

INSPECTION REPORT

BROMSGROVE MEADOWS FIRST SCHOOL

Bromsgrove

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116662

Headteacher: Mr. P. A. Williman

Reporting inspector: Christine Field
9479

Dates of inspection: 17th - 20th January, 2000

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. G. A. M. Strong
Date of previous inspection:	7 th – 10 th October 1996

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			The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Teaching and learning
			Key Issues for action
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			Partnership with parents and carers
Sharon Brown	Team inspector	English	
		Physical education	
		Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	
		Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	
Kath Campbell	Team inspector	Mathematics	
		Art	
		Music	
Jenny Dickins	Team inspector	Geography	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		History	Leadership and management
		Religious education	
		Equality of opportunity	
		Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated to the north of Bromsgrove within walking distance of the town centre. There are 402 pupils on roll: 214 boys and 188 girls aged between four and nine years. At the time of the inspection 71 children were under five years of age. The profile of pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average. Nearly ten per cent of pupils are eligible for free-school meals which is below the national average. Seventy-seven pupils have special educational needs; a figure broadly in line with the national average. Two pupils come from homes where English is not the first language, but no special provision is made. The school's commitment is to "Learning in Partnership" and is in evidence throughout its work.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Meadows First School is a very well led school in which an extremely positive team ethos is enabling shared goals to be realised. The quality of teaching is good overall, and this leads to pupils attaining above average standards at seven and nine years in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education. Through very worthwhile experiences pupils make good progress in most other subjects and are well prepared for the next stage of education. The school targets its relatively limited resources to actually getting things done that will improve quality and raise standards for children at the school now. Very good value for money is achieved. Parents support positively the education of their children to good effect.

What the school does well

- The leadership of the headteacher and senior managers is very good. It focuses on making improvements through good analysis of the quality of teaching and learning, and this impacts strongly on raising attainment.
- The rate of learning is good for most pupils and often very good for those with special educational needs. This results in an above average number of pupils achieving good standards by the time they leave.
- Nearly all the teaching observed was at least satisfactory with about two thirds being of good or better quality. Particularly effective teaching in children's early years gets them off to a good start in education, and there is accelerated learning as a result of very good teaching, and occasionally excellent teaching, in Year 4.
- Excellent relationships and good personal, social, moral, spiritual and cultural development are major contributions to the very positive values which are successfully underpinning the effective learning.

What could be improved

- The levels of challenge in some lessons and the pace at which some pupils work, especially high attaining pupils.
- The organisation of the curriculum, to ensure that pupils have sufficient time to learn in more depth.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1996. Since then good attention has been paid to making management more effective, making improvements to the quality of teaching, and to making more consistent planning and assessment practices. A systematic and rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluation has enabled the school to focus on the aspects of its work that will result in lifting standards. Action planning is now clearly focused on those elements of teaching and learning which have a direct bearing on raising standards. Target setting has raised expectations and is a key feature in sustaining continuous improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
reading	C	A	A	A
writing	C	A	B	B
mathematics	C	A	A	A

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

Standards in the National Tests for seven year olds have risen from an average level in 1997 to well above average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing. Standards compare favourably against similar schools. At the end of Year 4 pupils take National Tests and standards are above average when set against the sample of schools nationally that opt to take them. The school has set quite ambitious targets aimed at keeping standards high, and is well on track to meet these. Findings from inspection show that standards in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4. A new computer suite is not yet fully operational but will give teachers the chance to boost attainment in the future. Writing has been given close attention over the past year and the strategies in place to lift results are beginning to pay dividends in both the quality and level of work seen. Teachers are very successful at helping pupils develop language skills across the curriculum. Pupils' numeracy skills are good and are helped by teachers' keen focus on the need to work with both speed and accuracy.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils like school, most are highly motivated and keen to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils respond very positively to the behaviour code and are fully aware of the impact their actions have on others. Occasionally, a few pupils, usually boys, are silly and stop others from getting on with their work. Behaviour at lunchtime is not as good as in class.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The quality of relationships is a significant strength of the school and pupils are given plenty of opportunities to become mature and responsible individuals.
Attendance	Good.

Pupils benefit from a good all round education. Staff know pupils well and are good role models. Although good provision is made for pupils' personal development in some lessons there are too few opportunities for pupils to organise and manage appropriate aspects of their own learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching has much improved since the time of the previous inspection. Teachers hold very high expectations of what pupils can do and their work is supported by excellent long and medium term planning and explicit targets for raising standards. During this inspection 102 lessons were observed. All teachers were seen teaching English and mathematics. Four temporary teachers were in school to cover for staff absence. In 97 per cent of lessons the teaching was satisfactory or better and in 3 per cent unsatisfactory. In the unsatisfactory lessons there were problems arising from ineffective class management and insufficient gains in learning made as a result. Teaching was of good or better quality in 62 per cent of lessons, very good in 18 per cent and excellent in 4 per cent. The quality of teaching is judged to be good overall and is a key reason why pupils are learning successfully. The very best teaching in the school was observed in Year 4 and here pupils make accelerated progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for, and are very well taught when withdrawn for specific basic skills work. This enables them to work purposefully and productively towards their individual targets. In some lessons in Key Stage 1 there is too little support available for the range of pupils in the class and the pace of learning is not as good as it could be. There is still room for improvement and the most effective teaching practice needs to be shared more to ensure that levels of challenge and the pace of lessons are the best they can be for all pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There are many rich and imaginative opportunities for pupils to learn but too little time for some subjects and ineffective organisation gives rise to a sense of frustration that both teaching and learning have to be hurried.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Early assessment ensures that needs are appropriately identified, responded to well and built upon to ensure these pupils make good progress in learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils have good insights into their own culture, are provided with good opportunities for spiritual growth and there is a true sense of community. Very good provision is made for pupils' moral development and this results in the school being well bonded, happy and harmonious.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Pupils are well looked after and are safe. Staff know pupils well, are caring and responsive to needs. The quality of academic guidance and pastoral care systems are strengths of provision.

The school successfully promotes a “Learning Partnership” with parents and its community to the benefit of pupils’ education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has a very high profile in the school and the very positive values which he holds pervade all of its work. Senior managers work in partnership to take the school forward and have established very effective structures to monitor and review the work of the school. There is a very good team ethos at work with staff showing genuine commitment to, and continued working towards, shared goals aimed at raising standards. The school’s purpose and success so far are resulting from its “joined-up” management.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors take their place at the centre of what the school does. They know its strengths and weaknesses and keep it on track in striving for improvement. They have very effective systems in place for ensuring that all their legal responsibilities are met.
The school’s evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has good insights into its work and knows clearly what it needs to do next to improve. The investment in target setting work is really paying off in raising expectations. The pace of change at the school is about right to ensure that strengths are retained whilst new initiatives are being developed and improvements made.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Overall, the school makes extremely effective use of a relatively small budget, of time, staff, accommodation and learning resources to provide a good rounded education for the pupils at the school now. New technologies are being appropriately developed to support efficient working. The priorities set out in the School Development Plan are both realistic and achievable, and demonstrate collective determination to make the school even better than it is.

The headteacher gives excellent educational direction to the work of the school. The principles of best value are applied throughout the school through a well-structured process of plan, do and review. The school has very good capacity to succeed.

PARENTS’ AND CARERS’ VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils like school and are enabled to become mature and responsible. • Good teaching encourages pupils to work hard and do well. • The headteacher provides good leadership, is approachable and gets things done. • The Care and Summer Clubs are positive features. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour at lunchtime.

The inspection team agrees with parents’ views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The results of the 1999 National Test results for seven year olds indicate that, in comparison with all schools, and those with a similar intake, the percentage of pupils reaching expected levels was well above average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. Results show a rising trend since 1997 in reading and writing but a slight dip in mathematics came after a significant rise in 1998. The percentage of pupils reaching higher levels was above average in all of the three tested areas. There is no significant variation in the achievements of boys and girls, although on the whole, boys tend to do slightly better at this school than results show for boys' achievements nationally.

2. The results of the 1999 optional test results for nine year olds indicate that in comparison with the other schools who took them (see Circular QCA 53/99), the percentage of pupils reaching expected levels was above average in English, mathematics and science.

3. Since the last inspection overall trends have been upward. The main advancement has been in enabling pupils with special educational needs to succeed and the good results are testament to the very good provision made for these pupils. The school has yet to identify any talented or gifted pupils specifically but arrangements which group pupils based on their levels of attainment (setting) in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 are enabling the more able pupils to be better targeted with support. Writing, the relative weakness in results has received considerable attention, and a number of useful strategies have been established to focus on raising standards. The analysis of the most recent writing assessments undertaken by the school demonstrates that progress is being made across both age and ability range, although there is still work to be done in extending the opportunities for all pupils to write more extended creative pieces. The successful introduction of both the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies are having a positive impact on lifting standards. Teachers give good emphasis to teaching basic skills, for example a feature of many lessons is the way in which the vocabulary of the subject is promoted. This results in the pupils having good technical vocabulary which they then use in writing about what they have learned.

4. Children under five enter school with broadly average attainment. Through good quality teaching that promotes effective learning, most children make good progress and are enabled to reach, and in some cases exceed, the levels expected in all six areas of learning by the time they are five. Noteworthy is the good grasp on language and vocabulary which these pupils have by the time they move into Year 1 and the good access this gives to learning across the curriculum. Children's personal and social skills also develop well through the good opportunities extended for them to plan and manage relevant aspects of their own learning and to then assess how they might do better next time.

5. Standards in science, information and communication technology and religious education are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4, and are better than they were at the time of the previous inspection. Inspection findings confirm that overall standards are above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education with well above

average standards in reading and numeracy throughout the school. Through worthwhile experiences pupils make good progress in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, religious education, design and technology, geography and history. They make satisfactory progress in art and music at both key stages. Pupils make sound progress in physical education at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2. All pupils make accelerated progress across the curriculum in Year 4 because of particularly effective teaching.

6. Good attention has been paid to providing breadth and quality in learning and enabling pupils good equality of opportunity. Samples of pupils' work show good attention to detail and a good amount done, although presentation leaves something to be desired in some books. The carousel arrangements that are organised to enable pupils to have experiences of a range of foundation subjects and religious education within a specified time and then move onto the next one, causes a hurried approach to some teaching and is impeding high quality learning, and this requires review.

7. Good investment in training has raised both the confidence and the level of teachers' expectations about what pupils can achieve. The quality of teaching is significantly better than it was and this is a key reason why standards of attainment are rising. All teachers are involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the subjects they co-ordinate and this is an important factor in enabling the school to identify its strengths and weaknesses early on and then take remedial action to bring about improvement. Much effort has gone into establishing a rigorous and comprehensive planning framework to support continuity in learning. Its robustness was tested during the week of inspection to good effect by the fact that four teachers covering for absence were supported well to maintain quality.

8. Target setting very much underpins the 'Culture for Improvement' much in evidence in the school and is a key reason why standards are good. There is less consistent use of targets in lesson planning and in setting targets that pupils can then use to assess their own progress and know clearly what they need to do next to improve. Ambitious but achievable targets have been set for English and mathematics between now and 2002. The school has very good capacity to continue to improve its standards and quality in pursuit of excellence.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The school is well ordered, friendly and caring. Pupils like school and are keen to attend. The quality of relationships at all levels is excellent and this promotes the feeling of safety and security which helps children to achieve well. Bullying instances are taken seriously and responded to effectively. There have been no exclusions in the last twelve months. The school is harmonious, and all pupils are valued for being themselves. Parents appreciate the ways in which the school fosters pupils' sense of responsibility and maturity.

10. Children under five have made a very settled start to their education and show confident attitudes to work, one another and adults. They work with good effort and for prolonged periods, and show immense pride when they are told how well they have done something. By the time they are five most share nicely, co-operate successfully and behave very responsibly.

11. Throughout the school pupils' attitudes to learning are good and this is a key reason why standards are good. Pupils with special educational needs show very good levels of interest due to the very good support given to them, and because their efforts are praised

and recognised. Pupils work with diligence and perseverance; for example, in physical education when trying to move fluently and with great control but appearing as light as possible to represent flight in movement. Pupils work with good effort and imagination; for example, when writing a story together about life in a world in space. Pupils show interest in their work and are well motivated, except on the odd occasion when the timetable demands too much from them with too little time for reflection.

12. Behaviour in lessons is good. Occasionally in Key Stage 1 a handful of pupils, usually boys, show fussy behaviour and seek attention, and this results in them interrupting the concentration of others. At breaks and lunchtime, behaviour can sometimes become a little too boisterous, and noise levels in the dining hall commented upon at the time of the previous inspection, are still too high.

13. Pupils respond well to the code of conduct and know well the effect their actions have on others. Circle time is being used very positively for pupils to think about others' feelings and to develop rules for a more fair society. Pupils know very clearly what is right and wrong, and show respect for one another and their teachers. When given the opportunity, pupils take on roles of responsibility well. They are happy to carry out jobs and are very involved in fund-raising, for example. Too often, too little is expected of pupils in taking the responsibility for organising themselves and working out how best to tackle a piece of work. Pupils' self knowledge is not sufficiently developed. The shortage of time for some practical subjects is limiting the opportunities for pupils to "have a go" and this is stopping them taking the initiative for themselves.

14. Levels of attendance in the school are good and are contributing positively to the good standards achieved.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Teaching is good overall and results in pupils learning effectively, and making good progress in most subjects, by the time they leave at nine years. The teaching of children under five is good. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good.

16. The best quality teaching is in Year 4. Issues concerning lack of subject expertise in evidence at the time of the previous inspection have all been attended to, with good impact on learning as a result. There are no weak aspects of teaching. Teaching quality has improved significantly since the time of the previous inspection. The quality of relationships in the school are successfully underpinning the good standards being achieved. Teachers enjoy being with the pupils and vice-versa and this shows.

17. During the week of inspection in 97 per cent of the lessons seen teaching was satisfactory or better. In nearly 20 per cent of lessons the teaching was very good. Occasionally teaching is outstanding. In three per cent of lessons observed the teaching was unsatisfactory. The three unsatisfactory lessons were in English and mathematics in Year 1 and mathematics in Year 4, and characterised by difficulties with behaviour management and the time loss caused by this. In one case there were also constraints imposed by the timetable arrangements in place to deliver a 'carousel' of experiences which result in hurried teaching and less successful learning.

18. Teaching is mostly good because teachers ensure that pupils at the school have good quality learning opportunities that provide a rich and stimulating diet. They hold high expectations of what pupils can do, and are supported by excellent long and medium term planning. Teachers generally plan lessons well, maintain a productive and purposeful

ethos, manage behaviour well, use a good range of interesting materials and largely structure lessons well to make best use of time, resources and the accommodation. There are problems associated with the arrangements in place to deliver some foundation subjects and religious education, and too much is expected to be done with insufficient time available. This is impeding potentially very high quality teaching and learning.

19. Features of the best teaching in the school include good subject knowledge, skilful questioning and very good attention to basic skills. For example, in every class and across most subjects, teachers are promoting the correct vocabulary. In Reception pupils are taught to use the word 'sets' when sorting in mathematics; in Year 1, 'locality' when map-making in geography and in Year 4 'genre' a term to describe their favourite type of literature. Teachers show extremely consistently high levels of expectation about how well pupils should be doing and most set demanding and challenging work for the range of pupils as a consequence. They are supported by an exceptionally detailed long and medium term planning framework. Most teachers know full well what they want pupils to achieve but written lesson plans are not always specific enough to ensure that pupils' learning is as well targeted as it could be. There is variable use of time targets to aid the pace of individuals' learning when the teacher's attention is elsewhere. In some marking the teacher sets clear goals for the pupils to aim for but in others there is too much emphasis on effort expended at the expense of targeting improvements. This means that pupils' knowledge of their own learning is under-developed.

20. The very good and outstanding teaching involved capturing pupils' attention for the whole of the lesson with challenging work that became progressively harder for all, expecting pupils to organise themselves and care being taken not to over-direct the lesson at the expense of pupils 'learning by doing'. In the plenary session good timing enabled all pupils to share what they had learned, and then reflect upon what they needed to do next.

21. The teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs is good overall and often is very good in one to one, and in small group situations. This high quality reflects the good work of support staff and the well-written individual education plans with the next steps in learning clearly set down. Because targets are specific and measurable, and planning and assessment are effective, good progress in learning results. In some lessons in Key Stage 1 there is too little learning support available for the range of pupils in the class, especially in the independent time within literacy hours and this impedes some pupils' progress.

22. Children under five benefit from good teaching and get off to a flying start in their education as a result. The staff work together well as a team. They understand the needs of young children well and provide a rich range of learning experiences that help children develop a good all round education.

23. Teachers at the school are reflective about their work and constantly seek ways to improve their practice. A timetable of monitoring and evaluation is well established and all teachers are involved in tracking how well pupils are doing, and in target setting work to forecast likely future achievements. Communication between staff works well despite the scattered nature of the buildings. Professional development has been very successful in supporting all staff as they successfully implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

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

24. Pupils at Meadows First School enjoy many rich and diverse opportunities to learn academically and to become well-behaved, sensitive, thoughtful citizens who are respectful of the beliefs and values of others. There has been improvement particularly in the teaching and learning of basic skills and provision for pupils' aged under five and those with special educational needs since the previous inspection. Strengths in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils recognised then have been built upon. However, there is a need to check the impact withdrawal for extra support or music tuition has on pupils' learning across the curriculum. Enhanced monitoring of the organisation of the timetable is required to ensure that time is used more efficiently to enable high quality teaching and learning.

25. The school provides a broad and wide-ranging curriculum that meets the learning and personal, social and health education needs of pupils well, and meets fully statutory requirements. The breadth of the National Curriculum is exploited fully, and the curriculum for the under fives is well founded on the Desirable Learning Outcomes. The learning needs of those pupils with special educational needs are very well considered and setting arrangements in English and mathematics help class teachers meet the needs of the more talented pupils. This good quality provision ensures most pupils make good progress particularly in learning how to use and apply their basic reading, writing and number skills in other subjects.

26. The provision for religious education is well planned and meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. However, some timetable and organisational systems, such as the 'carousel' in Years 2 and 4, and whole year group teaching in Year 3, do not help teachers deliver quality teaching and learning because there is too little actual time available to achieve what is planned. A weakness in monitoring has not identified this shortcoming which is resulting in insufficient time and the inappropriate juxtaposition of lessons. For example changing for physical education and the putting out of apparatus took most of the planned time and left little actual time for teaching and learning of skills. The mathematics lesson that followed was delayed in its start because of the time taken to change and move through the school and the pupils were too keyed up with physical rather than intellectual creativity. This is an equal opportunity issue because it impacts more on some groups of pupils than others.

27. The school has invested heavily in improving long and medium term planning and this is of excellent quality. As a result teachers can concentrate their attention on lesson planning. This is of good quality overall but varies in its effectiveness. Learning targets are sometimes not sharp enough to meet the learning needs of the full range of pupils. Overall, although most pupils make good progress they have insufficient self-knowledge of how well they are doing. This is because there is not enough emphasis on individual learning targets in lessons and where there is they are seldom used in the marking of pupils' work.

28. This school rightly gives high priority to the development and extension of basic skills. The strategies employed to teach literacy and numeracy are effective in ensuring good progress. Pupils' are exposed to a good range of interesting activities to help them improve their spelling and phonic skills. Speed and accuracy in number are emphasised and the school has set itself a target to improve these skills still further. The emphasis given to mental calculation is very evident in the way lessons are planned for the first part of the Numeracy Hour. Although there is less adherence by some teachers to the National Numeracy Strategy guidance in respect of giving focused attention to a group each day,

instead teachers tend to respond to individual needs and this means that some pupils, often the more able, do not receive a fair share of the teacher's time. This is true of the literacy hours too and is an aspect that requires close monitoring. A homework policy has recently been introduced and this will provide a more systematic approach to the effective use of homework. The school has had much success in improving standards, particularly in reading and writing, over the recent past. By the age of nine pupils are confident, independent learners and these strengths together with high standards mean pupils are well prepared for the move to middle school.

29. The curriculum provision for the under fives is effective in helping them to make good progress. There are particular strengths in the way learning opportunities reflect needs identified through careful examination of the results of baseline assessment. Early reading, writing and number skills are systematically planned for and pupils are well prepared for the National Curriculum.

30. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good because it is well managed and effective in ensuring pupils make good and sometimes very good progress. A strength is the clarity and security in the methods employed to identify pupils and track their progress in lessons. The range of provision is particularly good for pupils at Key Stage 2 and includes individually planned work and extra support through the additional literacy strategy. Documentation is clear, sharply focused, sets measurable learning targets and provides a secure basis on which class teachers and support staff can build. Pupils' progress is well recorded and tight monitoring ensures good progress. However, there is no systematic monitoring of what pupils are missing when they are withdrawn for support and as some pupils benefit from a range of support this may result in considerable gaps in their learning in other subjects.

31. The school is very much rooted in its community and draws much support from parents and friends of the school, local firms and other aspects of the community. The school motto 'Learning in Partnership' is well reflected in the way the school works with others to improve opportunities for pupils to improve both academically and in becoming socially responsible citizens. There are good links with other schools that aid transfer and effective use is made of the locality and visits and visitors to widen opportunities to learn. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory but it tends to consist mainly of seasonal short-term provision and varies in amount and range across the school year. It needs to be underpinned by an explicit structure that would enable pupils, parents and staff plan their involvement more systematically. However the pre and post school care clubs provides good support for pupils and their families and opportunities to learn in different ways.

32. Spiritual development is good and provision has been improved since the last inspection. Acts of collective worship follow planned themes and assembly times make a strong contribution towards the sense of community that pervades the work of the school. Pupils gain good knowledge and understanding of their own and other people's beliefs and feelings through subjects, such as religious education, art and music. The school makes specific provision for pupils to reflect upon their own lives through the effective use of timetabled discussion.

33. Provision for moral development is very good. The school's behaviour policy and the recently introduced home school agreement, provide a secure framework of expectations for pupils, parents and staff. Clear targets are set for pupils who need to improve their behaviour. Rewards and sanctions are known to all, and teachers make constructive use of praise. The structure for rewarding good behaviour, kindness or effort through stickers,

badges and certificates, in addition to celebration assemblies, makes a very positive contribution towards promoting good behaviour. The school's supportive approach is very successful in helping the vast majority of its pupils to become self disciplined.

34. Social development is good. Excellent relationships underpin the work of the school. Pupils undertake an adequate, though not extensive range of responsibilities and duties in the classroom and around school. They relate positively towards each other and there are particularly good examples of social development during group activities in science. Circle time provides very good opportunities for pupils to listen to the views and opinions of others and responses showed tolerance and respect. Pupils are involved in raising money for local institutions such as The Primrose Hospice, and in this way are mindful of the needs of others. In some lessons pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to organise appropriate aspects of their own learning and this restricts personal development to some extent.

35. The provision for cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is good. Effective use is made of industries in the local environment and Avoncroft museum. Pupils visit churches, mosques and temples. In addition, numerous other educational trips, visits to theatres, and places such as Bromsgrove Museum enrich pupils' learning experiences. Art and music are used particularly well to ensure pupils gain an insight into other cultures and traditions, through projects such as 'Out of Africa'. Through the study of major world faiths in religious education, pupils gain insights into cultures different from their own. The growing use of the new computer facility is being promoted as a "window on the world" for pupils to explore further the richness and diversity of society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The school is very caring school and makes very good provision to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. Pastoral care is the responsibility of the class teachers who, together with classroom assistants, know their pupils very well, are sensitive to their pupils' needs and thus able to provide good personal support and guidance. The very positive relationships between pupils and staff encourage pupils to raise any concerns they may have. Circle time offers a good opportunity to discuss issues such as how to make class rules fair and appropriate, this time also enables pupils to reflect well on how they are going to make a useful contribution to a diverse society.

37. Procedures for promoting positive behaviour are highly effective, and include involving pupils in discussing school rules as well as giving appropriate rewards for good behaviour. Pupils are aware of the standards of behaviour expected and generally conform to them, which creates an orderly environment conducive to learning. Procedures for monitoring and promoting regular attendance are also very good. Attendance is carefully monitored using the computerised registration system, parents are given regular reminders about the importance of good attendance and there are awards for full attendance each half term.

38. Child Protection procedures are very good and all staff are familiar with them and aware of their importance. There is good liaison with other agencies. Pupils at Meadows are seen as individuals and the team approach in place ensures that individual needs are very well responded to. Pupils at the school say they feel safe and well looked after. Parents hold positive views about this aspect of school life.

39. Strong emphasis is placed on pupils' health and safety. Aspects such as healthy eating, personal hygiene and safety are covered through the personal, social and health education programme which includes talks by the police on road and water safety. Health

and safety procedures are very good, and include frequent inspections of the premises by staff and governing body together.

40. The assessment of pupils' academic performance and the monitoring of personal development are very good. Personal files on each pupil are in place from day one and include baseline assessment data and a very good early year's profile, which covers both academic and personal development. In later years academic progress and personal development are recorded on individual pupil progress profiles. There is good use of assessment in the classroom, and progress is carefully recorded. Assessment files are used to appropriately track a year groups' progress, and to check that 'value' is being added to pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills' acquisition.

41. Very good use is made of assessment to inform planning both in the long term where good use is made of formal assessments such as baseline and standardised tests and in the short term where lesson plans are modified in the light of recent assessments. A good example being a Year 2 mathematics lesson where the lesson plan had been adapted in the light of assessment information from the previous lesson to take account of the slower rate of pupils' learning about place value.

42. Pupils are well supported and guided on their academic progress and personal development. Good use is made of the assessment file which tracks individual pupils' progress from which individual targets are set. Pupils are also given some guidance through marking but this is not yet consistently informative about the next steps they need to take to improve standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Parents are very satisfied with all aspects of the school. They are particularly satisfied with the fact that their children like school, the progress their children are making, the quality of teaching, the expectation that their children should work hard to achieve their best and that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. The inspection team fully endorses these views. The very good links with parents are a strength in supporting pupils' successful learning.

44. The school's motto "Learning in Partnership" is reflected strongly in the very good links it has with parents whose views are sought through an annual questionnaire. These views are taken into account when planning future developments for the school. Most parents support the school very well by hearing their children read at home, ensuring homework is done and recorded in the diary, or by giving time each week to assisting teachers with a variety of tasks. There is good turnout for meetings, especially when pupils are performing such as in the Christmas concerts that involve each child.

45. Parents are well informed about the school through the prospectus, the governors' annual report and frequent newsletters. They are also well informed about the curriculum through meetings and extensive notes in the prospectus with particular emphasis on English and mathematics.

46. Parents are well informed about their children's progress which starts with the early years profile meeting and continues through consultation evenings and good quality annual written reports. Consultation evenings are particularly useful since the parents are involved in discussing and agreeing targets for their children as well as being informed about their progress which, in the case of Key Stage 2 pupils, includes advising parents of optional national test results. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are also well informed about their children's progress, and are fully involved in regular reviews.

47. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning both at home and at school. The home-school agreement, which nearly all parents have signed, has a positive impact on learning since it includes supporting the school's behaviour policy and homework policy. Parents are advised on how to help their children with reading through a meeting and leaflet on reading which enables them to give their children good support through the shared reading scheme. Parents also make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and development through helping in the classroom, making story sacks, helping at lunchtime through the Play Activity Leaders (PAL) scheme, and by raising substantial funds for the school through the Friends' Association.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The leadership and management of the headteacher is much more effective than at the time of the previous inspection because it has brought about significant improvements in teaching and learning. A major strength of the leadership is the way in which the headteacher, staff and governors have a shared sense of purpose and a strong commitment to making things better for the pupils. This is amply demonstrated by their vigorous pursuit of 'best value' principles which is successfully underpinning the school's very good capacity to sustain continuous improvement. The school makes very effective use of all available resources to provide a good all round education for pupils at the school. When taking into account the fact that the school receives an income per pupil less than most primary schools, it is judged to provide very good value for money.

49. The governors are well organised and manage their work efficiently and effectively through a system of committees. They ask the right questions and know well the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are united in their pursuit for excellence and take steps to ensure that all connected with the school are regularly consulted and informed of improvements. There are three aspects of the school in need of improvement that are remaining from the last inspection because the school is only in the third year of its four year development plan. The governors are aware of the need to continue to address these as part of future action planning. Governors fulfil all their statutory obligations but go much further than this in making sure parents and the community are well informed. They are rightly proud of the innovative work of the school, for example, in establishing the first pre and after school care facilities in the county, a feature of school life which parents hold very positive views about.

50. The systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning are rigorous and the governors, headteacher and senior staff know well where improvements are required. They address areas of weakness strenuously. There is detailed analysis of the attainment of individuals, classes and year groups of pupils, and results are used to set challenging targets for both teachers and pupils. This has led to improving standards by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. The school is well placed to continue to improve. However, the use of time in the carousel arrangement in place to deliver a range of foundation subjects is not monitored sufficiently. In reality too much time is lost to movement between classes, time taken by changing for physical education and, in

religious education, too little time for reflection. Although pupils gain worthwhile experiences across the curriculum, the level of quality in the lessons which form part of the carousel, is not at the best found elsewhere in the school's provision.

51. The headteacher has been very effective in involving subject leaders in the management of their subjects. Almost all of them have had the opportunity to evaluate teaching and learning, and as result, they have a good understanding of where further improvements are required. Appraisal and staff development are well used to improve the effectiveness of teaching. This is amply demonstrated through the successful way in which the school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies that are having a beneficial impact on standards of attainment.

52. Support staff and teachers work together as a team and communication between them is particularly effective in monitoring the progress of Key Stage 2 pupils with special educational needs withdrawn for extra support in basic skills. However, there is little monitoring of what pupils are missing when withdrawn in this way. Provision for pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 1 would benefit if there were more staff available to support basic skill development.

53. The school has recently invested heavily in new technologies and is well poised to capitalise on this investment. The necessary structures are in place to support teachers and pupils and ensure that standards rise. The school invests both time and money in support for pupils with special educational needs and they benefit from some of the most effective teaching and secure management seen at the school. The school has yet to make sure that the monitoring and tracking of talented pupils is just as effective.

54. The explicit values and beliefs of the headteacher are shared by all connected with the school and these permeate all actions and procedures. As a result there is very high degree of consistency both internally and externally. The channels of communication are well founded and this ensures information flows up, down and across the school. The school works hard at self-evaluation, knows what needs to be done to bring about even more improvement. The school is well able to demonstrate it adds value to pupils' learning during their time at the school. This is a very successful school and the pupils, parents and the tax payer get a good deal from the less than average amount invested in the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. Draw from the school's own best practice to improve rates of progress by:
- (1) Focusing learning targets more keenly on setting work that is hard enough for all pupils, especially the more able.
(Paragraphs: 8, 19, 27, 28, 53, 67, 80)
 - (2) Extending the use of time targets so that more work gets done, especially in the independent and group sessions in literacy and numeracy hours.
(Paragraphs: 8, 19, 24, 27, 28, 68, 80, 84)
 - (3) Widening the opportunities for pupils to take initiative, organise and manage appropriate aspects of their own learning.
(Paragraphs: 8, 13, 34, 90, 92, 101)
 - (4) Involving pupils more in setting targets for themselves and assessing progress
(Paragraphs: 8, 19, 27, 28, 106, 136)
 - (5) Ensuring that all teachers set out clearly in lessons plans what it is they want the range of pupils to be able to know, understand and do.
(Paragraphs: 19, 84, 141)
 - (6) Linking marking more explicitly to raising attainment by sharing with pupils what it is they need to do next to improve
(Paragraphs: 13, 19, 27, 42, 85)
 - (7) Reviewing and improving the use of curriculum time and organisation to make sure that it is working to the benefit of all pupils' learning.
(Paragraphs: 6, 17, 18, 24, 26, 50, 82, 131, 136, 138, 142)
 - (8) Monitoring the impact on their learning when some pupils miss part of lessons for music or additional basic skills support.
(Paragraphs: 30, 52)

The following is not a key issue but one which governors should be mindful of in drawing up their action plan:

Ensure that the items still requiring attention raised at the time of the previous inspection and which form part of the last cycle of the school's post inspection Action Plan are attended to, notably the improvement of the library, the re-surfacing of the playground and reviewing how to reduce noise levels in the dining hall. (Paragraph: 49)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	102
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	14	44	35	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	402
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	39

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	77

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	29

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	40	36	76

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33	34	35
	Girls	35	36	35
	Total	68	70	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (85)	92 (85)	92 (90)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33	34	36
	Girls	35	35	35
	Total	68	69	71
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (84)	91 (87)	93 (87)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	330
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.1
Average class size	26.5

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	142

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	564 065
Total expenditure	561 734
Expenditure per pupil	1 304
Balance brought forward from previous year	5 787
Balance carried forward to next year	8 118

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	401
Number of questionnaires returned	134

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	26	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	34	2	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	49	5	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	41	10	1	2
The teaching is good.	58	37	4	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	43	5	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	19	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	32	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	58	35	4	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	63	31	1	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	40	1	2	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	33	7	1	9

Other issues raised by parents

A few parents raised concerns about behaviour at lunchtime. Some made positive comments about the Care club and Summer club. A few parents wrote personal comments expanding on the responses to the questions above.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

56. In the previous inspection report, attainment in all areas of learning were found to be in line with those expected for children of this age, and children made a sound start to school. Since that time standards have improved in some areas of learning, particularly in language and literacy and numeracy where the successful introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies, adapted appropriately to meet the needs of the youngest children, are having a positive effect on raising standards.

57. Provision for children under five is within the three reception classes with an additional shared activity area managed well by a nursery nurse. At the time of the inspection, forty of the seventy-three children in these classes were under the age of five. The children enter the reception classes in the September following their fourth birthday. The local authority's early assessment is undertaken within a few weeks of entry to the reception classes. Information from this indicates that attainment on entry to school is average. This is supported by the inspection findings.

Personal and social development

58. The children under five make good progress in their personal and social development with the majority exceeding the desirable learning outcome in this area by the age of five. They settle quickly and are happy to come to school. The children know the importance of classroom routines such as lining up, listening quietly and putting their hands up in order to contribute to a discussion. They take responsibility for changing for physical education and are encouraged by the teachers to help on another in this task. They sustain interest well persevering with tasks, for example when completing a jigsaw to make a number pattern line. The teacher and nursery nurse place great emphasis on the development of independence and self-esteem. The children respond confidently as a result to the new challenges presented. They are well behaved, listening carefully to instructions and carrying these out obediently. They treat equipment with respect, share resources, taking turns when gluing and sticking, tidy up well and are able to work independently when required, such as in a literacy group in the literacy hour. They play together well co-operating in play activities with sand and water and working together, for example with construction material to build a tower. Relationships with the adults are very good. The well-structured activities and consistent approach by the adults contribute effectively to personal and social development.

Language and literacy

59. Attainment is above that expected of children of a similar age and progress is good, with the majority attaining standards slightly higher than would be expected of them by the age of five. The broad spread of attainment on entry means that a significant minority has limited skills in language when they first start school but because of good provision quickly make up lost ground. Children quickly learn to listen attentively to their teachers and others. They enjoy listening to stories, poems and rhymes in a variety of settings. They respond well to the exciting texts presented to them through the literacy hour. The story 'Walking Through The Jungle' for example, inspired children who actively participated throughout. During the week this motivation was sustained and reflected in many other areas of the curriculum as children developed their artistic and geographical skills as well as extending their literacy skills and knowledge and understanding of the world. Rich opportunities are provided by the staff for children to develop their early literacy skills in this way. Well-structured role play provides very good opportunities for the children to extend their

language skills through imaginative play. This is enhanced by the very good intervention by the nursery nurse, who is particularly aware of the skills needed, for the less able through careful identification and on-going use of the early assessment information. Most children handle books well, turning pages correctly and know that print goes from left to right. The very good emphasis placed on early reading and writing skills helps them to understand that these are means of communicating. The majority of children have an awareness of phonics with many knowing all or most of the letters of the alphabet and the sound it makes. Higher attainers use this knowledge to build simple words and attempt some more complex vocabulary. These children are beginning to read fluently, noting simple punctuation and adding expression as they read. The majority identify initial letters when attempting to build words. They often draw and write about stories and events, and such work is valued by the teacher by being made into class books at times. The majority of children recognise and can write their name independently. The children take books home to share with parents and this contributes well to their reading progress as well as building a good relationship with parents. The well maintained home/school reading diaries reflect this good link with school. The development of early reading and writing skills is well supported through the shared activity area, where tasks are linked to literacy and numeracy within the classroom, but focus carefully on the individual needs of some children, during morning sessions. The good teaching of language and literacy is contributing effectively to the good progress being made.

Mathematics

60. The children attain levels which are above those of other five-year-olds in mathematics, the good teaching helps them to make good progress. Skills and understanding are effectively developed through a wide range of activities which provide good experiences, such as sorting objects, matching and comparing, weighing parcels, building towers using three-dimensional shapes, making sets of shapes and using a variety of materials to create repeating patterns. Good opportunities are provided for sand and water play which develops mathematical language and concepts of volume and capacity. Teachers make good links with other areas of the curriculum to develop mathematical awareness. For example, they make bubble prints in patterns of circles and use collage material on different shaped paper. They can catch objects to a given number up to ten and are secure in their understanding of numbers to ten. Many can count to twenty and beyond. Song and number rhymes help to reinforce learning. Higher attaining children are confident to find one more than a given number up to nine. They are beginning to use language involved in 'addition' and to understand how to combine two groups of objects in relation to addition. The use number apparatus and games such as dominoes to develop their understanding of number, quantity and shape. Most children can recognise and name basic shapes such as 'triangle' 'square' and 'circle'. They use mathematical language such as 'bigger' and 'smaller' and use terms such as 'set' to describe a group of objects. Learning is reinforced well through the good adult support provided.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

61. Children make good progress in acquiring and developing knowledge and understanding of the world because they are provided with a wide range of rich experiences which are interesting. Children are achieving the desirable outcomes expected of five year olds. The children are interested in the world about them and are keen to explore and find out. They have a good awareness of daily routines such as the literacy hour. They talk with interest about the local environment, care for the guinea pig and use magnifying glasses to look at patterns on shells. Well-structured activities such as a visit to a farm enables them to have first hand experience of handling lambs and ducks. Through the story 'Walking Through the Jungle' the children developed a sense of place and climate, talked about routes and journeys and extended their understanding of a range of

words such as mountains, desert, and manmade features. Through effective questioning by the teacher many could identify similarities and differences between the sea, river and swimming pools. They make good use of story sacks to help them become familiar with features in the environment. The good use of construction toys during play activities helps them to develop technological skills. In water play, they explore scientific ideas about floating and sinking and investigate the properties of sand when pouring it from a variety of containers. They plant bulbs and seeds, observing their growth and change. They are developing early skills in keyboard awareness and mouse control when using the computer. They experience bible stories such as 'David and Goliath' and are able to discuss ways of solving problems without fighting. The activities are well planned with good teaching leading to effective learning.

Physical development

62. Children's attainment in physical development is average by the age of five, and they make steady progress. Many children can run, skip, hop and jump competently and confidently with a developing awareness of the space around them. Basic skills are carefully taught and independence fostered as children help to put out apparatus. They can balance, climb over and go under obstacles. The previous report was critical of the provision for outdoor physical development. This has now been addressed and the provision is good. An exciting outdoor adventure area provides good opportunities for climbing, balancing, swinging and sliding, offering much greater challenge than some of the indoor equipment, which is not sufficiently demanding, particularly for some higher achieves. The children with special educational needs are well supported to enable them to participate fully and make steady progress. Children listen well to instructions and understand the rules for safety. They use sound manipulative skills to write, draw, paint and construct. Adults intervene appropriately, for example the nursery nurse ensured scissors were held correctly in a cutting and sticking activity. Progress in some lessons is adversely affected because the pace is too slow at times and expectations of more able children in particular are sometimes too low.

Creative development

63. Attainment in creative development is average by the time children are five. Opportunities are provided for them to explore and experiment with a satisfactory range of media, using a variety of techniques which include painting, printing, drawing and collage. They develop skills in cutting and sticking and use modelling materials to roll, stretch, squeeze and shape. They receive good support from the adults which helps them to work carefully, and improve their skills. In a good art lesson, children demonstrated imaginative thinking in their ideas and what they saw in collages linked to the 'Walking Through the Jungle' story. They selected colours and texture for the river and desert, inspired by the story and with a real enjoyment of art. The children explore a range of untuned percussion instruments and learn numerous songs and rhymes, many involving actions. Experiences offered make a sound contribution to children's creative development overall.

ENGLISH

64. The previous inspection report showed that standards in English were satisfactory overall but with some variations that were not in line with the national averages in Key Stage 1. More pupils were below the expected level for their age than nationally at Level 2 although those achieving the higher Level 3 matched the national figure. Progress in Year 2 was found to be unsatisfactory. Since that time, considerable efforts have been made to raise standards in English, with the improvement evident in the 1999 National Tests, where both reading and writing are above the national average at the end of Key Stage 1. When compared to similar schools pupils' performance is well above average in writing at Key

Stage 1. By the end of Year 4, results of the optional tests indicate above average standards, showing that more pupils at Meadows First School are achieving at Level 3 and the higher Level 4 in reading than the national sample. In writing, pupils in Year 4 are achieving in line with the national sample. Evidence from these results, together with inspection findings suggest that by the end of Key Stage 2 reading will be above the national average, while writing will be at least in line with the national average, and has the potential for higher standards.

65. The evidence from close scrutiny of pupils' past and present work shows that standards are good in English at both key stages, but learning objectives are not always targeted precisely enough to ensure that higher achievers receive sufficiently demanding work at all times. Nevertheless, the improving trends suggest that the school is likely to meet its statutory targets for the Year 2000, and in some areas has already exceeded these targets. Factors contributing to these pleasing improved standards include the good start made implementing the National Literacy Strategy, although not yet consistent across the school, together with the concentrated focus on reading last year and writing this year.

66. Over time the pupils are making good progress. Early assessment information shows a broad but average level for English on entry to school. The good start provided in the early years enables them to make good progress in the reception classes. In Key Stage 1 pupils maintain steady progress. The accelerated progress made by the oldest pupils in Key Stage 2 is apparent. The pattern is similar in most aspects of literacy. However, progress in speaking is satisfactory overall, but with examples of good progress within the Year 4 classes. The pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported. The good provision for these pupils enables them to make good progress. Effective use of assessment enables the special educational needs teacher to plan and provide skill teaching at exactly the level required. Well structured teaching of basic skills in spelling and reading through the additional literacy support helps those pupils identify to improve these skills.

67. In some lessons, higher achieving pupils could be presented with more demanding work.

68. A strength of the pupils' attainment has been the improved standards in reading, and, more recently, in writing. The National Literacy Strategy is assisting in the raising of standards because pupils are presented with a wide range of interesting texts which motivate them well. They are encouraged to read aloud, with expression and there is a clear focus on developing phonic skills and spellings systematically. Pupils develop a good awareness of the audience for writing and emphasis is placed on the use of imaginative vocabulary. However, there remain inconsistencies within some literacy hours. For instance, the lack of classroom support for group work in some years, and in particular in Year 2 means that teachers do not focus closely on one group for guided work. Not all classes include guided reading or writing within the literacy hour, and the use of time within the literacy hour is not yet secure for all teachers.

69. By the age of seven, pupils are developing a cursive style of handwriting. Writing is organised with sentences which are structured, and they are beginning to use punctuation such as capital letters and full stops with greater accuracy. Many pupils produce lively writing in a variety of forms, for example 'Christmas' writing included letters from Gabriel to Mary and invitations to the shepherds for a party, as well as formal accounts of the story and writing in the first person. Higher achievers show an exciting choice of adjectives and more extensive use of punctuation, such as speech marks. Presentation is often very neat and spellings are usually accurate including more complex words. During their time in Key

Stage 2, pupils develop these skills further with more thoughtful and sustained ideas for writing and increased fluency and expression in reading. By Year 4, some of the work produced is clearly within Level 4, such as the poetry writing on Summer and Winter, and the sensitive writing about old people such as 'My Great Gran'. In speaking, high attaining pupils show above average understanding of the meaning of words, with good speaking skills evident in some lessons when they describe words like 'graceful' 'angelic' and 'comical'. These pupils are able to spell with speed and accuracy. There is considerable evidence of work at the higher level in Year 4 this year.

70. The pupils' response to English is very positive as a result of the good and sometimes excellent teaching. Except for a small minority of boys in Years 1 and 2 who sometimes lose concentration and are potentially disruptive, behaviour is good and often very good. The quality of relationships is very good and pupils have a desire to work at their personal best.

71. The good quality learning is directly related to the good teaching. This represents a big improvement since the last inspection. At both key stages, a high proportion of lessons involved good teaching and in Year 4 in particular, examples of very good and excellent teaching were observed. The best teaching is characterised by the teachers' very secure subject knowledge, well-planned lessons, brisk pace and the well managed pupils. High expectations, the setting of targets and a lively teaching style were also features of the best practice. An example of the best teaching was seen in a Year 4 lower attaining set literacy hour. The lesson began with pupils being praised for efforts with homework. The teacher proceeded to read pupils' writing with excitement, suspense and expression, bringing their writing alive. As a result, motivation and self-esteem were increased. Pupils were inspired by the teacher's enthusiasm, lively style and belief in her pupils' abilities to succeed. Intellectual and creative efforts increased. All were anxious to identify 'key events' in the shared text, 'Suddenly'. Effective use of time targets moved the lesson on at a brisk pace and pupils covered a lot of work in the lesson time. They generated good ideas for their own writing, understood clearly the drafting process and tried hard to please with the quality of presentation. Effective questioning ensured the pupils understood story structures. Good use of the plenary time reinforced the good learning taking place and highlighted the key points about speech marks, prediction and story endings.

72. The headteacher manages English very well in the absence of the co-ordinator. Assessments and monitoring systems are well developed. A weakness lies in the marking of pupils' work which is not consistently identifying how pupils need to improve their work. In addition, the lack of precise learning objectives to meet the needs of all pupils, including those who are setted, affects the amount of progress being made in some lessons, particularly for some higher attaining pupils when not sufficiently challenged.

73. The overall picture is of greatly improved standards in both key stages. There is a genuine shared commitment of enabling pupils to learn successfully through an exciting curriculum, rich experiences and good teaching.

74. The limited opportunities for drama and role-play within the curriculum do not contribute effectively to the development of speaking skills which are average.

75. Although resources for the literacy hour are good, library provision within the school is under-developed. The book provision is thin and the position of the library is not ideal. It is not used well to develop library skills systematically through the school. This was identified at the time of the previous inspection and should be included in the governor's action plan.

MATHEMATICS

76. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were satisfactory overall, but mental arithmetic, problem solving and data handling skills were regarded as weak. The quality of teaching was generally sound, with some weakness in Year 2, resulting in pupils' underachievement. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and pupils' attainment was not sufficiently systematic and assessment was not being used effectively. There has been noticeable improvement, particularly in the development of mental arithmetic and problem solving skills. The quality of teaching, the monitoring of provision for pupils and the review of assessment procedures have all been significantly improved. Consequently, the problem concerning under achievement has been resolved.

77. The results of the 1999 National Tests for seven year olds indicated that, in comparison with all and other similar schools, the percentage of pupils reaching expected levels or higher was well above average. In 1999 there was a slight dip in standards after a significant rise in 1998. However, since the last inspection, overall trends have been upward. In optional tests for Year 4 pupils, above average levels of attainment are sustained. Inspection findings support the view that overall standards are above average, with well above average standards in numeracy.

78. At the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils are developing confidence with numbers. Higher attaining pupils are secure with numbers far beyond 100 and are developing a wide mathematical vocabulary. Average ability pupils in a Year 2 lesson are developing simple ways of finding missing numbers and working out problems but are not yet confident enough to explain their methods clearly. Lower attaining pupils in another Year 2 lesson use their knowledge of number bonds well to add 3 digits accurately. Concentration on the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy has resulted in other areas of the mathematics curriculum being given less attention, but there is evidence in pupils' books of a basic understanding of such topics as 2D and 3D shapes and simple fractions.

79. By Year 4, pupils' numeracy skills are very strong and use of correct mathematical language is well developed. More able pupils apply their knowledge to problem solving in a variety of ways. Year 4 pupils in the average ability group write 4 digit numbers as multiples of 10. Some discuss with the teacher the probability of 2 pupils writing the same number and the majority are aware of the need to use standard measures when finding area. Lower attaining pupils work shows a basic understanding of addition and subtraction and they are secure but slow in their tables recall.

80. Pupils' progress overall is good and the rate of pupils' learning is closely linked to the quality of teaching. The numeracy hour has also had a positive impact for most pupils. Group work in Key Stage 1 and ability groupings in Key Stage 2 have started to meet the needs of individual pupils, but the most able pupils do not make best progress when the work set is not well matched to their ability in the independent session within the Numeracy Hour. This is sometimes compounded by the organisation of some of the Numeracy Hours when teachers are not focusing attention on a group a day but giving attention to those who want or need it. This approach often leads to the high attaining pupils working independently and sometimes they coast instead of working at full pace.

81. Pupils enter the school with an average knowledge and understanding of mathematics and they make good progress throughout their reception year. Throughout Key Stage 1 rates of progress are mostly good, although in one of the Year 1 classes currently progress is being hindered by too much of the teacher's time being spent on managing behaviour. Although Year 3 pupils make steady progress, the pace of some

lessons is too slow for pupils to make good progress. Lower attaining pupils grouped specifically to receive focused attention in Year 4, tend to make the best progress because the quality of teaching they were observed to receive was very good overall, and often outstanding. Although these pupils struggle with understanding mathematical concepts, all their work is purposeful, they work at a very brisk pace and they want to succeed.

82. Pupils' attitudes towards mathematics are generally positive. Higher attaining pupils in a Year 2 class particularly enjoy the challenge of the teacher's skilful questioning. Throughout the school, pupils of all abilities are eager, enthusiastic and totally involved when work is stimulating and exciting. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good use of correct mathematical vocabulary. Relationships are strong, the majority of pupils are happy in their work and they get on well together whether they are working on their own or in groups. Occasionally pupils lose interest when the introductory part of the numeracy hour is too long, the pace of the lesson is too slow or the work set is uninteresting and undemanding. This was the case in the two unsatisfactory lessons observed in Year 1 and Year 4. The unsatisfactory lesson in Key Stage 2 was in part due to the mathematics lesson being timetabled following a carousel of practical lessons, and at the end of a morning when pupils' levels of motivation were low.

83. Although a very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was observed in Key Stages 1 and 2, the overall quality of teaching in mathematics is good. In almost one in five lessons the quality of teaching was very good. In Key Stage 2, nearly one in ten lessons taught during the week of inspection was of outstanding quality and led to very successful learning. The large amount of good quality teaching contributes strongly towards the high levels of attainment in mathematics. In the best lessons, teachers know their pupils' needs very well and provide a rich variety of interesting activities that matches ability and challenges even the most able. For example, in a Year 1 lesson on counting in tens, the teacher has high expectations of all pupils, pushing them harder, setting increasingly difficult challenges and encouraging pupils to seek further knowledge. In a good Year 3 lesson, the teacher asks pupils searching questions, adopts a good range of teaching methods, and accurately assesses whether pupils have understood.

84. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy. Many staff have adapted their teaching styles well. Long term planning is of the highest quality and makes a strong contribution towards the school's consistent approach towards mathematics. Day to day lesson planning is not yet of the same quality and learning objectives are not always sufficiently precise. Introductory warm up sessions are used well to create mathematical interest and are geared to improving speed and accuracy in mental calculations. The last part of many lessons is used effectively to show examples of good practice. However, the pace of some lessons is too slow when pupils move to independent or group activities and there is a lack of purpose or urgency. Few teachers are yet giving focused time to specific groups on a daily basis as the National Numeracy Strategy recommends but instead give attention to those who need it. This works well enough but is worth monitoring for its impact on the rates of progress of individuals.

85. Work is marked regularly but the quality of marking is inconsistent. Although there are some examples in both key stages of marking being used effectively to help pupils improve their work, most comments do little to help pupils make progress. In addition, the presentation of work lacks consistency. Some pupils take great pride, but others pay insufficient attention to detail and the quality of their presentation does not always match the high levels of attainment achieved.

86. Secure assessment procedures make a very positive contribution towards raising

standards. Effective baseline assessment is carried out in the reception year. In addition, standard assessment tasks are carefully evaluated and numerous on-going checks and tests to identify individual pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding are used well to inform planning.

87. The co-ordinator leads the subject very well. There is a strong commitment towards raising standards. The improvement in monitoring and evaluation procedures for teaching and learning, and the setting of ambitious but achievable targets has been instrumental in raising the quality of teaching in mathematics. The school is securely placed to plan improvements and implement new initiatives successfully.

SCIENCE

88. In the last inspection report the standards in science were satisfactory overall. It is evident that in 2000 standards have improved and that now, at the end of Key Stage One pupils are attaining levels which are above the national expectations, and by the end of year 4 they are on track to exceed national expectations by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2.

89. 1999 National Curriculum teacher assessments and tests have shown that pupils are attaining above, and sometimes well above, the national average, and the findings of the inspection broadly confirm this assessment. Discussions with pupils in years 2 and 4, observation of lessons during the inspection, and careful study of pupils' previous work all show that standards are now good in the school. The evidence shows that there is a good match between the work given and pupils' abilities and aptitudes, including those with special educational needs. Careful planning and monitoring of work in the subject means that there is a steady improvement in standards.

90. As they move through the school pupils learn well at all stages. All aspects of science are well covered, and, although a slight deficiency was found by the latest teacher assessments in work on physical processes, this was not found to be significant by the inspection. The previous report commented on the need to develop pupils' investigative skills and their ability to work independently in their investigations. Since then the school has given attention to this through staff development activities and the result is that there has been a significant improvement. At present work on experimental and investigative science is much improved, but there is still a need for continued development, so that an investigative approach becomes fully integrated into the curriculum at all stages.

91. The pupils generally show a positive response to their work in science at all stages. In a Year 4 lesson on electrical safety, for example, pupils enjoy devising and playing board games which illustrate safety points. They enjoy the games and work sensibly together.

92. Working relationships, both between teachers and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves, are often excellent and this contributes significantly to the quality of learning. Behaviour is almost always good, with pupils showing sensible, co-operative and caring attitudes as they work through their tasks. Practical activities contribute positively to pupils' social development, teaching them to share, take turns and listen to the ideas and opinions of others and more opportunities could be developed.

93. Good teaching at both key stages plays a notable part in the good quality of learning. Teachers generally set a lively pace of work. In a lesson on light, for example, Year 1 pupils investigated the difference between light sources and objects which reflect light. The teacher provided appropriate support as pupils explored the subject, and an

assistant took groups to a darkened room to check their findings. The teacher used questions skilfully, ensuring that they were at the right level for the pupils' understanding. Throughout the lesson the teacher used correct scientific language, such as 'light source' and 'reflects', and encouraged the pupils to do the same. This approach makes a worthwhile contribution to the pupils' basic literacy skills.

94. The school's thorough approach to planning, and a well-developed assessment system have contributed to raising teaching standards throughout the school. Teachers also have good understanding of the subject, build good working relationships with their pupils and have high expectations both for the quality of work and behaviour.

95. The subject is well managed, and the co-ordinator is experienced and knowledgeable. Resources are in the process of being reorganised, but are sufficient, and of reasonable quality. Due consideration is given to safety issues. The recent introduction of new schemes of work is being evaluated, and science is about to become the school's curriculum focus, in line with the School Development Plan. There is good liaison between the co-ordinator and, on the one hand, other class teachers, and on the other, the senior management team, which has been successful in supporting the drive for higher standards.

96. The school is therefore succeeding in raising standards in science, and in ensuring that areas in need of attention are being given appropriate consideration. In order to raise standards further the school needs to continue to develop pupils' investigative skills, through attention to curriculum development and in-service training for staff.

ART

97. At the time of the last inspection, standards were sound and sometimes good. The range of displays provided a very good environment for teaching and learning. Occasionally creativity was stifled and planning was not always effective. Despite the heavy emphasis on literacy and numeracy, standards of art in classwork and display have been maintained. Pupils are given sound opportunities to develop their creative skills through the art club and involvement in art days and exhibitions. Planning documentation is currently in need of review and sketchbooks are not yet used systematically throughout the school. However the school is providing worthwhile learning experiences in art for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, that make a positive contribution to their cultural development.

98. Pupils have experience of a wide range of media at both key stages. Work is effectively linked to topics. For example, Year 2 pupils produce creative collages of natural and man made materials to link with their science topic. Attractive displays relate well to their work on the Great Fire of London in history. Year 3 pupils, working in the style of Matisse, display originality in their design and choose appropriate materials. By the end of Year 4, pupils have experience of an increasingly wide range of media. They sew purses and bookmarks in textiles; they make papyrus scrolls and Egyptian masks as part of their history topic; they have secure knowledge about famous artists such as Lowry, Clarice Cliff and Picasso. Art is effectively linked to work on other religions and provides good insight into both Eastern and Western cultures.

99. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress. When they are encouraged to improve and develop their work, they make good progress. However, the quality of work varies. Although there are many examples of good standards being achieved, some work is not refined in any systematic way. In addition, although the present art scheme allows balance and breadth, it does not ensure an even development of skills.

100. Pupils' attitudes towards art are positive. For many it is their favourite subject. The majority work well with others and enjoy the practical nature of activities. Older pupils are well informed and articulate about their work. They display mature attitudes and have developed an appreciation of their own work and that of others. Experiences in art is usefully aiding pupils' cultural development.

101. The quality of teaching in the small number of lessons observed was satisfactory in half the lessons and good in the remainder. Routines are well established and expectations are high. Both teachers and pupils make good use of re-inforcing literacy skills in their rich use of language such as 'bold' and 'contrasting'. Teachers show examples of best practice and classroom support is used effectively to guide pupils in their work. However, the introduction to activities is sometimes too long, leaving pupils with little time for practical work, and pupils are not always given enough opportunity to choose or experiment.

102. Following the recent promotion of the co-ordinator, the headteacher has taken over temporary responsibility for subject co-ordination and has evaluated accurately the areas in most need of development. Currently, there is no monitoring of the art curriculum to ensure balance and steady development of skills. The review of long term planning and the re-introduction of sketchbooks have already been identified as the priorities for improvement.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. The result of the last inspection was that standards in design and technology were found to be satisfactory overall at both key stages, although the quality of teaching was found to be variable. It is evident from the latest inspection that design and technology is an improving subject, although there is a need to continue staff development activities in order to ensure that all teachers are confident in their work in the subject.

104. As they move through the school, pupils are provided with a worthwhile series of experiences which, following the carefully planned schemes of work, provide a systematic development of their design and technology skills.

105. The quality of pupils' learning is good. They are given experiences of a range of activities involving planning, making and evaluating, which together ensure the development of good understanding. In Year 2, for example, pupils recently carried out a project to design and make their own finger puppets. After considering issues such as the best materials to use and how to show the different characters, they then made careful choices of materials and methods of joining them. They drew sketches and plans, and then made the puppets. Once they were finished, pupils could then use them to perform simple plays. These activities provided a range of links to other subjects, such as drama and language work in English, measurement in mathematics and consideration of the properties of materials in science. The activities therefore made worthwhile contributions to the development of pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. These well-considered and appropriate cross-curricular links are a strength of the school's provision for design and technology.

106. The teaching of design and technology is good throughout the school, and sometimes very good at Key Stage 1. Teachers show enthusiasm and provide tasks which are appropriately challenging for all levels of ability. Occasionally, pupils would have made more progress if the teacher had intervened to give guidance, and set out targets for learning.

107. The subject is efficiently managed by the recently appointed co-ordinator, who has already attended a number of in-service training activities. Resources are adequate and moves have been made recently to centralise their storage in order to improve safety and access.

GEOGRAPHY

108. At the time of the previous inspection a number of problems were identified in the teaching and learning of geography. Overall, provision and standards achieved were inconsistent and too variable at both key stages. These shortcomings have been addressed well and are no longer a cause for concern. Pupils are receiving a worthwhile experience in geography.

109. Pupils are introduced to geographical language from a very young age, and their knowledge and understanding develops well as they move through the school. Pupils in the reception year are introduced to the idea of 'place and geographical features' through the use of story and illustration. There is good direct instruction of geographical language and well focused questioning to make the children explain the key differences between 'a river, lake and the sea'. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good understanding of how the buildings and features in the streets near the school are represented on a map and in a key. They have some understanding of 'orientation' and can relate the inside of the different classrooms to the nearby streets. They identify correctly differences between a lane, street and main road. At Key Stage 2, pupils begin to study place further afield and compare and contrast them with Bromsgrove. They begin to demonstrate some insight into the relationship between 'climate, food, and lifestyle' but this is an area for more work. They learn about the points of the compass and can identify different countries on a map or world globe. They know how to use co-ordinates to identify places on real maps or ones they have drawn to illustrate a range of geographical features. The good emphasis on practical and investigative work in geography enables all pupils to succeed at their own level.

110. Geography is a well-liked subject and pupils respond well in lessons. They have positive attitudes, want to find out about where they live and contribute well information from their own experience. Younger pupils are interested in the travels of Barnaby Bear and enjoy finding out more about the places he visits. This approach is helping their cultural awareness of the world about them.

111. Teaching in geography is good because it motivates the pupils well to want to find out more and gives them the skills with which to investigate. Long term planning underpinned by national guidelines is particularly effective at ensuring a broad coverage of geographical skills and knowledge. But it is the methods used by teachers that is the key to their success. Teacher's share their interest and enthusiasm with pupils, promote lots of interesting discussion, use resources such as the Katie Morag books well and ask pupils to record in different ways. For example, they write letters, plan routes, record the weather and make maps and plans using co-ordinates. In this way there is good reinforcement of basic skills.

112. The coordinator for geography has had the opportunity to monitor work in geography and has a good understanding of where improvements are required for example. The school has already looked at pupils' work to identify progress in the development of map skills.

HISTORY

113. When history was inspected in 1996, attainment and progress were judged to be sound but low expectations and limited progress were identified in some classes. Provision for history has improved, and pupils make good progress in history as a result of effective teaching. Good opportunities are provided that result in pupils using and improving their research and literacy skills.

114. Pupils are introduced to ideas about the past in their first year at school and this work includes two very important elements. Firstly, children are taught the language of history, such as 'past, present and future' this enables them to think about and discuss what they see and hear. Secondly, they are introduced to history from evidence through the very effective use of photographs. This results in the youngest pupils learning a lot about the past by looking at photographs of their teacher. They discuss the content and use of colour as they decide the order in which the pictures were taken. By Year 2 pupils are enthusiastic investigators who represent the Great Fire of London dramatically and write accounts of how the fire started and its consequences. The Romans are studied in Year 3, and pupils identify what they have left behind them as they re-create part of Hadrian's wall. Pupils in Year 4 study the Tudors and record interesting facts about Henry VIII's wives. They use their developing research skills to investigate Henry's character, personality and the clothes he wore. Many pupils however lack awareness of the range of sources available for the study of the past, and some confuse modern day creations, for example, a newspaper account of Henry's sixth marriage, with contemporary sources. While older pupils know the Romans came before the Tudors, pupils' understanding of chronology needs more emphasis. Much history is taught through class discussion and this provides good opportunities for all pupils including those with special educational needs to make good progress.

115. Pupils enjoy history and are keen to take part in class discussions. Boys and girls are equally enthusiastic and work together well. Some older pupils learn acronyms to help them recall facts and a number undertake research at home and share their findings with the rest of the class. In Year 4 a number of pupils brought in information downloaded from the Internet to share with the class. The experiences in history are contributing positively to pupils' cultural development.

116. Teaching in history is good because it helps pupils make good gains in knowledge and understanding about the past. Teachers ask probing questions which make pupils think. Two notable examples occurred in the week of inspection. Firstly in a reception class lesson when pupils were justifying their ordering of photographs, and in a Year 4 lesson where pupils were asked to find evidence from contemporary portraits and writings to explain why Henry VIII behaved as he did. Pupils responded by pointing to a range of evidence to justify their comments. Teachers constantly reinforce the teaching of basic skills during history lessons. Pupils are taught specific subject vocabulary and have a good range of opportunities to record their ideas. Teaching would be even better if it explored issues of reliability and bias in sources of evidence. Information and communication technology resources and the central library are currently underused by pupils to support history studies.

117. The coordinator has had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in history and has a good understanding of the areas for development. National guidelines for history are being introduced well. Very effective long-term planning for history supports progress in English and work in English supports progress in history. This has a significant impact on the rate of learning pupils make in knowing about and understanding history, and in their

language and literacy skills.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

118. The school received a satisfactory report for information technology in the last inspection. Standards were in line with national expectations both at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4. The timing of the present inspection is such that the school is in an interim period between the previous classroom-based provision of computers, and the full introduction of a new computer suite. This has meant that some aspects of the new information and communication technology curriculum were seen at a transitional stage during the inspection week. For this reason it was necessary to consider a range of evidence, including discussions with pupils, teachers and the subject co-ordinator, detailed scrutiny of pupils' previous work and careful assessment of work seen during the inspection.

119. The outcome of this is that standards are found to be above the national expectations at both key stages. It is a tribute to the quality of work in the school that, despite the difficult circumstances, such standards could nevertheless be sustained. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can understand how to achieve particular results by giving a series of instructions. By Year 4 they can use appropriate software with confidence, selecting suitable tools and techniques for their tasks.

120. The teaching of information and communication technology is good throughout the school, and sometimes very good at Key Stage 2. Good planning, a lively approach and a satisfactory pace of work are features of the teaching. In a lesson in Year 4 for instance pupils were taught about the 'pointillist' style of painting, and used the 'Dazzle' software programme to attempt their own pictures in the same style. The lesson was well planned and the teacher showed very good subject knowledge, which enabled her to give clear explanations of the work and to use correct subject language. Across the curriculum there is good use of information and communication technology to support pupils' development.

121. Pupils generally enjoy their work in information and communication technology. In a Year 2 lesson on controlling a programmable toy, pupils were enthusiastic and showed good understanding of the principles involved. They knew how to programme the toy to carry out a series of simple instructions, and showed persistence in overcoming practical problems. The teacher provided an appropriate programme on the computer to support the pupils' learning. They worked together well, sharing, taking turns and making decisions.

122. The information and communication technology curriculum provided in the school is broad and balanced, and includes good work in the area of Controlling and Modelling. As they move through the school pupils are given a progression of experiences which build information and communication technology skills and understanding, and which link well to other areas of the curriculum. The new information and communication technology suite has enabled both pupils and teachers to begin to use email and the Internet and the development of these aspects being carefully monitored by the co-ordinator despite some early teething troubles. The set up envisaged will enable each pupil in the school to have their own email address.

123. The subject is effectively managed by a recently-appointed co-ordinator who has taken over the post during the maternity leave of another member of staff. The school's robust management structures have ensured that the change in management has not disrupted effective learning in the subject.

124. The school is well resourced for information and communication technology, both in terms of computers and other items. There is a need to ensure that the new information and communication technology suite is brought into full operation as soon as possible, so that the substantial investment which the school has made in this facility will be of maximum benefit to all its pupils. It is also necessary to continue to consider the changes in teaching and organisation which will be increasingly felt as the use of the new suite is developed.

MUSIC

125. The last inspection indicated that, although the quality of concerts, festivals and performances was good, the same high standards were not reflected in the everyday music of the school. Class music teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to good, pupils' knowledge was not developed sufficiently well and progress was sometimes slow. There has been much improvement in the quality of teaching and the standards achieved in class lessons. Rates of progress and the development of knowledge has been soundly attended to. Provision for peripatetic music has also been expanded.

126. Current standards are similar to those found in other schools at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4, with some musically talented pupils reaching higher standards. Younger pupils sing a variety of songs from memory, they remember words well and standards of singing are satisfactory. They know the names of familiar musical instruments and they are developing a secure understanding of rhythm. Year 3 pupils decide some instruments are more appropriate than others, when interpreting their 'Ghost' score. They are aware of fast and slow, loud and soft and they can interpret graphic notation. Year 4 pupils have developed a good breadth of knowledge. They are familiar with listening to music ranging from flamenco to folk dance. Most are confident with the language of music.

127. Pupils of all abilities make steady progress. The schemes of work provide helpful guidance for non-specialist class teachers. They are structured to ensure each element of the music curriculum is covered but they do not adequately ensure that skills are developed systematically as pupils progress through the school.

128. Pupils enjoy their music lessons. Key Stage 1 pupils sing with much enthusiasm during their song practice. Year 2 pupils contribute some very creative ideas in their lesson and display good self control as they wait for their turn to play the musical instruments. Year 4 pupils are inquisitive to know more as they listen to folk music. Their responses show maturity, appreciation and interest.

129. In the small number of lessons observed, the quality of teaching in half was good, and satisfactory in the remainder. In the best lessons, the teacher creates the right atmosphere and makes learning a fun experience. In a Year 4 lesson on 'Dancing Round the World', there is a good balance of activities so that pupils do not lose interest and there is secure class management and control. The lesson is well organised and the choice of materials is appropriate. Teachers sometimes show subject insecurity, when they accept pupils' first attempts and give insufficient opportunity for pupils to refine or improve their work. However, all teachers encourage pupils to use the language of music in their responses and provide pupils with a worthwhile experience of music.

130. Pupils develop their social skills through group music making activities. A larger than average proportion of pupils has access to peripatetic string, woodwind, keyboard and guitar tuition. In addition, pupils learn recorder and every pupil takes part in various concerts and performances throughout the year. The school makes effective use of the

multi-cultural material provided in the schemes of work, but currently does not have a good range of multi-cultural instruments.

131. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over responsibility for the subject. Although standards have improved since the last inspection, because music provision is not monitored, no-one currently has a clear overview of what pupils have learned or the standards achieved. The school is aware of this, and has included the monitoring of music as a target within its development plan.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

132. At the last inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and by Year 4 were satisfactory and pupils made sound progress at both key stages. Since then standards have been maintained in Key Stage 1 and further improved by the time pupils leave the school.

133. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of attainment. They enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum which focused clearly on promoting physical development and social interaction and contributes well to pupils' personal development. All aspects of physical education except for swimming are covered during the year. Lessons in gymnastics and games were observed during the course of the inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, build successfully on previous learning to improve their performance. They make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and very good progress in Key Stage 2, the excellent teaching in Year 4 contributing greatly to the accelerated progress by the oldest pupils. Higher attaining pupils in particular are well challenged in this year group. Girls and boys show equal enthusiasm for the subject.

134. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have increased their confidence and move with improved co-ordination. They can travel in a variety of ways using different pathways and moving at different levels. They are beginning to link movements together to form a simple sequence, and gain an appropriate awareness of the space around them. Many have imaginative ideas when travelling along the apparatus. In Key Stage 2, pupils work well independently, in; in pairs and in teams. They have a good awareness of safety, can work with a partner on symmetrical shapes. They acquire and develop good hand/eye co-ordination when introduced to racquet skills and demonstrate correct racquet grip, and competence in controlling a ball with a racquet. In gymnastics, they perform a variety of jumps, developing further their ability to create a sequence of movement based on 'flight' in movement. They acquire appropriate technical language such as 'star jump' and extend their vocabulary with terms such as 'fluidity' of movement. Pupils demonstrate well developed skills, and critical evaluation of each other's technique and this contributes well to improved performance.

135. In Key Stage 1, most pupils respond positively in lessons, participating with enjoyment. Most pupils concentrate and behave satisfactorily. A small minority of pupils demonstrate immature behaviour, for example when waiting for instructions and putting away apparatus. Time is sometimes lost as a result of silliness and this affects the progress being made. In Key Stage 2, all pupils demonstrate very good attitudes to learning and behave very well, working with commitment, enthusiasm and enjoyment. Their well developed skills in evaluation of their own and each other's performance contributes very effectively to their personal development. They work with sustained effort and are keen to practise and improve their skills. Pupils appreciate each other's efforts and have a good sense of play.

136. The quality of teaching seen ranged from satisfactory in Key Stage 1 to excellent in Key Stage 2. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. All teachers set a good example by changing appropriately for lessons. They enjoy very good relationships with pupils and are sensitive to the needs of the less able. The excellent teaching in Year 4 is characterised by the very secure subject knowledge of the specialist teacher, clear identified learning objectives and very brisk lesson pace. The use of specialist teaching in Year 4 is having a very positive effect on raising standards because skills are systematically developed and challenging and interesting tasks are set which lead to highly motivated pupils who work enthusiastically, inspired by lively and exciting teaching. Very best use is made of the very limited time through the 'carousel' arrangement of lessons in Year 4. However, in Key Stage 1, lessons are too short, to ensure good progress. There is insufficient time to develop skills well, or to apply them to apparatus work. At times, a lack of insistence on high standards of behaviour affects the pace and progress made in lessons in Key Stage 1. Missed opportunities to develop pupils' self-evaluation skills does not contribute effectively to improving pupils' learning.

137. The subject coordinator promotes the subject very effectively for older pupils. This expertise needs to be shared throughout the school in order to improve progress in Key Stage 1. Resources are satisfactory and are very well organised and managed. Resources for the youngest children for gymnastics do not provide sufficient challenge for all pupils. There is very good field provision and an outdoor play area which provides well for all pupils. The quality of teacher support provided by the Sports Council is good. A sound range of extra-curricular activities, including basketball, hockey and country dancing enhances the curriculum and contributes effectively to pupils' social development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

138. During the previous inspection attainment, progress and teaching were all judged to be sound. Since then overall provision has improved and pupils now make good progress and standards are better than those set out in the locally agreed syllabus. The carousel arrangement in place to enable the delivery of religious education and some of the foundation subjects is placing time constraints on teaching and learning and this is leaving too little time for reflection in some lessons.

139. Provision meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils learn about Christianity and two other world religions, Judaism and Hinduism, during their time at the school.

140. Pupils learn to recognise places and things that are special for different faith groups. Pupils in Year 1 recognise the importance of special places and readily identify where they go when they want to be quiet and think. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have good knowledge of the main events of the Christmas story and know what Advent means. They have studied Judaism and know what the Torah is and have some understanding of the importance of the family in Jewish life. When visiting the synagogue they know how to behave respectfully and can identify religious symbols and artefacts. Pupils in Key Stage 2 learn about Hinduism and show considerable maturity in understanding that for Hindu's God has many faces. They are interested to learn about the role played by all the senses in Hindu worship. Pupils in Year 4 gain much from thinking about the story of the Good Samaritan and retelling it in a modern way that makes the moral clear. As a result of this activity it is clear that by the age of nine pupils have gained a set of moral principles to help them make decisions about right and wrong.

141. Pupils respond well in religious education lessons. They want to find out more and

offer to undertake research in their own time. They show positive mature attitudes towards the artefacts associated with different faiths and demonstrate respect for the beliefs of others. Sometimes it is apparent that they would like more time to share what they have found out with one another and to develop further some of their emerging thoughts about moral and spiritual elements.

142. Teaching is good because teachers are enthusiastic and introduce topics in an interesting way. There is good use of artefacts, a weakness at the time of the previous inspection and particularly effective use is made of comments made by pupils. Some difficult concepts such as worship require more work to ensure they are well understood. Pupils are encouraged to write prayers for use in assembly and do so confidently. A strength seen in all lessons is that pupils are consistently taught specific subject language and expected to use it correctly. Planning meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus but there are some difficulties in translating planning into effective teaching and learning. In Year 2 religious education is taught as part of a three-subject carousel. This does not work well as much time is lost during lesson change and this results in some sessions being only half the planned length. In Year 3 an opportunity is provided for specialist input but the accommodation used is too small and not conducive to quiet reflection and response. In Year 4 teaching is energetic, stimulating and lively with good links to literacy in fact there is occasionally some tendency for religious education lessons turning into English lessons.

143. The coordinator has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in religious education although time has already been identified for this purpose later this term. She is already aware of some of the constraints that impact negatively on the quality of provision and is keen to make improvements.