

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **BUSHBURY HILL INFANTS SCHOOL**

Wolverhampton

LEA area : Wolverhampton

Unique Reference Number : 104290

Headteacher : Mrs B Hawkins

Reporting inspector : Mrs Judith P Hicks  
02063

Dates of inspection : 11<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> January 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 704140

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 nursery
Type of control :	County
Age range of pupils :	3 to 7 years
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Old Fallings Lane Wolverhampton WV10 8BY
Telephone number :	01902 558230
Appropriate authority :	The governing body
Name of chair of governors :	Mrs M Pemberton
Date of previous inspection :	February 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<i>Team members</i>	<i>Subject responsibilities</i>	<i>Aspect responsibilities</i>
Mrs J Hicks Registered Inspector	Mathematics	Attainment and progress Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Teaching Leadership and management The efficiency of the school
Mrs E Jay Lay Inspector		Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Mrs M Attwood Team Inspector	English Religious education History Areas of learning for the under-fives	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mr E B Gill Team Inspector	Science Geography Physical education	The curriculum and assessment Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mrs J Joy Team Inspector	Information technology Art Design and technology	Special educational needs Equal opportunities

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*Paragraph*

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- The staff and governors work as a close-knit team to provide firm support for the pupils and their families. The school's partnership and warm relationships with parents and the community are strengths.
- Staff work very hard and have a genuine concern for the well-being and academic progress of the children.
- From a very low starting point, the children make good progress in the reception classes.
- Steady progress is made in Years 1 and 2, with good development in reading and mathematics (but overall attainment remains below average in English and mathematics at the age of 7.)
- A majority of the pupils reach an average standard for the age-group in science, information technology, religious education and in all other subjects by the time they transfer to the junior school.
- The school is implementing national projects for literacy and numeracy with energy and commitment, and is using these initiatives to improve standards further.
- Teaching is in general thoroughly competent and 42% of the lessons seen by inspectors were good or better.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- Most pupils behave well in lessons, but a small minority of the children have poor self-discipline and waste teachers' time and energies.
- Despite recent improvements, attendance is still below average.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop personal independence and take on responsibilities.
- Nursery provision has solid value and provides well for the children's social development, but the pupils do not make enough progress in literacy and numeracy.
- The deployment of support staff and use of their time is not fully effective.

**The school's strengths more than outweigh its weaknesses. Areas where shortcomings have been identified will form the basis of a post-inspection action plan to be drawn up by governors. This will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils attending the school.**

## How the school has improved since the last inspection:

The school has made considerable progress since the last inspection. Up to date policies and schemes of work are now in place for all subjects and there is improved provision for information technology and the foundation subjects, in line with recommendations in the last report. Arrangements for analysing baseline assessments and national test results at 7 are well in place and realistic targets have been set. Formal arrangements for monitoring standards and the quality of teaching are in place, and governors are playing an increasing and constructive part in this process. Registration procedures have been improved with the introduction of an optical mark reader (OMR) system, and energetic efforts are being made to raise levels of attendance.

## Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 7-year olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	<i>Key</i>	
			<i>well above average</i>	<i>A</i>
Reading	E	C	<i>above average</i>	<i>B</i>
Writing	E	C	<i>average</i>	<i>C</i>
Mathematics	E	D	<i>below average</i>	<i>D</i>
			<i>well below average</i>	<i>E</i>

The information shows that achievement in recent national tests is well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, but is broadly in line with similar schools. Inspection findings show that higher attaining pupils are reaching the expected standard in English and mathematics by seven, and that many others are approaching this level. From a low starting point at five, good progress is being made in reading and mathematics. In science, information technology and religious education, attainment is average for the age-group by the end of year 2, and steady progress is being made in all other subjects.

## Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years
English	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	n/a	Satisfactory
Information technology	n/a	Insufficient evidence
Other subjects	n/a	Satisfactory

**Teaching was satisfactory or better in 96% of the lessons seen, and very good in 3%; 4% were unsatisfactory.**

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

## Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Most pupils behave acceptably, often responding well in lessons, but staff have to work very hard to manage a small minority of difficult children.
Attendance	Lower than average but improving
Ethos*	Sound overall. Generally strong and positive relationships between teachers, classroom support staff and pupils, but tensions sometimes created by pupils with social or emotional problems.
Leadership and management	Good leadership is provided by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators. The role of governors is developing strongly.
Curriculum	Broad and balanced, with effective implementation of literacy and numeracy projects. Effective systems of assessment developed.
Pupils with special educational needs	The needs of the many children with learning difficulties are effectively met. Further development needed in the management of acute emotional and behavioural problems.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Sound, with good attention to pupils' moral development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory resources and accommodation. Good numbers of support staff. Effective arrangements for training and professional development of staff.
Value for money	Thoroughly satisfactory

\* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

## The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's good progress in reading and in some other subjects.</li> <li>• Approachable, friendly headteacher and staff.</li> <li>• High standards of care for the pupils.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very few parents are worried about standards of behaviour.</li> </ul>

Inspectors' findings bear out the views of parents.



## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to raise standards further and improve the quality of educational provision, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- **Review the nursery curriculum to extend opportunities for learning through a wider range of practical experiences and structured play, and to ensure that more progress is made in the key skills of literacy and numeracy.** *(See paragraphs 75, 77, 88).*
- **Develop further strategies for the management of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties by**
  - ⇒ developing a clear and positive role for support staff in this area;
  - ⇒ ensuring that immature and troubled children have opportunities for active learning and structured play beyond the nursery and reception classes;
  - ⇒ providing more structured activity during the midday break, with further training of supervisory staff;
  - ⇒ continuing to seek additional external support for these pupils as a matter of urgency.  
*(See paragraphs 12, 16, 20, 44, 53).*
- **Sustain the present efforts to improve attendance further.** *(See paragraphs 15, 43).*
- **Provide all the pupils with more opportunities to think for themselves and to take on more responsibilities in class and around the school.** *(See paragraphs 14, 35).*

**In addition to the key issues above, the following recommendations should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan:**

- Develop guidance on the teaching of handwriting *(paragraphs 95, 97).*
- Consider how higher attaining pupils can be further extended in mathematics and information technology *(paragraphs 31, 99, 137).*
- Review school aims to reflect the school's commitment to raising standards *(paragraph 50).*
- Consider bringing forward the cycle of school development planning so that it is in line with the budget-setting process and the financial year. Extension of the plan to cover two or three years would provide a productive longer-term perspective *(paragraphs 54, 64).*
- Set in place a rolling programme for the replacement of major items of equipment *(paragraph 66).*
- Review the timetable, taking steps to prevent loss of teaching time *(paragraph 68).*
- Look at the deployment of support staff and the use made of their time *(paragraph 67).*

## INTRODUCTION

1 Bushbury Hill Infants School had 182 boys and girls aged from four to seven on roll at the time of the inspection, broadly average for infant schools in England and Wales. The school's nursery class provides places for up to 60 three- to four-year olds on a part-time morning or afternoon basis. Children are admitted to reception class in either September or January as they approach their fifth birthdays. In the week before the inspection 24 children were admitted to a newly-established reception class, and admissions to nursery were ongoing during the inspection.

2 The school serves a tight-knit community in the Low Hill district of Wolverhampton. The area is characterised by high levels of social and economic disadvantage, and, although most of the children are well cared for, many families live in relative poverty. The attainment of children entering both nursery and reception classes is well below average, with many nursery children showing under-developed spoken language skills and limited social experience. About half of the pupils in the infant age-group are included on the school's register of special educational needs, including a significant number with emotional and behavioural difficulties. These figures are well above average, although the school has no pupils with a statement of special educational need at present. Very few pupils come from a minority ethnic background, and most have English as their first language.

3 The school aims to meet the all-round needs of its pupils; to give them full access to a broad and balanced curriculum; to promote respect for others and equality of opportunity; to establish a partnership with parents and the community; and to promote pupils' enjoyment of learning and sense of personal achievement whilst nurturing inventiveness and creativity. Current priorities identified in the school development plan include introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and improving standards of reading.

### Key Indicators

#### Attainment at Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year		1998	31	35	66
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics	
Number of pupils	Boys	17	22	23	
at NC Level 2 or	Girls	26	28	26	
above	Total	43	50	49	
Percentage at NC	School	65	76	74	
Level 2 or above	National	80	81	84	
Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Number of pupils	Boys	22	22	31	
at NC Level 2	Girls	27	26	31	
or above	Total	49	48	62	
Percentage at NC	School	74	73	94	
Level 2 or above	National	81	85	86	

**Attendance:**

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

		%
Authorised absence	School	11.5
	National comparative data	5.6
Unauthorised absence	School	1.1
	National comparative data	0.5

**Exclusions:**

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

**Quality of teaching:**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	3
Satisfactory or better	96
Less than satisfactory	4

## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### **Attainment and progress**

4 The overall standards achieved in recent national assessments of English and mathematics are well below national average levels, but the school's results match or are only a little below average attainment in schools where similar numbers of pupils are entitled to free school meals. In view of the poor attainment on entry and the very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), the school is judged to be reasonably successful in terms of the numbers achieving the expected level (level 2) in English and mathematics at the age of seven. Good progress is made in reading and mathematics. Pupils with SEN are well supported and make steady progress. The school is less successful in extending higher attaining pupils so that some achieve or come close to the higher level (level 3) before they transfer to the junior school. Although the last inspection report (February 1996) stated that attainment was on the whole in line with national expectations for the age-group, inspectors have found no evidence of any decline in standards apart from the usual minor variations between one year and the next.

5 Many, but by no means all, children enter the nursery with limited social confidence and experience, and under-developed language skills. From this disadvantageous starting point they make good progress in personal and social development and mainly steady progress in other areas of learning. In the reception classes the children begin to make good progress in literacy and mathematics, although in both these areas attainment is still below average at the age of five. Attainment is broadly in line with nationally agreed targets for children entering compulsory education in personal and social development; some aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world (especially early scientific understanding); physical development; and in musical and artistic strands of creative development.

6 Overall attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 1 is well below national averages and expectations for seven-year olds, but is close to the standards achieved in similarly disadvantaged schools. Good progress is made in speaking and listening and in reading, with thoroughly taught phonic skills. By year 2 most pupils can contribute to discussion and express a personal viewpoint in an informal style. They read simple texts for pleasure and information with reasonable fluency, and well established technical skills. They have been taught to use a contents page and index, but some pupils' understanding of what they read is limited by a restricted vocabulary. Steady progress is made in writing, and the pupils have appropriate opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and audiences. Most make sound progress and are beginning to understand how to punctuate sentences correctly by seven, although many pupils do not write fluently and at sufficient length. Handwriting is slightly below average.

7 Average standards in mathematics are well below national averages, but the pupils are making good progress and a majority are achieving, or just missing, the expected level (level 2) by the time they transfer to the junior school. Because staff are, for understandable reasons, focusing on raising the achievement of lower attainers and average pupils, there are virtually no higher-level attainers, although one or two individuals show real aptitude for mathematics. This is a problem which the school is attempting to tackle. By year 2 most pupils have a secure grasp of numbers to 100 and are beginning to develop an understanding of place value (tens and unit). They use mathematical terms in the course of their activities and use information technology (IT) to support presentation of their findings. The recent adoption of the national numeracy strategy is improving mental agility and calculation.

8 Attainment in science is, on the basis of teacher assessments, in line with national averages and matches expectations for the age-group, with steady progress made. The pupils learn to observe

carefully and to explore materials and ideas. Their technical vocabulary is beginning to develop, but skills of prediction and explanation need further development. Pupils' work is appropriately supported by IT, where sound progress is made and average standards achieved. Religious education is in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus, with satisfactory standards prevailing.

9 The pupils make steady progress in all other subjects of the curriculum. They work hard and achieve at least average standards in practical and creative subjects, such as music, movement and physical education.

### **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

10 Children starting at nursery settle down well, making good progress in their personal and social development. When used to the nursery routine, most participate in group sessions and play happily alongside others, in some cases joining in role-play with other children. Some of the least mature children tend to be passive, however, only doing as they are directed by the adults working with them. By the time they enter the reception class, the children are well used to school routines and are beginning to develop a degree of independence, for example when asked to work on a task without direct adult input. Some older reception pupils are able to manage their own materials and activities well, as when a higher attaining group made number lines, using paper, scissors and paste without adult assistance. By the age of five the children meet most expectations for the age-group in their personal and social development.

11 Most pupils in years 1 and 2 have positive attitudes to learning, behave acceptably and have good relationships with staff, often responding with interest in lessons. They respond to questions readily, but do not as often ask questions to seek information or clarify meaning. Most can talk sensibly about their work. They particularly enjoy practical and creative activities, including art, music and physical education, but are also glad to read to adults and express confidence in mathematics.

12 Behaviour in lessons, in assemblies and around the school is satisfactory overall. Most pupils do as they are asked and conform to school routines and class codes of conduct, but staff sometimes have to work very hard to manage a small minority of difficult and disturbed children who occasionally unsettle others. In year 1 the pupils sometimes find it hard to move sensibly between whole-class sessions and work in their groups without a fuss, and they tend to be noisy even when working well at their tasks. Throughout the school the pupils respond well when staff have a positive approach, offering encouragement and confidence-building measures. The pupils usually move about the school sensibly and are quiet and respectful during collective worship. There is some boisterous behaviour outdoors, but this is mostly friendly and high spirited. The pupils need more positive direction during the midday break and at dinner-time, when standards of behaviour and manners tend to deteriorate. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

13 The pupils establish good relationships with one another and are generally kind and helpful, for example when helping a neighbour who does not understand a task. Throughout the school there is surprisingly little unkind or mean-spirited behaviour towards others, and individual differences are accepted without question. The pupils seldom use inappropriate language or gestures except on rare occasions in imitation of older friends or siblings, and there are no racial tensions. They respect school property and can, for example, be trusted to use real money for work in mathematics. The children are pleasant and outgoing when talking on an individual basis to support staff, volunteer helpers and visitors.

14 Personal development in years 1 and 2 is not as satisfactory as attitudes, relationships and behaviour, partly because the pupils do not have enough opportunities to exercise choice, work independently, use their initiative and undertake tasks around the school. The pupils are expected to

tidy away materials, but do not choose or organise learning resources for themselves often enough. Levels of supervision are in general high, largely because of concerns about pupils with emotional and behavioural problems, and this has some adverse effect on the rest. Parent helpers and dinner supervisors in particular are sometimes inclined to perform tasks for the children which they could as well do for themselves. The pupils respond willingly and with pleasure when they are given responsibilities, for example collecting the registers. Expeditions out of school, especially residential trips, provide valuable opportunities which extend horizons and contribute well to the pupils' personal and social development.

## **Attendance**

15 The school has had a significant problem of low attendance for some time, as was made clear in the 1996 inspection report. The attendance rate in 1997/8 was around 85% compared with a national average of almost 94%. This very high rate of absence was clearly unacceptable, and a vigorous programme to improve attendance has now been set in place (see paragraph 43). As the result of the commitment of both the LEA and the school, attendance levels improved to 90% in the term preceding the inspection. Although this is still well below national averages, the improvement is nevertheless a notable achievement. There are a few late-comers, but most pupils arrive at school on time and sessions begin promptly.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **Teaching**

16 The overall quality of teaching is sound, with consistently good teaching in some classes. Of the lessons seen, 96% were satisfactory or better, of which 42% were good or, occasionally, very good. Three lessons (4%) were judged to be unsatisfactory because the teacher was unable, on those occasions, to handle a small number of seriously disruptive children effectively. These pupils, all boys, unsettled the rest of the class so that little progress could be made.

17 Teaching staff have good basic professional skills and most have in-depth knowledge of the early years and Key Stage 1 curriculum, largely as a result of effective subject co-ordination, collaborative planning and good professional development. This has resulted in the smooth and successful introduction of national literacy and numeracy strategies, where teachers are showing developing skills in management of the sessions.

18 Teachers set high standards for pupils' behaviour and for the presentation of work in books. There are also generally high expectations of what the pupils can achieve, especially in terms of the good progress expected of lower attaining pupils in English and mathematics. There is not always enough active awareness of what the small number of abler pupils might achieve.

19 Teachers are well prepared for lessons, and planning is thorough and conscientious. There is a successful format for weekly planning of literacy and numeracy hours: here and in other subjects lessons usually build systematically on what has been taught before and take into account lesson evaluations and assessments of pupils' progress. Although teachers know exactly what they intend to do and what activities are planned for the pupils in each session, learning objectives as articulated in short-term plans do not always have a sharp enough focus. Expectations are not often made clear to the class at the start of lessons, although there are good instances of summing up at the end.

20 There is some skilled class management and organisation, for example in the reception classes. Here learning is developed through a range of practical experiences, with a well planned learning environment and some opportunities for structured play to extend learning. Play opportunities in the

nursery class are soundly planned but should be enriched further, with more careful planning for progress at various levels. Teachers of immature and difficult pupils, especially in year 1, sometimes expect them to remain sedentary and inactive for too long a stretch, and need to make more provision for independent activity or structured play.

21 Relationships between pupils and staff are generally good. Some teachers have particular strengths in the quiet, positive and encouraging management and control of their class. In the best cases, there is a consistently relaxed and productive atmosphere in the classroom, which provides a secure haven for the pupils. Other staff make occasional mistakes, for example raising their voice over the pupils when they become noisy.

22 Throughout the school groups are well organised and the tasks set, especially in English and mathematics, are usually appropriate for each ability group, including pupils with SEN. Teachers know the pupils well and have them well weighed up, so that work is matched to individual needs. When worksheets or cards are used, these are often school-made, with vocabulary carefully chosen to ensure that the pupils can read and understand instructions.

23 Resources are in general very effectively used and often painstakingly made by teachers. Those used in numeracy sessions, for example, are particularly useful and support a good pace of learning. Most staff use their time well, although there are one or two classes where the pace of teaching is less lively than it might be. Support staff are well briefed before the start of lessons, with support teachers involved effectively at the planning stage. These staff have strong professional skills and make a good contribution to the teaching of groups within the classroom, including support of SEN pupils. However, they spend too much time listening passively to teaching inputs and do not always intervene effectively with difficult or disturbed children.

24 Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously, with positive remarks often accompanied by a useful indication of the context of the activity. Sound use is made of homework especially to consolidate progress in reading, spelling and mathematics.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

25 The school provides a broad and generally balanced curriculum which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. The school rightly places a strong focus on literacy and numeracy to meet the needs of its pupils. The integration of spoken language and literacy into the foundation subjects is well planned and monitored and, although some strands of the curriculum are slightly under-represented in terms of the time allocated, overall provision for the foundation subjects is satisfactory.

26 A number of initiatives have led to positive changes in the curriculum since the last inspection. Priority has been given to writing and the development of emergent writing skills, contributing to a marked improvement in national assessment results at the end of Key Stage 1 last summer. The former topic-based approach to the foundation subjects has changed to single subject delivery with cross-curricular links, so that progression in each subject can be more readily identified. Strategies are being developed to encourage collaborative and independent learning, but these have not yet had much effect in some classrooms. The successful introduction of the literacy hour, in line with the National Literacy Strategy, and the early implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy (on the basis of the draft scheme of work, 1998) have been effectively planned and managed. Early indications from staff monitoring show that these developments are beginning to contribute to improved progress in some respects, for example mental arithmetic.

27 Planning throughout the school is good and contributes to the progress made by the pupils. There are written policy statements and schemes of work in place for all subjects to ensure continuity and progression. Medium term plans translate curriculum material into a detailed sequence of subject specific and linked units of work, closely monitored by subject leaders for their match and provision of assessment opportunities. Weekly forecasts indicate objectives, resources, organisation of support and individual targets. Monitoring of planning and curriculum delivery is well established in the school, leading to improvements in target setting and the quality of teaching.

28 Personal and social education is seen as an important part of the curriculum. Circle time has been introduced in all classes and, together with assemblies and religious education lessons, emphasises sharing, awareness of others and feelings. The school has developed a drugs education policy implemented through health education lessons. Although sex education is not formally taught, it is included as part of the science programme; pupils' questions are answered as they arise, in line with the policy of the governing body.

29 Taking into account the age-group of the pupils and pressing demands on staff time, the range of extra-curricular activities is good, with a recorder group, school productions and musical events. Educational visits, including overnight residential trips, add breadth and interest to the curriculum.

30 The school makes effective provision for equal opportunities, reflecting its policy and aim to provide and promote equal opportunities for all pupils in all areas of the curriculum whatever their sex, race, ethnicity or special circumstances. Baseline and national assessments are analysed by gender, and staff seek to act on the basis of this information. The school is beginning to address the issue of pupil self-stereotyping. For example, during the inspection a woman police officer, who had already spoken to pupils about her work, visited to read a story to one class.

31 The school makes considerable efforts to cater for pupils of differing abilities and levels of maturity by organisation into ability groups within each class. Staff prepare work of varying levels of difficulty for literacy and numeracy sessions. This work is on the whole well matched to each group's stage of learning, except that the very highest attainers are not always sufficiently stretched in mathematics. In other subjects work is largely undifferentiated, but the lower two groups often receive additional help, and more is expected of average and above average pupils. Those who fall just below the expected level are being specially targeted at present in an attempt to increase the numbers achieving the level 2 by the end of year 2. This initiative appears to be meeting with a degree of success. When feasible the school also needs to consider those who might achieve higher levels.

32 Good provision is made for the considerable numbers of pupils in each class included on the special needs register because of general learning difficulties and delayed development. There is also generally sound support for those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, but this is not as consistently well managed. Class teachers are given non-contact time to produce individual education plans (IEPs) for SEN children at stage 2 and upwards; these are followed on a daily basis and referred to in planning by most staff. The plans are on the whole clearly written with measurable targets, but are almost exclusively concerned with literacy development or social behaviour; the need for target setting in other areas of the curriculum such as mathematics is sometimes overlooked. Lower attaining pupils and those with SEN are assisted in the classroom by an additional teacher, nursery nurse or classroom assistant. This support is often of good quality, but the nursery nurse and classroom assistants should be encouraged to take more active responsibility for children with social and emotional problems. IEPs are reviewed each term in line with the Code of Practice, and SEN pupils move stages on the SEN register as appropriate.

33 Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning of the school and is used effectively in monitoring pupil progress and informing planning at different points in the school. Baseline



assessment takes place as children enter reception, providing a clear picture of what they can do. Regular observation and the assessment opportunities identified in the planning are used to build up records of achievement across the subject areas. Records are kept for phonics, reading and personal information. These together with the pupil portfolio, which includes samples of work chosen and assessed by the children and their parents, represents the record of achievement for each child and a picture of their personal development. Class portfolios are maintained as evidence of National Curriculum attainment with work samples selected which match specific levels or attainment statements. School portfolios for English, mathematics and science include moderated material for all attainment targets and levels of the National Curriculum, whilst useful portfolios are also being built up in other subjects. Analysis of pupils' performance in national assessments has helped the school to identify weaknesses, for instance in Attainment Target 1 in science, leading to changes in teaching strategies and emphasis. There is a useful marking policy in place which leads to good, constructive marking. The outcomes of assessment are used to develop teachers' plans and play an important part in the quality of education provided.

### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

34 The school makes sound provision for pupils' spiritual development. The acts of collective worship are well planned and include music, prayer and time for reflection. Assemblies are used as opportunities to encourage the children to think about others, as on one occasion when the children were encouraged to reflect on shared human needs rather than the differences between people. At the end of religious education lessons, the children are sometimes invited to join in a prayer, responding with respect. They are regularly involved in special celebrations, including Christmas and festivals from various world faiths. There are good links with a local church, which the pupils have visited for an Easter service.

35 The school lays great emphasis on moral development, for which provision is good. Parents speak highly of the values and attitudes represented by the school. There is a positive approach to behaviour, the staff set high standards for conduct and relationships in the classroom, and praise is used constructively to create a positive ethos and encourage acceptable behaviour. Moral codes and the distinction between right and wrong actions are a regular focus of assemblies and circle time. The older pupils talk about the way in which the environment can be protected, and some are able to relate these ideas to their own neighbourhood. In a lesson on blindness, the reception children were helped to gain insight and understanding into the needs of people with disabilities.

36 Social development is sound. There are generally good relationships between adults and pupils, with teachers and classroom support staff providing a model of courtesy, care and respect for others; however, this is not always the case during the midday break. The pupils are expected to contribute to the running of the school by distributing and collecting registers and they help to tidy away resources in all classrooms. There are some opportunities for year 2 pupils to make choices and to undertake research for themselves, using books or a computer facility. Overall, however, the pupils are not given enough chance to think for themselves and they are not trusted to work without close supervision. This limits their opportunities for personal development.

37 The provision for cultural development is sound. The school has good links with the community and invites visitors into school on a regular basis. Grandparents and older people who have links with the school come into school to talk about past events, raising the pupils' awareness of the local heritage and the people and places around them. Visiting artists and musicians have been invited into the school, with their work and performances much enjoyed by the pupils. Visits have been made to the local church and to nearby places of historical and environmental interest.

38 The school promotes an understanding of cultural diversity through a range of information and

story books, posters and displays around the school corridors and in all classrooms. Visits from people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and cultures are encouraged: for example, a Sikh parent brought in artefacts from her wedding to show to the pupils and a display was set up in the hall. The pupils have created a display depicting the Chinese New Year, and parents have shared with them in Divali celebrations. The multi-cultural travelling 'Zip' theatre visits the school regularly and recently enacted an Asian story *The King with the Dirty Feet*. Year 1 pupils followed up the visit by working collaboratively to create a large story board display in the corridor retelling the story. This aspect of pupils' cultural development helps to prepare them for their lives in a diverse society.

### **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

39 Pupils and their families are very well known to the staff and this forms a good basis for the school's provision for their care and welfare. Teachers and classroom support staff show warmth, care and concern for their pupils and this gives the children the confidence to trust them. Pupils approach adults readily, both to talk to them about small events but also to ask for help if they are troubled by other children's behaviour or distressed for any other reason. This openness in communication helps to safeguard against bullying and parents are confident that any incidents are dealt with promptly and effectively. Newly admitted children in the nursery and reception classes are handled with skill, and settle down quickly with a minimum of upset. Year 2 pupils are well prepared for their transfer to the junior school, with very good liaison between the staff concerned to ensure a smooth transition.

40 The pupils are treated with kindness and sensitivity, but also with firmness when the situation demands it. A record is kept of serious incidents of misbehaviour. The emphasis is, however, on praising positive behaviour. The extensive system of rewards is appreciated by the children, and they are, for example, proud to describe why they have been awarded stickers. Teachers make clear the standards that are expected in the school and constantly remind pupils of the importance of kindness, caring and consideration for others.

41 There are detailed procedures for monitoring pupils' academic, social and emotional development including those pupils with special educational needs, with individual records of achievement and also portfolios to which both parents and pupils contribute, thus providing a valuable element of self evaluation.

42 In view of depressed economic and social conditions in the neighbourhood, the school nurse spends half a day a week in the school and works closely with the staff to monitor pupils' health and welfare. She carries out routine health screening and liaises with the headteacher where there are any concerns. The nurse follows up these concerns if necessary with visits to the families or referrals to community health facilities. Although their main concern is attendance, educational social workers also offer valuable support to families.

43 The effort and commitment of the school and LEA officers to improve attendance is notable. Each unexplained first day absence is followed up either by telephone or by a home visit from the assistant educational welfare officer, whilst weekly monitoring of the registers by the educational social worker and headteacher helps to identify any emerging patterns of absence, which are again investigated. The school constantly reminds parents of the importance of good attendance and has an effective incentive system of individual and class certificates for improved attendance. These strategies together with the determination and commitment of all those involved have been successful in increasing attendance to just over 90% in the term preceding the inspection. Although the school is aware that not all parents share its views on the importance of regular attendance, it is rightly continuing to make great efforts to improve the attendance rate further.

44 Arrangements for ensuring the safety and good supervision of pupils during school sessions are

clearly set out in the staff handbook. Despite regular inputs from the headteacher and other senior staff, however, the midday break and mealtimes in the dining hall are not civilising experiences. The dining room itself is a temporary building approaching the end of its useful service and at a distance from the school. With poor design and acoustics, the noise during mealtimes reaches an unacceptable level. Supervisory staff have been trained, but are over-extended and do not make sufficient efforts to improve table manners or to play constructively with pupils in the playground. Pupils with minor emotional, social or behavioural problems are not always contained effectively at such times, and problems are sometimes exacerbated by a failure to channel the pupils' energies.

45 There is a nominated person for child protection, who has been appropriately trained, and local joint procedures are well understood by teaching and classroom support staff. Other health and safety measures, including an annual audit of the school premises, are in place, but no formal record of fire practices has been maintained: this is now being organised. A number of minor safety and supervisory issues have been drawn to the attention of the headteacher and are currently being addressed.

### **Partnership with parents and the community**

46 A constructive and supportive partnership with parents is a central aim, and its achievement is a strength of the school. A great deal of thought and energy has been spent in involving parents in the life of the school and in finding ways of supporting families in the community. Staff in the nursery visit each family before a child starts school. There is a policy of open access which parents appreciate and family members, including young siblings, are seen to be made welcome.

47 Newsletters for parents are of a high standard. They are well written and friendly and make frequent references to parents being welcome; for example a warm invitation is given to join story time each week. The prospectus and information booklets, such as a pamphlet on helping children to read, are written in a clear and straightforward style. Annual reports to parents provide a useful record of personal development and general progress and are appreciated by families, but they tend to lack a sharp enough focus on attainment. These would be improved by giving more detailed information about what pupils have achieved.

48 Several parents help in the school on a regular basis. The school has an active approach to making parents feel capable of helping both their own and other people's children. This is done through a scheme called 'Patchwork' in which parents receive tuition from a teacher from the local Adult Education Institute. The success of the scheme is illustrated by the fact that some parents proceed to obtain further qualifications, give regular support to their own children and also help in classrooms. The school has a flourishing Parent-School Partnership scheme which organises talks and workshops on curricular matters, particularly literacy development. The use of reading diaries, which parents say are regularly read by teachers, is another useful link. The school provides an additional and more unusual service for the parents by organising a savings bank, efficiently run by the school secretary. An indication of the success of these initiatives is the relatively high proportion of parents - about 80% - who attend parents' evenings. All these initiatives help to create positive links with parents and represent considerable achievement.

49 The school has close and constructive links with the junior school which shares the same site. Good use is made of community facilities, and many visitors come to the school; for example members of the fire brigade have visited to read stories to the pupils. Increasing contacts are being established with the local church, and the vicar occasionally takes assembly. The health and welfare services are well used, and pupils make visits to art galleries, local festivals and also to the local allotments, where they are made very welcome. All these arrangements make a constructive and valuable contribution not only to pupils' progress but also to the life and development of the community.

## **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Leadership and management**

50 The school has a statement of written aims drawn up by staff and governors and kept under regular review. This sets out appropriate general aspirations, including a concern to meet children's all-round needs, provide equality of opportunity and establish a partnership with parents; most of these intentions are reflected well in the day to day life of the school. Policy documents such as the statement on behaviour are consistent with the school's expressed aims and are well understood by all members of the teaching and classroom support staff. However, the aims statement does not, except by implication, express the clear commitment to raising academic standards which is a current preoccupation of the headteacher, senior management team and staff. This omission should be considered when time allows. Governors have helped to set appropriate and attainable targets for improving standards in reading, writing and mathematics in the course of the next two or three years.

51 The headteacher's leadership, although individual in style, is a strength and she has the full confidence of the pupils, their families and the community. She knows just what is going on in each classroom and understands well the pressures which affect staff, but does not hesitate to tackle difficult issues, including any areas of under-performance, as they arise. This has contributed to an improvement in teaching quality since the last inspection. The deputy headteacher and other members of the senior management team provide good professional support and organisational skills, ensuring that the school is able to build on experience and accept change. Teamwork is good, and both teachers and support staff work hard in the interests of the pupils, showing real commitment to the school.

52 Subject leadership is good, and significant progress has been made in the review of subject policies and production of schemes of work since the last inspection. National initiatives in literacy and numeracy have been smoothly and effectively implemented as a result of hard work, careful planning and the judicious use of external advice, training, and support. Involvement in the Effective Early Learning (EEL) project is also beginning to change classroom practice. Co-ordinators as well as the headteacher are increasingly taking responsibility for monitoring teachers' planning and evaluating the standards achieved, with some effective analysis of baseline and end of key stage assessments. Co-ordinators are beginning to receive some non-contact time to visit the classrooms of colleagues, with agreed guidance on the criteria and procedures to be adopted. The focus for observations is appropriately determined by current priorities set out in the school development plan. There are close working relationships between the staff responsible for parallel classes in each year-group, with joint planning ensuring a consistent approach.

53 The school's ethos is thoroughly positive and supports the progress of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The atmosphere occasionally becomes tense, however, when the disturbed behaviour of one or two children places pressure on staff and disrupts learning for the other pupils. Understandably, teachers' confidence can falter in these circumstances.

54 The school has a well produced and detailed school development plan (SDP) drafted by the senior management team and discussed fully by staff and governors. The plan includes a review of the previous year's targets and achievements, with a useful analysis of indicators. There is a rationale for the main priorities, which are appropriately separated from routine, ongoing tasks, and a well designed format is adopted for action planning setting out individual responsibilities and resource implications. Measures of success are included, but tend to be over-general and too hard to quantify. The current major priorities have been chosen for good reasons, and support higher standards. In order to improve further the school's already effective process of development planning governors should consider bringing the planning cycle forward so that the SDP is aligned more conveniently with the process of

budget-setting. In some areas plans have been sketched out for the next two or three years, and staff and governors are well aware of the coming year's priorities; it would now be helpful to include this material in the SDP to give a more organised long-term perspective.

55 A joint governing body has responsibility for the neighbouring junior school as well as Bushbury Hill Infants, and there are joint committees for finance and general purposes and curriculum in addition to various statutory panels and working groups. Despite long agendas, these arrangements are felt to work well by all involved, ensuring a degree of continuity between the infant and junior schools and facilitating management of a complex shared site. Governors represent between them a good range of community interests and possess skills, including educational expertise, which are of value to the school. Attendance at meetings is good and a clear record of proceedings is maintained. Governors know the school well and most visit regularly. Each takes an interest in a specific area or aspect of the curriculum, including literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. Recently governors have been effectively involved in monitoring. Overall this is an effective governing body which fulfils its statutory obligations conscientiously and provides support for the headteacher and staff.

56 There are minor omissions from the governors' annual report to parents, and, because of a recent long-term absence, there has been some delay in starting the second cycle of teacher appraisal. In all other respects the school fulfils its statutory obligations, including those for collective worship. Special educational needs are organised in line with the Code of Practice.

### **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

57 The main school has a good balance of teachers, suitably qualified and trained to teach the age-group. This is a stable teaching staff, and the current profile reflects a combination of experience and service which has been effectively deployed to balance expertise in each year-group. The nursery is staffed appropriately, with an advantageous child to adult ratio.

58 Nursery nurses and classroom assistants, together with support teachers, make a valuable contribution to support pupils' learning, especially during group work. In many instances the degree of briefing and planning to target children and work in the classroom adds to learning, but consideration must be given to how support is best used when the class teacher is giving an input to the whole class. All staff show commitment to the aims of the school and are making a contribution to its work.

59 The school has placed an effective emphasis on professional development both for teaching and support staff, to strengthen the curriculum and respond to recent educational innovations. The school's practice reflects a good balance between individual needs and whole school priorities. Benefits are seen in the development of curriculum policies and schemes of work, and in developing classroom practice, especially in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Training needs are identified in the school development plan, through appraisal and curriculum monitoring. The first cycle of appraisal has been completed for teaching staff, and a timetable established for the second cycle. An effective system of review for nursery nurses and classroom assistants is also in place. Job descriptions, which are reviewed annually and signed by the individual and the chair of governors, give a clear indication of roles and responsibilities. The school handbook provides excellent information for staff and visitors.

60 The school building is clean and well cared for. Classrooms are of reasonable size for the numbers on roll, and there are quiet areas in the corridors for children to sit, read or carry out work. Attractive displays in the classrooms and public areas which focus on different areas of the curriculum enhance the learning environment, and efforts have been made to make the main corridor attractive, with a small fountain and flowers. The central position of the library makes for good access, but books are not displayed sufficiently invitingly to encourage young readers and its use as a base for skills

learning and independent research is under-developed. There is a satisfactory purpose-built nursery separate from the main building.. Despite many representations on the part of the school, the dining hall facilities remain dingy and unattractive, and the acoustics give rise to excessive noise. Maintenance of the external areas is a serious concern for the school. A new security fence has been erected in an effort to reduce vandalism and break-ins, but this has already been damaged.

61 The range and quality of learning resources in the school is satisfactory. With the exception of music, all subjects have the necessary resources for teaching the National Curriculum. Provision for the literacy and numeracy hours is good, with materials accessible and very efficiently organised. Information technology provision is adequate, with a computer in each classroom.

62 The school makes very good use of the site and adjacent countryside as a resource for learning. Educational visits and visitors to the school are effectively used in a number of curriculum areas. All have an impact on the pupils' knowledge, understanding and language development.

### **The efficiency of the school**

63 The school makes effective use of the resources available, with careful financial planning by the headteacher and governors. Fluctuating roles, cuts in LEA funding and the need to manage short-term funding and grants from various sources all create pressure and make long-term planning a complex matter. With careful projections, judicious use of grants and a prudent approach to financial management, the school has succeeded in avoiding budgetary problems in difficult times. The need to make a teacher redundant last year was identified early and managed appropriately by governors. The undoubted need for caution has in the past led to above-average sums being carried forward at the end of the financial year, but monitoring indicates that this is unlikely to arise in the current year, with an acceptable planned surplus of about 4% of the total budget.

64 Governors manage the budget in the light of a common understanding of educational priorities, even though the SDP is not at present written until after the budget has been set. The school should now consider co-ordinating the timetables for budget setting and school development planning. Good oversight and control of the budget is exercised through the finance and general purposes committee. Budgetary statements are regularly monitored and virements are discussed in detail before being authorised. The headteacher and governors seek the best value for money, especially when purchasing more costly items, and tenders are invited for major contracts such as site maintenance.

65 The use of ear-marked funds, including those allocated for professional development and training, is delegated to the headteacher, with a full account of this expenditure included in the school development plan. All such funds are used for the intended purpose, in line with the given criteria. A modest sum is added to the budget by the LEA to reflect the high numbers of pupils with social deprivation and special educational needs, but the school has complete discretion about how this funding is used. Some release time is provided for staff to write and review IEPs, and the remaining funds are used appropriately and in line with governors' policy to increase classroom support staffing. This is enabling the needs of SEN pupils with learning difficulties to be met appropriately, but there is a need to give rather more priority to those with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

66 Routine expenditure on resources for learning is determined by the senior management team in the light of priorities in the school development plan. This is enabling major initiatives such as the literacy and numeracy strategies to be adequately resourced. Governors should now consider drawing up a long-term plan for the maintenance and replacement of major items of equipment such as computers and audio equipment. Resources are generally well organised and utilised by staff and pupils.

67 There is effective deployment of class teachers, and very good use is made of limited non-contact time by co-ordinators. Support staff, some of whom are funded from Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) sources, make a good contribution to the pupils' progress for most of the time, especially when working directly with groups. They are well briefed, often in writing, before lessons begin, but more thought needs to be given about how they can be occupied most productively during direct teaching inputs by the class teacher. There are already instances of good practice, for example, when support staff complete focused observational records of spoken language during whole-class sessions.

68 The school's management of time is not fully efficient. Time available for teaching at Key Stage 1 is just over the minimum recommended 21 hours a week but is below national averages, and there is some erosion of time when classes stop work early before the midday break. The literacy and numeracy hours are timetabled almost exclusively in the mornings, squeezing time for the foundation subjects and creating unnecessary pressure on the hall timetable so that, for example, physical education and music lessons are often rushed.

69 The school runs smoothly on a day to day basis, with well established routines and systems for the supervision of pupils. Arrangements are clearly set out in an informative and clearly written staff handbook. Clerical back-up provided by the school secretary is well established and reliable, and registration procedures, criticised at the time of the last inspection, are now efficient and in line with statutory requirements. There are sound and well understood procedures for ordering goods, with appropriate arrangements for the division of duties. Recommendations made in the course of the last local audit have been acted upon. The school fund accounts are well maintained; they are audited and presented to governors as required.

70 In view of the average levels of funding received, the quality of teaching and curricular provision and the steady progress made by the pupils, the school is judged to provide thoroughly satisfactory value for money.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

71 There are 60 children attending the nursery for morning or afternoon sessions, with a further 52 children in the two reception classes. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average for children in the three- to four-year old age-group and, although good progress is made in personal and social development, with steady progress in other areas, the majority of children are still significantly below average levels of attainment when they enter reception. Despite generally good progress in the reception classes, the attainment of the majority of children at around five is below the expectations set out in nationally agreed 'desirable outcomes', particularly in language and literacy and in mathematics.

#### Personal and Social Development

72 Good overall progress is made in personal and social development. Most children reach the expected levels of confidence, independence and sociability by five, but a number of less mature children do not achieve these standards.

73 There is a successful emphasis on personal and social development in the nursery. On entry to the nursery many children are lacking in confidence, have limited social skills and have difficulty in making relationships with adults and other children. The children respond to the warm, caring atmosphere of the nursery and settle into a learning environment where they are made to feel safe and secure. They are generally well behaved and conform to routines, for example answering their names at registration, but some remain over-reliant on the staff for direction and guidance. A significant minority of these children do not select play opportunities independently or extend their play activities beyond what is suggested to them.

74 In the reception classes the children are secure and happy, accepting school routines and classroom expectations. A small number of children are lacking in self discipline but generally the children play and work well together. They can be trusted to carry out their activities with low-level supervision, for example in the 'play room' or when working in their maths groups. They are beginning to become more aware of the needs of others, respond positively to adult expectations of right and wrong and show interest in stories and the activities of others.

#### Language and Literacy

75 Attainment in language and literacy is well below the level expected for children by five. The children's language and literacy skills are particularly underdeveloped on entry to nursery. Many have unclear speech, limited listening skills and respond to conversation with nods, gestures and single words. They are not able to use language to direct their play and have a limited vocabulary with which to express their needs. As they become more settled into the nursery they make satisfactory progress and their speaking skills improve but are still well below the expected level. The children enjoy books on a one to one basis, but develop very little understanding of print by the time they transfer to reception. They learn to listen to stories as a group, and some show confidence in making marks on paper. More could be done to develop specific early literacy skills, including awareness of sounds and rhyme.

76 In the reception classes the children listen with greater concentration and their speaking skills are more developed. Progress is seen in their written work. The children enjoy looking at books and can talk about the pictures. Most of the older pupils are making good progress in early reading skills, with a small number reading books at an appropriate level. These children recognise letter sounds and many are able to write their name unaided. However, there are still a significant number whose speech is poor



and use of language limited, and by five these children still recognise few letters and cannot write their name. The school has recognised the low level of some children's development in oral language and attainment in literacy, and is making a conscious effort to identify difficulties and provide a programme which will meet specific individual needs.

### Mathematics

77 Attainment in mathematics is well below average. On entry to the nursery the majority of the children are unfamiliar with numbers, have poor recognition of shapes and colours and find difficulty in recognising the simplest patterns. Although they enjoy number songs and rhymes they need a lot of adult support to relate to the numbers involved. The children make limited progress in using numbers in their everyday activities, and many cannot count objects reliably beyond 2 or 3 when they transfer to reception. They are able to sort by colour and shape but need a lot of reinforcement and encouragement. The children are beginning to use mathematical language to describe size and capacity. Although progress is generally sound, nursery staff should make the development of early mathematical understanding through structured play a higher priority.

78 Good progress is made in the reception classes and at around five some children can identify numbers to 10 and count in sequence confidently, with a small group of high attainers able to count to 20 and beyond. The children learn to match, sort and put objects into sets by colour and shape, and are starting to use the correct mathematical language when comparing height, weight and shape. Reception children learn a number songs and rhymes, and the most capable can place numbers correctly in a number line. Higher attainers are beginning to write numbers accurately. Good progress is made in mathematical vocabulary, number recognition and counting sets, but overall attainment is still below the expected level at five. Awareness of number operations is limited and the children have little experience of creating mathematical patterns and recording their findings.

### Knowledge and Understanding of the World

79 On entry to the nursery most children have had limited opportunities and experiences to develop an awareness of the world around them and, although some are naturally observant, understanding is below the level which would be expected for their age.

80 Children in the nursery and the reception classes are being provided with a variety of experiences to help the development of knowledge and understanding of the world around them. In the nursery pupils are encouraged to talk about their families and events when they come in each day, attention is drawn to special occasions such as birthdays or a new baby in the family. The nursery has an attractive small garden area which is used to introduce flowers and trees and where a bird table has been introduced. Bulbs have been grown in the classroom. The children visit places of interest in the locality including a 'magic garden' and a farm. They have opportunities to explore basic materials such as water and sand. Some children can describe simple properties, state which containers hold more or less and observe how to make a wheel turn faster by pouring larger amounts of sand onto it. More could be done to stimulate the children to investigate and solve problems for themselves for themselves, however, with a wider range of structured play activities.

81 In the reception classes children have been exploring the senses and have talked about the sense of sight in detail. This study has been linked to other areas of the curriculum, for example through the story of Jesus healing the blind man, making 'feeling patterns' of the children's names and a display of objects relating to the senses, encouraging the children to experience and talk what they can feel. The children have looked at an old teddy bear as an introduction to studying objects from the past.

82 In both nursery and reception classes there are opportunities for children to use information

technology. They enjoy listening to story tapes, but need a lot of adult input to make meaningful use of the computers. Good use is made of visitors such as police officers and the dental nurse. Steady progress is being made, limited only by the below average language skills of a larger than average number of children.

### Physical Development

83 On entry to the nursery pupils have the expected level of skill and control of movement. They run, jump, climb and balance with purpose and confidence. They enjoy using wheeled toys and the larger apparatus for climbing and crawling. On entry to the nursery the use of tools and other small objects is not so well developed and the children need a lot of practice and guidance to use brushes, pencils and scissors effectively. Children were observed rolling and moulding play dough with interest and enjoyment.

84 In the reception classes physical skills are what would be expected of children in this age-group; they move around with vigour and confidence, and are developing an awareness of space. They dance with good response to the music, demonstrating improved performance after practice. Progress is seen in the use of tools and writing implements, and the majority of children use pencils, brushes, scissors and small pieces of equipment appropriately and with average control.

### Creative Development

85 On entry to the nursery a significant number of children are reluctant to join in with singing and playing percussion instruments. They are slow to respond to the experiences provided and need encouragement to join in painting and making things. Nursery children tend to play in an individual way and only on occasions was play observed where the children showed imagination and good use of the play materials. They have opportunities to use a selection of paints and other media and materials, resulting in painting, printing and masks of an average standard. The children make steady progress, learning to join in singing and to enjoy stories.

86 In the reception classes the children have good opportunities for creative development including painting, model making, music and dance. Children participate in well planned imaginative role-play, for example in the 'opticians' in one class. Although much of the work is below the expected level for children of this age there are some interesting and original drawings and paintings.

### General

87 The quality of the teaching in the nursery is sound with some good teaching, especially seen in some successful large group sessions. Support staff make a valuable contribution. Teaching is mainly good in the reception classes, with classroom organisation and management a strength.

88 The staff in the nursery work well together as a team and have shared aims to provide a secure and pleasant environment for the children. All staff are involved with the planning the curriculum. There is good understanding of the areas of learning for the under-fives and awareness of the 'desirable outcomes' for children's learning. Routines are well established, there are high expectations for behaviour and praise is used effectively. Learning activities are well organised and resources are carefully prepared. In the reception classes there is a good awareness of the progression into the National Curriculum. However, in the nursery insufficient attention is given to developing the children's skills in language and literacy and mathematics; the low level of attainment in these areas of learning is a cause for concern and needs to be addressed. Objectives and targets matched to the wide spread of maturity in the nursery are not clearly identified at any stage of the planning, and play activities do not have written learning objectives. This makes it difficult to monitor progress securely.

89 There are effective procedures in place to assess children's attainment on entry including home visits. Teachers keep detailed records of the children's development in all areas and make regular observations. The parents are kept fully involved in their children's progress and children take books home regularly. Resources for learning are satisfactory but there is insufficient provision for the children to experience, investigate and interact independently.

## **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

### **English**

90 Attainment in English is below national averages and expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. The level achieved in recent end of key stage assessments is well below national averages, but is broadly in line with attainment in similar schools. From a low starting point, a majority of the pupils reach the appropriate level (level 2), with a small number above, demonstrating good progress. The school has well above average numbers of pupils with special educational needs, and this has a marked influence on overall attainment. Teacher assessments at the end of the key stage are in line with the moderated outcomes of the written tasks and tests.

91 Baseline assessments indicate that on entry to school the pupils' speaking and listening skills are well below the level expected. They make generally good progress but the range of attainment is wide and standards remain below average at the age of seven. The majority of pupils in year 2 listen attentively and contribute well to discussions. Pupils discussed care of the environment in one of the lessons seen, and here their contributions were relevant and related to their own experiences, although ideas were informally expressed. Older pupils answer questions appropriately and are able to initiate and maintain conversations, but the range of their vocabulary is relatively restricted. Questions were raised in some of the history lessons seen, but the pupils do not regularly ask questions when seeking information. There is a small but significant group of pupils who are reluctant speakers and whose listening skills are limited. This is often linked to a general level of poor behaviour and the staff have to make special efforts to encourage these pupils to talk about their work and take part in discussions.

92 Pupils make good overall progress in reading from a low level of attainment on entry to school. The higher attaining pupils are achieving standards well in line with those expected for the age-group, with average pupils and many of the lower attainers close to the appropriate level. Pupils are gaining in confidence in reading and experience pleasure in using and reading books, participating fully in guided reading sessions during the literacy hour. Technical reading skills are well developed. The correspondence between letters and sounds is thoroughly taught, so that even younger and less capable pupils know letters by name and sound and use their phonic knowledge effectively to tackle unfamiliar words. The pupils are aware of punctuation and many read fluently and expressively, but understanding of the text is sometimes limited by restricted vocabulary. Pupils in year 2 seek information by using the contents page and index of reference books; in a geography lesson, for example, they used books to find out about the Arctic. The minority of pupils whose reading skills are well below the expected level for their age-group all have identified special educational needs.

93 There is also a wide variation in attainment in writing, with steady progress made from a low level of attainment on entry to school. Some pupils are reaching levels appropriate for their age, but at present there are none reaching a higher level. Pupils write for a variety of purposes including stories, lists, news, instructions and invitations. In year 2 the pupils have written poems about autumn and the stars. Written exercises are used to improve spelling, use of vocabulary and grammar, and the majority of pupils in year 2 write in sentences and understand the use of full stops and capital letters. Higher attainers use other forms of punctuation, such as question marks. Nevertheless, pupils do not write at length and there is some lack of fluency. Writing is generally done on unlined paper, and, although letters are correctly formed, handwriting tends to be somewhat uneven in size and spacing, slightly below the standard expected for seven-year olds.

94 English lessons are almost invariably soundly taught, with examples of good teaching. Where the teaching is good the lesson is well structured, moves at a good pace which keeps all pupils actively involved and control of the class is good. Teachers have good understanding and knowledge of the requirements for the literacy hour, plan lessons effectively for the age-group and prepare resources well. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils and use praise and encouragement effectively. Generally support staff are used in a way which provides meaningful help for pupils, and play a valuable role in their learning. The review of work at the end of the literacy hour is usually effective: pupils explain their work and the older pupils are encouraged to evaluate what they have achieved. Written assessments are carefully done and used in future planning. Some groups of pupils have been targeted for extra reading support which has produced improved progress for the individuals concerned. Good use is made of the results of national assessments to highlight particular strengths and weaknesses in the standards achieved.

95 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress within the targets set in individual learning programmes. In all year groups a significant number of pupils have made sufficient progress to be removed from the register.

96 Generally pupils are attentive and interested during English lessons. They participate well in the class activities and settle down to individual written work quickly and quietly. The pupils enjoy reading and many in year 2 say that they enjoy literacy sessions and lessons involving books.

97 The subject is enthusiastically led by a highly competent co-ordinator, and the introduction of the literacy hour has been very successfully managed. Staff have attended training and have planned the implementation with thought and thoroughness. Planning and curriculum development in English is based on a recent literacy audit which has established priorities, set targets and identified ways in which parents and governors can be involved. The policy for English is well written but lacks guidance on the teaching of handwriting. This omission should now be addressed. The school has made a considerable effort to involve parents effectively in the literacy project, organising meetings and inviting parents into school for activities. Good records are kept of pupils' progress and attainment. The school is aware of the need to make English a high priority subject and have a positive approach to raising standards further.

98 Resources are satisfactory. There are sufficient books and materials for the implementation of the literacy hour and for a progressive reading programme, but not enough extension reading for the more capable readers either in classrooms or the library. The library is well sited but under-used. The curriculum is enhanced by regular visits by a theatre group, the local librarian and visits to the local library, and a Book Club where parents and pupils can save towards the purchase of books.

## Mathematics

99 Attainment in mathematics, as measured by national assessments at 7, was well below national averages in 1997 and 1998 and somewhat below average for schools with a comparable intake. In a continuing effort to raise standards the school has this year replaced its scheme of work with the draft scheme developed by the National Numeracy Project (NNP), and has introduced a daily numeracy hour across the school. Preliminary indications are that this initiative is producing positive benefits. Although overall standards are still below the national average, a majority of year 2 pupils are working at or only just below the expected level for their age-group (level 2), whilst many lower attaining pupils are not far behind. The school's understandable priority is to bring as many pupils as possible up to an acceptable standard of mathematics, without allowing too great a gap to develop between the most and least capable. For this reason, only a handful of pupils are at present approaching the higher level (level 3), and these have not been taught enough to be secure at this level. As NNP methodology beds in, the difficult issue of catering for the highest attainers should be given further thought.

100 The pupils do best in number. By year 2 most have a good grasp of the number system to 100 and are beginning to develop an understanding of place value (tens and unit), for example adding and subtracting tens readily from a given starting point. They recall number facts to 10 and many can calculate in their head to around 20, although this tends to be slow, with some laboured counting on fingers. Able pupils double and redouble numbers, as when they are asked to find  $8 \times 4$ . The pupils apply their understanding of number to money and have rather above average practical skills in making up sums from various coins and in understanding what change is due. They are beginning to use standard measures to record length and height, but were not at the time of the inspection as secure in understanding weight. Very few are yet beginning to tell the time using an analogue clock. Most pupils can name simple two- and three-dimensional shapes and describe some of their mathematical properties, to an appropriate standard.

101 Work on using and applying mathematics is rather less strong, and, despite the efforts of staff to extend mathematical vocabulary, all but the highest attaining pupils find it difficult to put their ideas about mathematics into words or to frame questions about mathematics. Examples of completed work and displays in various classrooms do show that the pupils can, with adult support, collect, organise and present information, using mathematics to help them interpret their findings and draw valid comparisons, but there is a need to strengthen this strand. Mathematics is used effectively to support learning in science, whilst year 2 pupils have completed simple work on co-ordinates of relevance to their work in geography.

102 Progress through Key Stage 1 is largely good, with the most marked progress made by older pupils in the reception class and by pupils in year 2. With a few exceptions, many children's mathematical understanding is well below average when they enter reception and a few pupils of statutory age still find it difficult to count a set of 3 or 4 objects accurately. From a low starting point, mathematical vocabulary develops well; the pupils are taught to read, write and order numbers and begin to develop the understanding and skills they need to make further progress. Year 1 provides thorough consolidation and a secure practical basis for later work. In one lesson, for example, the pupils explored and then recorded every combination of coins to make up 5p, using real money. They were later encouraged to explain and record their findings by means of a diagram.

103 The teaching of mathematics was invariably sound or better in the lessons seen and is good overall. Consistent and well planned teaching is a major factor in the good progress now being made by the pupils. The school has benefited from the impact of professional development undertaken by the co-ordinator and from in-house training on current national initiatives attended by the whole staff. As a result subject knowledge is fresh and up to date, with common teaching approaches and efficient planning formats adopted. Each session has clearly defined learning objectives and most are undertaken

at a good pace. In the best lessons there is a positive, lively and encouraging approach with an effective focus on oral work and mental skills. Learning resources for each lesson are painstakingly prepared by staff, with good attention to detail, as when teacher-made worksheets are individualised to ensure that each pupil works alone when this is intended. Teachers have high expectations and insist that work in books is well presented; however, some are not as successful in persuading groups to complete written work quickly. Each child's progress is accurately tracked, and most group work is well designed to meet the learning needs of the pupils.

104 The pupils enjoy mathematics, especially number work, and by year 2 most express confidence in the subject and have a sense of success. From the reception classes onwards, there is good concentration in direct oral sessions at the start or end of sessions, with some keen responses to questions. Where class management is most skilled, the pupils work hard in a relaxed and productive atmosphere during group work, showing some ability to get on without direct adult input. Some classes tend to work noisily, however, and this can interfere with the rate of progress.

105 The subject is well managed, with a knowledgeable and effective co-ordinator, and the staff have worked hard together to achieve a consistent approach. Standards and teaching are being monitored constructively, starting with oral mental arithmetic sessions, and there is some useful analysis of assessment outcomes. Resources to support teaching have been exceptionally well organised to support each learning objective within the NPP. With the formal launch of national initiatives in mathematics next year, the subject will become a major priority within next year's SDP. The co-ordinator is well aware of the steps that need to be taken in order to raise standards further.

## **Science**

106 Standards of attainment in science for Key Stage 1 are in line with national averages. Inspection findings are consistent with previous inspection findings and teacher assessments at the end of the key stage. A sound introduction to science is given in the reception classes.

107 Throughout the school children are given opportunities to undertake a range of scientific investigations in which they observe, compare and describe their findings. Reception children investigating the topics of sight and colour can name the features of the eyes, understand the purpose of blinking and can recognise the uses of other senses when blindfolded. They are able to talk about coloured inks spreading in water and how they break down into separate colours.

108 At Key Stage 1 pupils in year 1 are able to describe and sort things into groups, recording them as they do. They are able to represent their observations in different forms. They are beginning to make simple comparisons and offer reasons, for instance why certain objects are made from specific materials. Year 2 pupils can begin to see that materials can have a range of uses depending upon their properties. They can compare objects in terms of different attributes, exercise more advanced recording skills and offer explanations for their findings. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress. Continuity and progress are seen in the growth of scientific vocabulary, facts and the processes of science. Emphasis needs to be given to developing the higher order skills of prediction and justification.

109 The attitudes of pupils towards science can be varied, ranging from good to unsatisfactory. An enthusiastic approach to enquiry and discovery was observed in many children but there are classes where the noise and calling out went beyond simple eagerness to contribute and take part and had an impact on others in the classroom. Most pupils listen attentively to instructions and explanations, handle materials and apparatus sensibly and work purposefully on their tasks. They are keen to demonstrate their knowledge responding well to questions and concentrating on recording their information. Loss of interest and unrest only occurs when discussion or teacher input goes on too long.

110 The standard of teaching in science throughout the school is consistently satisfactory and sometimes good. Lessons are generally well planned, with the best having clear objectives and involving pupils in direct ‘hands-on’ experience. In all classrooms there is a clear attempt to use scientific enquiry as the means by which knowledge and understanding are developed. The balance, however, between teacher and pupil involvement is not always correct and more attention should be directed to group investigations rather than whole class methods. Most teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and use questions to relate science to the pupils’ own experience or to extend their reasoning. Lessons are invariably well resourced and in some instances allow children to study a topic in different ways, adding to their understanding. The use of differentiated tasks and systematic intervention by teachers to reinforce understanding and set targets are seen in the best lessons.

111 The school has a detailed policy and guidelines for the teaching of science. The subject is capably led by a co-ordinator who has oversight of teachers’ planning and monitoring of classroom delivery and understands the approach science teaching should take in the primary school. The subject is adequately resourced and makes good use of its environment and visits to extend the pupils’ understanding.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS**

### **Art**

112 Pupils in key stage 1 gain general experience of drawing, painting and collage as well as having opportunities to print, model with clay and work with textiles. By year 2 they control pencils or paint brushes well to produce representational pictures; for example, they painted pigs following on from a literacy activity, paying careful attention to size and detail. In one session a group used fabric, sequins and safety pins to create snowflakes. Older pupils have learned how to use a water colour wash to create a background, later using charcoal and white crayons to represent winter trees in the snow. There are opportunities for observational painting and drawing, as when pupils use water colours for observational painting of fruit. Pupils work in three dimensions, for example creating masks representing people they would like to be.

113 Pupils make satisfactory progress in practical art activities across the range of experiences. For example in collage work they learn to apply adhesives in a controlled way, fixing tissue paper, glitter and foil, and progress by using a range of textiles to develop their ideas. When drawing pupils use pencil and crayons, and make satisfactory progress in handling pastels and charcoal. Year 2 pupils make progress in colour mixing, for example learning how to add white and black to create lighter or darker shades when making autumn leaf prints. This is helping them to develop the necessary vocabulary to talk about the use of colour, texture and line in their work. They make progress when allowed to experiment, for example adding dry powder paint to wet paper to create new effects. Some work seen was based on the work of well-known artists or designers, this is sometimes indicated in teachers’ plans.

114 The pupils enjoy practical art activities. They share the resources provided for them well, but are not often enough given the responsibility for selecting and setting out their own materials. Pupils take pride in their work and share in the achievements of others, as in one year 2 class where pupils discussed another child’s charcoal drawing of winter trees. Pupils have some opportunities to work collaboratively. For example after a visiting theatre company acted out a story, year 1 pupils worked together to create a large storyboard for display in the corridor.

115 The teaching of art is invariably satisfactory and teachers have sufficiently secure subject knowledge to ensure that steady progress is made in investigating and making. Planning is satisfactory and is collaborative between year groups. Plans are based on the school's detailed scheme of work which outlines the progression of art skills to be achieved by pupils across the full range of art activities for painting and drawing, collage, modelling and printing. Teachers assess pupils' artwork each half term and make evaluative comments on the planning sheets, which are passed from class to class to ensure progression and continuity. Although pupils use computer graphics software to create pictures throughout the key stage, how this links to the school's art scheme is not made sufficiently clear.

116 The subject is led well by the co-ordinator who has designed the school's scheme of work for art. She offers advice to colleagues and is involved in monitoring the subject half termly by looking at teachers' planning after the work has been delivered and assessed. She regularly collects samples of work for the art portfolio which has recently been contextualised and dated.

117 The resources for art are well organised, plentiful, easily accessible and appropriate to this key stage across the range of art experiences. There are opportunities within the art curriculum for pupils to study the work of other artists such as Lowry. Visits to Wolverhampton Art Gallery extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject. They have seen Victorian representations of people at work, and this has supported work on portrait painting, also linking with work in history.

## **Design and technology**

118 Progress throughout the key stage is satisfactory across a range of materials. By year 2 the pupils are able to design a simple 'snowman' puppet and write a list of materials they need to add features. Adults assist with the cutting out, but a good number of pupils are able to sew the felt front and back of the puppet together independently, using a running stitch and leaving an opening for the hand.

119 From the scrutiny of work pupils are seen to progress in textiles from sewing bookmarks made from binca to sewing their own felt puppets together. Mouldable materials such as dough are used to make Christmas tree decorations and egg cups. The pupils make satisfactory progress in work with reclaimed materials like boxes and paper to make insects and by the end of key stage 1 they are making vehicles with wheels that turn. They design and make healthy sandwiches by selecting their own fillings and evaluate by tasting. They cut and stick materials together to make paper hats and calendars, showing increasing control of tools and satisfactory attention to the quality of finished products. Throughout the key stage pupils make steady progress at all stages of the plan, design and make process. They begin to evaluate their work by talking to adults about how they feel about their work. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils make written evaluations about what they have made and comment on the fitness for purpose. For example, pupils evaluated flower vases made from reclaimed materials, which were tested to check that they would hold water.

120 Pupils enjoy design and technology activities. They usually concentrate well and remain on task as they do their work. They co-operate with one another and share the available resources. There are sometimes opportunities for pupils to select their own materials, but in other lessons these are set out for them, limiting independence. The children are not sufficiently encouraged to collaborate on larger pieces of work which would involve sharing ideas and making joint decisions.

121 The teaching of design and technology is usually satisfactory, but was unsatisfactory in one lesson as the result of the disruptive behaviour of a minority of pupils. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the plan, design, make and evaluate process and all activities are designed to encompass these stages. Teachers' planning is satisfactory and collaborative within year groups. Each half term they use the school scheme to select from a range of focused design tasks linked to topics, covering the



range of materials expected at this key stage. After each activity teachers evaluate how pupils managed the activity on their planning sheets.

122 The subject is well led by the co-ordinator. She has prepared a detailed scheme of work which teachers use in their planning and has provided in-house training on how to organise and deliver the subject. The subject is delivered in the classroom during group sessions and pupils are often supported ably by a classroom assistant who is briefed by the teacher on what is to be achieved. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' half termly planning retrospectively, enabling her to be fully involved in the evaluation of what is achieved throughout the school. The resources for learning are well organised, sufficient and appropriate to this key stage. Opportunities are found for pupils to use information technology to support their work in the subject.

## **Geography**

123 It was possible to observe only a limited number of lessons in geography during the inspection, but observations were supplemented by the scrutiny of completed work and interviews with children, together with examination of portfolios and teachers' planning. Progress in geography is seen to be sound and consistent across the school with specialist vocabulary and geographical skills being consolidated and developed steadily. Understanding is built up through various themes and a range of experiences which move the pupils from local to wider and contrasting environments. Mapping skills and fieldwork feature strongly in the school's approach to the subject.

124 In the reception classes the children are able to see how the weather affects the types of clothes worn and they can match simple symbols to weather conditions. They are able to describe seasonal changes and what people do in winter and summer. In looking at the school and local area they are able to show where they live and talk about buildings and jobs. Pupils in years 1 and 2 have looked at the immediate neighbourhood, made routes identifying places of work, carried out traffic surveys, discussed methods of transport, and are able to talk about attractive and unattractive features of the locality. As part of their topic on food, year 2 pupils discuss how the climate influences what is grown, how food is produced and transported. They are able to follow directions, recognise map symbols and make plans of real and imaginary places. In the course of lessons on Arctic life they extract information from a number of sources, explain the differences between their own locality and the Arctic Circle and demonstrate that they can identify these places on the globe.

125 Pupils' responses to geography are good. They commit themselves purposefully to tasks, particularly when these require sorting or searching for information. Concentration, especially when the work is challenging and meaningful is sustained. They contribute well to discussions and show a good recall of facts. Older pupils are capable of working independently of the teacher, sharing and using resources correctly and sensibly.

126 The teaching of geography is good and sometimes very good. The best teaching is exemplified by clear goals, well planned and differentiated activities and an intention to develop concepts through reinforcement and different approaches. Very good links are made with literacy development. Realistic yet challenging expectations are set and the pupils are given responsibility for information-seeking and enquiry.

127 The school has a good policy supported by detailed guidelines for the teaching of geography. Assessment procedures and records of attainment are in place to monitor pupils' progress. The subject is capably led. Resources for the teaching of geography are satisfactory, with good use of the school grounds and local environment to widen pupils' knowledge and understanding.

## **History**

128 It was only possible to observe two history lessons, both in year 1, but from the scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils, progress is judged to be satisfactory. The school has revised its approach to the teaching of history and now sets aside a block of time to work on historical topics such as the Sixties and Victorian Britain. This allows an in-depth study of each topic and promotes progression and understanding. These changes have been well planned and effectively managed.

129 In the lessons observed, the pupils were interested in discussing the Sixties and appreciated the differences between articles used in daily life then and now. They asked questions and related the objects seen to their own experiences; for example, one child mentioned that his grandfather had an old record player, whilst others talked about black and white television sets. Their observations showed an understanding of change affecting the way people live. The older pupils are encouraged to develop skills in obtaining historical information from books. They are beginning to understand how to use a time line.

130 The teaching of history is sound. Teachers have relevant knowledge and understanding of the subject and use a variety of ways to make lessons interesting. During a lesson on the Sixties, for example, music of the times was used for the pupils to dance to.

131 There is a new policy and scheme of work for history, which form a good basis for planning. However, the pupils do not have separate history workbooks, so that finished work tends to be fragmented. Samples of work are retained in class portfolios, but individual progress is not always clear. Resources are adequate, with books and artefacts supplemented by the use of materials from outside sources. A good range of visits to places of historical interest is used to extend and enhance the history curriculum; pupils have recently visited Shugborough Hall and Northicote Farm, a Tudor building nearby.

## **Information technology**

132 Only one introductory lesson on how to create a computer picture was seen during the inspection. Other evidence on standards and provision for information technology (IT) has been gathered by watching teachers' interventions during group lessons, the scrutiny of pupils' work, wall displays around the school and in classrooms, examining the school's IT portfolio and talking with pupils.

133 By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 1 standards in IT are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils use their mouse and keyboard skills, for example to word process a list of the materials needed to complete a task in design and technology. They are able to enter information onto a graphing package, as when in science they investigate the use of various materials around school, learning to create and interpret graphs.

134 Pupils enter the key stage knowing how to use and drag with the mouse. Reception pupils, for example, can position sections of a picture together and show control when selecting a colour balloon from the screen. Progress throughout Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. Pupils can draw lines and shapes of different colours on the screen and they make satisfactory progress, for example learning how to create their own recognisable representations of snowmen or Christmas trees. From being able to make lists of words ending in 'ff' during the literacy hour they progress on to word processing sentences, showing the ability to edit and alter their work. They create their own musical compositions by selecting and combining given phrases, and they also make satisfactory progress in interrogating a CD-ROM database from an on-screen index to research information about Arctic animals. From early in the key stage pupils are supported in the basic skills of loading, saving and printing their work.

135 All pupils enjoy using IT in their work and behave well when using the computer. They talk about what they are doing and work with increasing concentration on the task they are involved with. Pupils co-operate well together in pairs whilst working at the computer but it is only with teacher intervention or adult support that they actually collaborate on joint efforts. Pupils are happy to demonstrate their IT abilities and skills to other members of the class. They generally take an interest in one another's work.

136 The teaching of IT is satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject across the whole programme of study and statutory requirements are met to the expected standard. All teachers are familiar with the software titles pupils are using and all intervene to move pupils forward in their learning. Lower attaining pupils are well supported, sometimes by parent helpers who are made clearly aware by teachers of the aims of each activity.

137 The subject is well led by the IT co-ordinator who has produced a very useful whole-school IT forecast outlining teaching and learning objectives with suggested activities for their delivery. Teachers plan effectively in year groups, using the system of forecasting well, and pupils develop their IT skills, knowledge and understanding through activities clearly linked to other areas of the curriculum. Teachers assess and evaluate pupils learning in IT half termly and this information is used to plan the next half term's work. This process is monitored well by the co-ordinator. The results of these evaluations should now be used to support higher attaining pupils, with teachers having higher expectations of what they can achieve in their IT work. Computer ratios allow one computer per class and teachers effectively manage this limited resource during group work sessions in the classroom.

## **Music**

138 Music lessons, especially singing, give real enjoyment and contribute to the pupils' cultural development. Satisfactory progress is made through the school, well in line with the average for the age-group in performing and composing. There is provision for listening to music from different times and places, for example at the start and end of assemblies and hymn practices, but this was not sufficiently integrated with other aspects of the music curriculum in the lessons seen. Dance and mime sessions provide appropriate opportunities for the pupils to respond to and interpret the mood of various musical pieces.

139 The pupils are familiar with a good range of songs appropriate for the infant age-group. They fit the words in accurately, stay together well and produce a pleasing, rounded tone especially when singing quietly. Songs are learned quickly and steady progress is made in most lessons. By year 2 the pupils are beginning to sustain two separate vocal parts successfully with a little adult support. They can name simple pitched and untuned instruments belonging to the school, holding and playing them correctly. The younger children are beginning to compose simple patterns, for example by alternating short rhythmic phrases or sequences of loud and soft sounds, and in both year 1 and year 2 the pupils create sound effects to evoke special occasions or events in the natural world. For example, recent compositions on a fireworks theme used effective combinations of percussion, vocal sounds and freely blown recorders. The class performance of a year 2 composition involved the interpretation of graphic symbols on a simple score and showed the pupils' developing appreciation of mood and texture. Although the pupils listen to music with apparent appreciation, their musical vocabulary is limited and they find it difficult to talk about what they have heard.

140 The pupils' response is usually good, and they look forward to music lessons with pleasurable anticipation. They sing with enthusiasm, almost all joining in whole-heartedly and following a lead accurately. Suggestions to improve performance are listened to and acted upon. Sometimes listening is very attentive, as when a year 2 class listened in silence to the wind before continuing a composition on winter weather. The same class behaved with patience and self-control as instruments were distributed and they concentrated well during rehearsal.

141 Teaching was mainly good in the lessons seen. With the support of a capable accompanist, staff lead singing confidently, providing a clear model for the pupils' own performance. Teachers ensure that words are understood and clearly articulated, and help the pupils to learn melodies accurately. They ensure that each member of the class is well involved and promote enjoyment without sacrificing quality, for example making sure that the children do not shout when they become enthusiastic. There is often good attention to dynamics and tone in singing sessions. In some lessons class management shows high expectations and a skilled use of positive control strategies: the pupils are taught to handle instruments carefully and correctly and to follow the lead of an adult or child 'conductor' with self-discipline. Examples of recent work in the music portfolio show that staff have a secure understanding of composition and simple graphic scoring. A beginner recorder group is being carefully taught by a knowledgeable practitioner, and the pupils are making good progress.

142 Provision for music has developed steadily since the last inspection, with a sound policy in place and a detailed scheme of work for the current year. These documents provide staff with useful indications of the school's expectations, especially in performing and composing. There is scope for strengthening guidance on the development of pupils' musical vocabulary and for giving more attention to listening and appraising. A far wider range of resources for listening is needed, and there is a need to acquire a good CD player when funds permit. With considerable pressure on hall time in the afternoons, some of the music lessons observed were too short for the material to be fully developed; this limited the progress made in some cases.

## **Physical education**

143 During the inspection it was not possible to observe all aspects of the physical education programme and judgements are based on pupils' work in dance and gymnastics. On this basis, progress in physical education is judged to be satisfactory .

144 Reception class pupils are able to match actions to music when learning a country dance. They are able to follow simple instructions, and with practice link sequences together to complete the dance. A number are able to co-ordinate actions with the rhythm and pulse of the music. Year 1 pupils can carry out the basic actions of travelling, and show differences in direction, shape and level. In an imaginative dance about winter, for example, they were quick to develop a sense of mood and stillness and contrast that with vigour and strength as they enacted the actions of the wind on snow flakes. In another year 1 class pupils responded to musical stimuli to walk through deep snow, make a snowman, and so on, with contrasts of shape, speed and balance. By year 2, the pupils are beginning to interpret words into movement competently, show greater control and co-ordination in their responses and make good use of expressive hand and body actions.

145 Steady progress is made throughout the school. Pupils improve their performance through regular practice and by building on previous work and teachers' guidance. There is growing precision in movement, mastery of skills and actions and in the range of ideas generated. Pupils are making less progress in their ability to evaluate and offer suggestions about ways in which their performance might be improved.

146 Pupils have positive attitudes to their physical education lessons. They are keen and enthusiastic, eager to participate and tackle their work with enjoyment and imagination. Behaviour is good, with self control and very little noise or distraction. In paired activities or larger group situations the pupils work well alongside one another. They listen attentively to instructions, observe demonstrations carefully and concentrate fully on their own sequences or actions. They are eager to show their teachers what they can do, with plenty of vigour and determination.

147 Teaching is consistently satisfactory or better. Lessons which have been planned by the co-ordinator are invariably well prepared and managed. Teachers have clear expectations of behaviour and standards of performance. Relationships are good, with support and encouragement given to all pupils and the use of feedback greatly assisting pupils' learning. Some teachers make effective use of demonstrations to improve the quality of pupils' work and reinforce learning. The best lessons have a brisk pace, incorporate all phases of warm up, activity and calming down, and involve systematic intervention by the teacher to challenge and strengthen the quality of movement. More emphasis should be given to the evaluation of performance by the pupils themselves and the discussion of what they and others have done.

148 The curriculum for physical education is broad, balanced and relevant covering all aspects of the subject. The policy and comprehensive scheme of work ensure that pupils progress through the National Curriculum programmes of study in a systematic and progressive way, building on what they have learned in previous lessons.

149 Physical education lessons provide good opportunities for pupils' moral and social development as they work together and share equipment. The school is adequately resourced with a hall, hard and grassed play areas and a good range of games equipment. Leadership in physical education is good, with a strong emphasis on curriculum planning and monitoring of standards.

## **Religious education**

150 Religious Education is taught in accordance with the Locally Agreed Syllabus and meets statutory requirements. The pupils make steady progress and achieve the standard expected for their age-group by the age of 7.

151 The curriculum and scheme of work are under current review, but provide a reasonably balanced approach with an emphasis on discussion and sharing of ideas. Although the lessons seen in years 1 and 2 focused on general social and moral issues, planning and records show that the pupils do have the opportunity to learn about the Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter, seasons such as Advent, and major festivals from other world faiths, such as Divali, with the associated narratives. The pupils learn about special ceremonies such as marriage within different traditions.

152 In the lessons seen, older reception pupils responded thoughtfully to the story of Jesus healing the blind man, showing some understanding of what loss of sight means to the individual. In year 1, pupils contributed ideas and drew upon their personal experience as they discussed family life and thought about how members of a family care for one another. Year 2 pupils considered responsibility for the environment, offering ideas about how the neighbourhood could be improved.

153 Pupils are generally interested and responsive, sharing their experiences openly. Some find it difficult to relate to the subject for any length of time, especially when lessons are held at the end of the day.

154 The teaching seen varied from less than satisfactory to good, but is sound overall. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and select learning activities which are relevant to the age-group

and experience of the pupils. Lessons are usually discussion times and pupils are encouraged to offer ideas in a safe and secure atmosphere. However, on occasions, the children need a lot of teacher input to keep the discussion relevant and meaningful. Sometimes insufficient attention is given to the religious dimensions of general discussions, and this is not identified clearly enough in planning.

155 A monitoring folder is kept to record work. The pupils do not have work books, and any work done is on paper, with samples included in a class portfolio. This makes it difficult for the co-ordinator, who has only recently taken over responsibility for the subject, to follow the progression in pupils' learning and to monitor coverage of the curriculum.

156 The resources for religious education are adequate and centrally displayed and stored. There are a limited number of artefacts for studies of major world faiths. The pupils visit the local church and the Vicar has visited school. There are also links with the church communities, and a group has visited the school to act out plays with the pupils.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

157 The inspection, which was undertaken by a team of 5 inspectors, took place over a period of 4 days (16 inspector/days). Prior to the inspection, documentation provided by the school was analysed. The registered inspector held a pre-inspection meeting, which was attended by 12 parents of pupils attending the school. The school distributed questionnaires, which were returned by 27 families. During the inspection, the team observed the whole or part of 69 teaching sessions, plus registration periods and assemblies, for a total period of 53 hours. Discussions were held with all members of the teaching and classroom support staff. Samples of the pupils' work, records, teachers' planning and school and class portfolios were scrutinised, and a number of pupils read to members of the inspection team. Before the inspection separate meetings were held with the chair and vice chair of governors and with the whole governing body. Discussions or informal conversations were held with the headteacher of the neighbouring junior school, the educational social worker, the LEA's literacy co-ordinator and many parents.

## DATA AND INDICATORS

### PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y2	182	0	95	98
Nursery Unit	29.5 (f.t.e.)	0	33	n/a

### TEACHERS AND CLASSES

#### Qualified teachers (YR – Y2)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.8

#### Education support staff (YR – Y2)

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked each week	75.15

Average class size:	26.5
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#### Qualified teachers (Nursery)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	31.5

#### Education support staff (Nursery)

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked each week	60.25

### FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:	1997/98
	£
Total income	407,742
Total expenditure	396,178
Expenditure per pupil	1,435
Balance brought forward from previous year	30,481
Balance carried forward to next year	42,045



## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	221
Number of questionnaires returned:	27

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	64.0	36.0			
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	72.0	28.0			
The school handles complaints from parents well	44.0	44.0	8.0	4.0	
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	52.0	44.0	4.0		
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	60.0	36.09	4.0		
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	56.0	44.0			
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	41.7	45.8	8.3	4.2	
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	45.8	45.8	4.2	4.2	
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	52.2	47.8			
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	28.0	52.0	8.0	12.0	
My child(ren) like(s) school	66.7	33.3			