenged them to achieve more. Very good use of time targets ensured that pupils worked at a cracking pace and accomplished much. It was very evident that the teacher enjoyed the lesson just as much as the pupils.

81. Results in the Key Stage 1 SATs last year were above average, though a smaller proportion than average achieved the higher level 3. The school has set insufficiently challenging targets at Key Stage 1 to ensure that standards are at the best level possible for the present Year 2, a significant proportion of whom are potentially high achievers. Additionally, inspectors have concerns that in some lessons the time available for group-work in Key Stage classes is limiting pupils' achieving at the higher levels.
82. Overall the quality of teaching has consistently improved since the last inspection, particularly in Key Stage 2 where almost two thirds of the teaching was very good. This was characterised by very good teacher subject knowledge, planning which responded to the needs of all pupils, and a delivery, which created challenge, motivation and enjoyment. In the 60 per cent of lessons throughout the school where teaching overall was good or better, expectation was high and pupils thrived on the teachers' enthusiasm for mathematics. A strength of the best teaching was the way in which teachers built on previous skill; checked knowledge and understanding rigorously by skilful questioning, and promoted strategies encouraging pupils to work independently when teaching was focused elsewhere. Where teaching was satisfactory, objectives were less precise, the pace less vigorous, and experiences less challenging particularly for the significant proportion of potentially higher attaining pupils. Progress is generally satisfactory in Key Stage 1, increases to good in Years 3, 4, and 5 before accelerating to very good in Year 6. Pupils enjoy each other's company, are proud of their achievements and respond enthusiastically to challenge. They respond positively when adults value their contributions, and as their confidence increases so does their desire to succeed.
83. The effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) has provided greater consistency, a greater balance of programmes of study with clear objectives for teaching and learning. The concentration on the direct teaching of skills is having a positive effect on the quality of learning. Although there are no precise guidelines for promoting the use of numeracy skills across the curriculum, pupils apply their knowledge and understanding well when recording traffic surveys, measuring accurately in design and technology, calculating time lines in history and when recording science investigations for example. Planning indicates a good balance of the requirements of the NNS, with investigation and application skills being very well developed.
84. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in mathematics especially where they receive effective support from learning assistants. Individual education plans are in place for a number of pupils but generally focus on literacy as opposed to numeracy targets. Pupils with special needs are fully included in all aspects of mathematics whether inside or outside the classroom. Planning provides equality of access, in line with school aims, for all pupils. Setting arrangements are providing a sharper focus to the quality of learning and together with greater teacher expectation is enabling all levels of pupils to make appropriate progress, especially higher attaining pupils. Support staff is used effectively to improve the quality of learning particularly when they support lower attaining pupils during whole class teaching such as mental introductions and summing up sessions. Lesson planning is good, and teachers evaluate the success of their lessons and include comments for improvement making subsequent lessons even more effective. Very good questioning enables teachers to challenge and check the rates of understanding. Good assessment identifies what pupils understand and can do and detailed records are kept of gains in skills and knowledge. Marking is very good, informs pupils of their successes in reaching their objectives, and at its best includes comments on how pupils may improve further.
85. Leadership for mathematics is good. The co-ordinator has analysed the results of national and optional tests, identified and responded to strengths and weaknesses, and has provided a good

action plan for improvement. The strategy to enable her to monitor teaching and learning, and to build on skills in a continuous and progressive way, has contributed well to the raising of standards. Very good professional development has raised teacher awareness of the demands of the National Numeracy Strategy and the decision to concentrate on the mental work has added to the quality of learning. Although homework is inconsistent in amount and frequency the school appreciates the contribution which parents make to the quality of learning.

86. The co-ordinator is aware of steps necessary to improve standards, and all teachers share a vision for achieving excellence. Identified needs for improvement include a wider range of computer software to support the development of mathematical skills in the classroom and a more precise analysis of data in order to plan for improvement by setting targets for all pupils including those identified as talented and gifted.

SCIENCE

87. SATs results last year showed that pupils attained average standards at the end of Key Stage 1. However, the proportion of pupils achieving at higher levels was below average compared with schools of a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals. Results at the end of Key Stage 2 were average when compared with all schools, but well below average when compared with the performance of similar schools.
88. Since the previous inspection standards have been improving steadily, and a new scheme of work is supporting the improvement. It is clear from the results of the last four years that standards in science are rising at a similar rate to that seen nationally. However, the school's results in science are below those of English and mathematics. Unlike in the other two core subjects there are no whole-school targets for raising standards in science and this is a missed opportunity.
89. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in science are average at both key stages. The scrutiny of pupils' past work shows that at Key Stage 1 most teachers set tasks that are appropriately challenging for average attaining pupils, but not enough attention is paid to demanding hard enough work from those pupils capable of higher attainment. Work in science books done earlier this year by pupils indicates that some achieve better than expected when finding out about materials and their properties. For example, they understand about condensation. One wrote: "*When the steam touches the spoon it goes to water.*" Pupils have much experience of investigating and testing since they do much of their learning in this way. They respond well to opportunities to experiment and collect valuable information, but sometimes they forget to say how they did the tests, or whether things turned out as they expected. Observation of a lesson in Year 2 showed that pupils are well able to set up an experiment as they constructed an electrical circuit and made a bulb light with a good measure of confidence.
90. At Key Stage 2, pupils have secure knowledge about materials. They understand that matter can exist in three states, and write about, "what makes a liquid, a liquid and a solid, a solid." They know too that changes can be made to materials, some of which cannot be undone. They experiment confidently, making appropriate predictions. For example, a higher attaining pupil said, "*I think that the vapour will condense back into a liquid state.*" However, the work they did earlier this year shows that they are not yet confident in describing how they will alter one test variable without affecting the others.
91. Pupils have good opportunities to learn in science lessons. For instance, the school has a system of teaching groups of Key Stage 2 pupils of similar attainment. This setting helps to

ensure that the needs of individuals are catered for. Teachers make good provision for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, by, for example, supplying lists of scientific words to help them write about their experiments. In all of the lessons observed by inspectors teachers gave pupils appropriate learning objectives that usefully supported their investigations. In some instances the teacher directed how pupils should record their findings, rather than let the high-attainers devise their own recording formats. The prescriptive approach limits attainment at the higher levels. Science lessons are well structured to enable pupils to find out things for themselves. However, there is too little time made available at the end of most lessons for pupils to reflect on what they have learned and how well they have achieved the learning objectives set for them.

92. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. As a result, pupils at both key stages make satisfactory progress. Teachers at both key stages plan lessons well. They set out clearly what they want pupils to learn and, whenever possible, provide practical experience to help build the ideas being taught. This makes learning easier for the pupils. In the best teaching, good questioning, coupled with the provision of relevant examples, promotes learning well. For example, in a lesson for Year 6, a pupil was confused in his thinking about materials that dissolve. He was unsure whether or not lard dissolved. The teacher asked whether he thought that an ice-lolly dissolved if it was heated by the sun. By using his existing knowledge, she helped him to learn effectively what was being taught. Most teachers understand the subject matter and how to help pupils to understand it. As a result, pupils gain skills and knowledge at a satisfactory pace. Sometimes, however, teachers misjudge the time available for pupils to complete their tasks, and the end of the lesson arrives before some of the class have fully mastered the skills being taught. This reduces the progress that is made and does not allow pupils time to reflect upon their new learning nor think about future improvement.
93. Throughout the school, pupils are keen to learn. Their positive attitudes and their very good behaviour in lessons contribute strongly to the progress they make. Their ability to co-operate and discuss the work in hand constructively significantly enhances their learning. They are happy to take responsibility for their own work, but sometimes teachers do not make enough demands on them to think of ways in which they could record the results of their experiments. This hinders both their personal development and the progress that they make in becoming more able young scientists.
94. At Key Stage 2, pupils are given good opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, following their work on dissolving, pupils wrote poems, one of which was called "Sugar Crystal Haiku".
95. The co-ordinator is relatively new to the post. She has made a positive start to checking that teachers plan lessons to cover the agreed programme and that pupils are working at an appropriate level. Insufficient attention has so far been given to tracking and target setting work in science to ensure that the very best rates of progress are promoted throughout the school. The co-ordinator has recently made a good start in addressing the need to improve the assessment procedures and to provide examples for teachers, of the different levels of work that are expected in Curriculum 2000. Science is planned to become a school development priority and time for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning is built into the action plan.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN and TECHNOLOGY

96. The school has sustained satisfactory standards in art and design and design and technology. Strengths in art and design at Key Stage 2 have been sustained whilst standards in design and technology have been improved at Key Stage 2. The school has been successful in providing pupils with worthwhile experiences whilst giving emphasis to national strategies in literacy and numeracy. Effective use is made of the new national guidelines that are supporting pupils' learning by building systematically on their skills, knowledge and understanding.
97. Pupils make good gains in learning, including pupils with special educational needs because the quality of teaching has improved, with greater knowledge and understanding. A scheme of work now provides a structure for the development of skills and the level of resources has been improved to meet the requirements of the curriculum. However, much of this improvement is recent and has not yet had sufficient impact on progress over time so that standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are only in line with the nationally expected levels, in spite of much good teaching seen during the inspection.
98. In Key Stage 1, pupils in Year 1 learn the difference between 'national' and 'man-made' materials through their exploration of the work of artist Andy Goldsworthy. In this lesson they created their own sculptures from materials gathered in the school grounds, working together in small groups. Skills in working together improved as the lesson proceeded, but for a significant majority these skills are not yet strong. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils used a range of objects to print a repeat pattern having explored pattern in buildings previously. Whilst many printed carefully, all but the most able created random patterns, with few pupils having a clear understanding of 'repeat pattern'. In a design and technology lesson, Year 1 pupils demonstrated sound skills in cutting and sticking as they made different kinds of flaps and hinges. The teacher encouraged independence in the use of tools. However, tools such as the hole punch proved difficult to manage for a significant number of pupils because the tools were new to the pupils and skills in their use were not yet developed. In all of these lessons there was a good focus on the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding and appropriate vocabulary was reinforced well.
99. Teaching ensures that pupils have a clear understanding of the task and there is a good emphasis on safety when using tools and equipment. Pupils respond sensibly, listening carefully to instructions, working with application and enthusiasm, particularly when they are well challenged. In a very good art and design lesson, pupils in Year 3/4 created patterns from cut out shapes linking very well to mathematics as they created patterns with 'rotations', 'reflections', 'translations' or 'repeats'. They worked with commitment and enthusiasm, taking pride in their work. The brisk lesson pace ensured pupils covered a good amount of work, through the teacher's effective use of time targets. The same pupils worked with equal enthusiasm in design and technology, when they made their own levers and linkages to create moving pictures for story books, having first disassembled a range of 'moving picture' books and created their own 'pop-up' card. The successful teaching focused on careful and systematic skill progression, together with the safe use of tools. In spite of the good teaching, standards achieved were only in line with those expected for pupils of this age because they were experiencing the use of some tools for the first time. The lack of skills experience in the past was reflected in the difficulty experienced by a significant number of pupils when using split pins to make a lever and when handling certain tools. This was particularly apparent in a Year 5/6 class where pupils were involved in making cams. Many found difficulty using safety snips and hand drills, because they were not used to handling these tools.
100. Pupils enjoy lessons in art and design, and design and technology. They work enthusiastically because they are well motivated. This is particularly true in Years 3 and 4 where pupils are often inspired by very good teaching by the co-ordinator. Most persevere well and take pride in their achievements. They share resources and help each other with tasks, working sensibly

and safely together. The quality of teaching is good overall, although one or two teachers still lack confidence in these subjects. The good teaching is now ensuring a more systematic approach to the acquisition of skills, helped by the national guidelines recently adopted. Basic skills are more carefully taught. The high expectations of a number of teachers is reflected in the learning taking place and the efforts of most pupils. In art there is a good focus on painting skills, for example the winter landscapes produced in Years 5/6 show effective colour mixing and use of colour.

101. The range of art media experienced is fairly narrow. Skills in observational drawing, for example are not well developed, and skills in the use of clay are not built upon systematically. In design and technology, pupils lack experience in handling a range of tools and as a result these skills are below what is expected by the end of Key Stage 2. Whilst attention has been given to evaluating products, sometimes these skills are at a superficial level. In both subjects, teachers focus well on extending literacy and mathematical links, for example through appropriate vocabulary, but the use of information and communication technology is more limited, particularly in design and technology.
102. The co-ordinator manages these subjects well. She has focused on the successful implementation of schemes of work and ensuring sufficient resources are in place to support the curriculum. Through her teaching she provides a good example to teachers and her leadership is ensuring better direction for both subjects. There is no formal assessment in place and no opportunity at present for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning. This is a weakness. Sketchbooks are in place in both key stages, but the way in which they are used is inconsistent. In the best practice, the use of sketchbooks is making a very effective contribution to pupils' skills.
103. The development of a portfolio of work for these subjects would provide guidance and support to teachers as well as assist them with their assessment of standards. The art club provides good opportunities for pupils to extend their skills. It is intended for more able pupils. Several of these talented artists are children identified as having special educational needs in other curricular areas.

GEOGRAPHY

104. Standards in geography are in line with national expectations at both key stages. Since the previous inspection, effective use has been made of national planning guidance to meet the needs of school by adapting the programme of work for the mixed age group classes. To some extent, geography has taken a back seat whilst emphasis has been given to literacy and mathematics. Through worthwhile experiences, pupils are making steady progress in their geographic skills, knowledge and understanding.
105. Pupils at Key Stage 1 gain much of their geographical skills and knowledge from studying places such as the Island of Struay and contrasting its life and features with those of their own locality, The Straits. They draw sketch maps of the island, and read and interpret professional versions. Pupils understand that the new pier has brought changes, but they do not express any views about this. They note that the houses at home are closer together, compared with those on the island. Other studies they make cover a range of countries as the pupils follow the adventures of 'Barnaby Bear' to Paris for example.
106. Pupils at Key Stage 2 gain much from gathering evidence for themselves. The most productive work is done when they visit Woodgate Valley to undertake a river-study. They ask suitable questions, such as, "How fast does the river flow?" They investigate matters such as the effect of flooding on the surrounding area. Pupils record the facts: "grass growing the wrong way, earth washed away....." They begin to use the correct geographical terms; "tributary",

“channel” and “source”. They develop their mapping skills effectively by drawing sketch maps on site. However, pupils do not discuss sufficiently, the effect of humans on the places that they study. The teachers also skilfully reinforce scientific ideas such as evaporation and condensation in geography lessons.

107. Although the school makes proper provision for teaching geography, it was only possible to observe one lesson. This was of satisfactory quality and had as its strengths the very thorough preparation of the teacher and very good use of learning resources to support pupils’ learning. The scrutiny of pupils’ past work and the evidence of teachers’ plans indicate that the quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. The pupils’ ability, in the lesson observed, to concentrate hard when other children were speaking to the class or when the teacher was using visual aids, significantly enhanced their learning.
108. The committed co-ordinator has had limited time to devote to her responsibilities for this subject, but understands how to work to raise standards further. There is no whole-school system of assessment in place and this is unsatisfactory. The choice of topics in history is clearly stimulating pupils’ good achievement in history and there are lessons to be learned here that could support the improvement of geography. The co-ordinator has exciting plans to establish a link with a school in Russia to enhance pupils’ learning.

HISTORY

109. Standards in history are better now than they were at the time of the previous inspection. By the end of both key stages the pupils reach levels higher than expected. Teachers enjoy teaching history and their enthusiasm rubs off on the pupils who make good progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding in history. The co-ordinator has given a strong lead on the topics to be covered and has ensured that resources are in plentiful supply and available when needed.
110. By the age of seven, the pupils develop good knowledge and understanding of the lives of the people in the past for example, by re-telling stories to imagine what life was like as Florence Nightingale, a war-time nurse. Most Year 2 pupils can take the work further by comparing the style of nursing in Florence’s day with modern day nursing. This work is successful because teachers have a clear grasp of the subject and pupils’ interest is maintained because of the perceptive questioning, which challenges the pupils to work to good levels. This is taken forward well in Key Stage 2. Eleven-year-old pupils have a good knowledge of key dates, events and periods in British history. They develop and use this well, as shown when they discuss important changes in British life since 1948, stimulated by a wide range of resources provided by the teacher. At both key stages, the pupils’ sense of time is developing well. In Key Stage 2 they show this when they talk about their parents and grandparents and make comparisons between past and present life.
111. Pupils’ experience of how history is interpreted is a strong area of the work. An example was in a Year 3/4 lesson where good use was made of pupils’ independent research skills to compile information for their own booklet on a given aspect of Anglo-Saxon history.
112. Teaching and learning is good overall. The use of time lines, a wide selection of books, good historical questions, vocabulary and artefacts help pupils in Years 3 and 4 to understand The Romans and the Celts. Teachers use very good historical resources throughout the school. This was evident in Years 5 and 6 work and the effect of the Blitz on the lives of the people in Britain. The teaching motivates the pupils who apply themselves well and show interest in their work.

113. The subject is well led and the co-ordinator has sharpened staff's planning skills and pupils' progress through careful monitoring of their planning and pupils' work. She has identified the need to monitor teaching throughout the school and introduce assessment procedures to record pupils' progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

114. By the end of Key Stage 1 and 2, standards are in line with national expectations. Throughout the school, pupils make satisfactory progress in ICT. Since the previous inspection the provision made for ICT has improved significantly. The opportunities for pupils to use computers, criticised in the last inspection report, are now good. A new computer suite has been installed, much new equipment has been acquired and regular lessons are allocated for each class. However, whilst teachers are making good use of the time in the suite, they are missing opportunities to extend pupils' computer skills in the classroom. Few pupils were observed developing their ICT skills outside the computer suite during the inspection, even though machines are available for this purpose. The school acknowledges that now the use of the suite is firmly established, teachers need to turn their attention to including computers in as many lessons as possible. The recent improvements in the quality of teaching have yet to be reflected in the standards the pupils achieve.
115. Pupils at Key Stage 1 have developed keyboard skills at an appropriate speed. They use these effectively in word processing. Year 2 pupils practise these skills by changing a shopping list from a horizontal to a vertical format for example. Discussion with the pupils and examination of the work they had saved on the computer showed word-processed compositions with titles such as "Big Sisters" and "Ask Mum, Ask Dad", on screen. They develop their ICT skills effectively in other subjects. For example, they produce graphs in mathematics, create ideas for Christmas cards in design and technology activities and "paint" using the computer. In a good lesson observed in Year 1, the clever way in which the teacher planned a series of activities, helped pupils to easily acquire skills in giving instructions to move an electronic toy.
116. At Key Stage 2, pupils build on their existing skills to make more use of computers to gain information; for example, by accessing the Internet. They download information to help them with their work in subjects such as history. Year 6 pupils spoken to during the inspection had learned in depth about World War 2 in this way. Discussions with them and watching them confidently access their saved work, showed that they had a suitably wide range of experiences, including the use of equipment such as temperature probes, linked to the computer. They made use of this method of gathering information during their work in science. The pupils are particularly good at creating multimedia presentations, in which they combine text, images and sound, about topics that they choose. These included presentations entitled, "The Brownies" and "My Football Team".
117. Pupils are very keen to learn about computers and they respond well to good teaching. The strong features of the teaching include good lesson planning and preparation, clear explanation of tasks, good subject knowledge, the setting of different tasks to meet the needs of individual pupils and teaching at a good pace. As a result of this good teaching, pupils concentrate well and involve themselves fully. In a lesson in Year 1, the pupils were excited by the good methods used by the teacher that involved dressing pupils in a robot 'uniform', to receive the kind of instructions that these youngsters would give later to a programmable toy. The very good relationships that exist between the children and adults ensure that they work

well together. Pupils' good behaviour also enhances their learning. Occasionally, teachers forget to praise pupils for their good behaviour and a minority work noisily as a result.

118. The work of the enthusiastic co-ordinator has a positive impact on the standards that pupils attain. The plans she has drawn up, for developing work in the subject, are good. The extra adult support given to the classes of older pupils allows them to be taught in separate age groups, which helps to improve their learning. Now that planning has been brought in line with the requirements of Curriculum 2000, the school has plans to develop its assessment procedures and provide teachers with examples of the work that is expected by average pupils in each year group. The school is not yet making the best use of good practice in target setting seen in other subjects to ensure that the highest attaining pupils develop their ICT skills at the best rate. Some lack of suitable programs hinders the use of ICT in subjects such as mathematics. ICT is not given a sufficiently high profile in display about the school and it is difficult for the visitor to school to get a sense of the range and quality of work being done in ICT.

MUSIC

119. The previous inspection report found pupils' attainment to be in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. The quality of provision has improved and pupils' attainment is now above expectations at the end of both key stages This is largely due to the successful teaching of a well-structured curriculum and a rich range of extra-curricular opportunities available to pupils.
120. Pupils throughout the school enjoy their music-making activities. The tuition provided by visiting specialist teachers, and the music co-ordinator is a strength of the provision. Recorder, woodwind, guitar, drums, keyboard, choir and ensembles further enhance the provision for older pupils. This enables talented musicians to achieve well. Pupils aged seven to eleven who play musical instruments attain good standards in both reading and playing music. Year 6 pupils perform their Chinese pentatonic music confidently in assembly when classes arrive and leave. The standards of singing and composition achieved by pupils in music lessons are good throughout the school. The use of musical notation in recording is developed well throughout the school. Some older pupils have collaborated to write their own scores which inspectors observed performed in an assembly.
121. Younger pupils sing well showing good control of dynamics, pitch and rhythm. This was evident in Year 1 pupils' performance of 'Chinese New Year is here again' and Year 2 pupils' performance of 'London's Burning' and 'Goldilocks'. In Year 6, pupils compose and perform simple pieces using pitched and un-pitched percussion instruments for example 'Journey of a River' and 'The Nutcracker'. They read songs and hymns competently and teachers make effective use of these as materials in literacy lessons.
122. Pupils in the infant age classes learn to create percussion parts to songs such as 'Tinga Layo' performed by Year 1. Both infant age pupils and junior age pupils record their singing in order to listen to, assess and improve what they have done. They are gaining a good knowledge of music making with other subjects such as geography and history through topic work on the Victorians and Tudors. Such experiences make a valuable contribution to pupils' cultural development.
123. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good overall. Music is mainly taught by the music co-ordinator, supported by class teachers. The standard of music in the co-ordinator's classes are always of a high standard, because her subject knowledge and

understanding is very secure. Pupils are taught to improvise music and to evaluate their performances. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to explore rhythm and blues and often incorporate their best efforts in concerts for parents and the community.

124. There is a structured approach to teaching music, however there is currently insufficient detailed guidance to help all teachers to plan and take their lessons. There are good systems in place for assessing and recording pupils' progress in music from one year to the next. The co-ordinator provides strong, effective leadership for musical performances and acts as a positive role model.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

125. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain standards in physical education (PE) that are in line with national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 2, inspection evidence shows that standards are above the level expected nationally, and in dance activities pupils in Year 4 reach standards well above expected levels. The school's records show that a high proportion of pupils is able to swim the expected distance of 25 metres unaided, by the time they leave the school. Since the previous inspection, the written guidance to help teachers to plan PE lessons has been improved, and a new scheme of work is being successfully implemented.
126. In dance activities at Key Stage 1, pupils keep to the beat as they explore different movements. In a lesson in Year 1, they stretched, curled and jumped in response to the tambourine and reacted well to the teacher's questioning by thinking hard about what they were doing. Observation of a games lesson for pupils in Year 2 showed that most could throw with reasonable accuracy, although catching skills were not as well-developed. Pupils used the space available to them well.
127. As a result of some excellent teaching, the quality of movement of pupils in a dance lesson in Year 4 improved significantly. The lesson about germ-warfare became more exciting for pupils, who became 'explosive' in their improvisation and more expressive as a result of the enthusiasm and high level skills of the teacher in drawing out individual talents. Boys and girls worked equally well and demonstrated a very good awareness of space and of the need to work with control whilst also working creatively. Other pupils worked well in groups in their dance lesson creating angular movements to portray germs invading the human body. Many interpreted the music well and higher attaining pupils made good use of different levels and directions. Because the teacher gave very close attention to what pupils were learning and constantly set new challenges, this ensured all pupils, no matter what their starting point, made very good progress and achieved to a high standard. To close the teacher used questioning very effectively to enable pupils to share their learning with others in class and find out what pupils felt they could do better in the next lesson. Excellent relationships supported the great enjoyment that both teacher and pupils felt in working together successfully.
128. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It varies from excellent to unsatisfactory. In the best lessons, the teachers exert good discipline, understand the subject very well and inspire the pupils to do their very best. The pupils respond extremely well to the teachers' high expectations of what they can achieve. They listen very carefully and reflect on the quality of other pupils' performances. This considerably enhances their learning. In the lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, there was too much concern about pupils' behaviour, some of the tasks set were too difficult and not enough time was given to allow the full development of skills, before the activity was changed. These shortcomings had a negative effect on the progress that pupils made. Generally, pupils behave well and are keen to take part.

129. The school's involvement with local soccer clubs improves the pupils' attitudes to sport, and the coaching they receive supports their learning well. The inclusion of dances from different countries in the programme of work helps pupils appreciate the richness and diversity of British society. A new PE co-ordinator has been appointed, but has yet to take over responsibility. However, she has already made a good start, by revising the subject policy and adapting the new scheme of work to suit the school's needs.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

130. Attainment is in line with standards expected in the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages. Although only one lesson was observed in Key Stage 2, judgements have been made after scrutinising previous and current work, checking planning and talking to pupils. Nationally produced guidelines have been introduced to aid planning and are being adapted to meet the school's need.
131. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils show a good awareness of Christian and Jewish customs and traditions and describe special occasions such as Easter, Christmas, and Hanukkah. They know about the significance of Holy Books such as the Bible and the Torah and have written their own prayers and rules for living. Pupils in the Year 1 classes have a good understanding of family values and have explored family trees. They understand that the practising of customs and traditions gives a sense of belonging 'this shows that they belong to God.'
132. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to learn about special occasions, places and people. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 investigate the richness and diversity of other faiths by learning about the Hindu celebration of Divali. As pupils progress through Key Stage 2, they are encouraged to respect the values and views of others. This is used to very good effect in Year 5 when exploring the importance of the Qu'ran. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils know the significance and meaning of some of the main teachings and traditions of Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. Pupils in Year 6 extend their knowledge of sacred books and discuss personal qualities such as 'anger, happiness, sadness and trust'.
133. Overall, the quality of teaching in religious education is satisfactory with pupils, including those with special educational needs, making satisfactory progress. Where teachers' subject knowledge was good, as in years 1 and 5, pupils made good progress in lessons. Pupils are managed well, good quality resources are used effectively, and good strategies used to motivate pupils. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves by careful questioning and reflection. Teachers take great care to engender a high level of respect for all opinions and beliefs and this is reflected in the pupils' good attitudes and behaviour. Good use is made of day-to-day assessment to cater for individual needs, and pupils' knowledge and understanding is checked at the end of each lesson. In Years 3 and 4, pupils use a range of high quality personal and reported writing to record their growing knowledge and understanding about world faiths in the 'Nazareth News' or the 'Shepherds' Times'. Such opportunities are providing pupils with exciting opportunities to extend their literacy skills through creative writing. There are good links with local churches, with pupils' experiences much enriched by the involvement in weekly assemblies of a local minister of religion. These links have also provided pupils with valuable experiences such as a 'school wedding' and 'baptism'.
134. The co-ordinator has not yet monitored nor evaluated standards, nor has she been able to share good practice. Consequently, there is a lack of consistency in the provision being offered especially towards the end of Key Stage 2. Displays using artefacts from major world faiths have contributed to the good cultural development of pupils and the provision of opportunities

for pupils to research, discuss and debate issues, contribute significantly to a growing awareness of citizenship.

135. The co-ordinator's action plan includes continuing to adapt national guidelines in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus; the development of systems to identify what pupils know and can do, and then how to use of this information to inform planning for future lessons. Although Year 2 has used the Internet to investigate Judaism, the co-ordinator is aware of the need for more computer software to support learning in the classroom.