

INSPECTION REPORT

LITTLE ASTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124127

Head teacher: Mr R Brandon

Reporting inspector: Brian Holmes
15215

Dates of inspection: 11th – 14th June 2001

Inspection number: 191449

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	County
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Forge Lane Little Aston Sutton Coldfield West Midlands
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Simon Osborne
Date of previous inspection:	9 th December 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15215	Brian Holmes	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology History Physical education	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? School's results and achievement How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9542	Brian Jones	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents? How well does the school care for its pupils?
19946	Roger Baker	Team inspector	English Special educational needs Art and design Design and technology Religious education Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
29989	Pauline Goodsell	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics Geography Music	
31734	Malcom Ridge	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Little Aston Primary School, Staffordshire is an average-size primary school with 212 pupils between the ages of 4 and 11. About sixty per cent of the pupils come from the surrounding locality of the school, whilst an increasing proportion of about forty per cent come from further afield. Children come to the school at the age of four, with a variety of pre-school experiences. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The school has a high proportion of pupils who originate from ethnic backgrounds, but few of these pupils have specific English language needs. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs has increased but is still well below the national average. Five pupils have a statement of special educational need and this proportion of pupils is above the national average. Pupils' attainment level on entry to the school is above what is normally expected for most pupils at the age of five.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school with a staff committed to providing a good, consistent standard and quality of education in a happy, caring environment. Pupils are taught effectively and achieve standards which are broadly in line with the average compared to what is achieved in other schools, and above average in some subjects. Most pupils make satisfactory progress during their time at the school. It is a caring school, where the pupils are happy. The school sets pupils high standards for their behaviour and personal development. Pupils show very good attitudes towards school and achieve the very good standards of behaviour expected. The school is effectively led and managed by the headteacher and staff, supported well by the governing body and, as a result, gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils attain good standards in the Foundation Stage and by the age of 7; they attain good standards in mathematics and religious education throughout the school, and in information and communication technology by the age of 11.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good in the Foundation Stage and in the infant classes.
- Pupils achieve very good standards of behaviour, show positive attitudes towards school and form very good relationships in a happy, caring environment.
- The quality of learning opportunities provided is good, and there is good provision for extra-curricular activities.
- Very good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has a very good partnership with its parents.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment in English for pupils by the age of 11.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the junior classes, which is satisfactory and should be raised to that of the best in the school.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The use of assessment information to set specific targets for improvement for pupils.

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 December 1996 and has made satisfactory progress since then overall. The key issues for action identified then have been satisfactorily addressed. Provision for pupils under the age of five has improved and is now good. Reports to parents are now good, and there are effective procedures for reporting pupils' attendance. In addition, there has been improvement in the standards and progress pupils achieve in English by the time they are 7 and in the quality of teaching in the infant classes. There has been good improvement in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is now very good overall. Procedures

for assessing pupils' progress in curriculum areas have also improved. However, there is also a number of important areas of the school's work which have declined since the last inspection and now require further development and improvement. These include standards of attainment in English by the time pupils are 11, which are now in line with the average. The quality of teaching and learning in the junior classes is in need of improvement to that of the rest of the school, and provision for pupils with special educational needs is now unsatisfactory.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	C	C	E
mathematics	A*	A	B	C
science	A	B	C	D

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The results of the 2000 National tests show that in mathematics by the time pupils are 11 standards are above the national average and in line with it in English and science. When compared to schools with pupils from a similar background, standards are well below the national average in English, below the average in science and in line with it in mathematics. Trends over time show a steady decline in the last two years in English, though standards in mathematics have remained above the national average. Inspection findings are consistent with the recent trend. Standards of attainment in English and science are in line with what is normally expected by the age of 11, while standards in mathematics are above the expected level. The results of the 2000 national tests for 7 year olds show that results are very high in comparison to the national average in reading and writing and well above the average in mathematics. When the school's results are compared with similar schools they are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that standards are above the average for most pupils by the age of 7 in all three areas of learning. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the core subjects from their above average levels of attainment on entry to the school. In religious education, pupils attain standards above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus at both 7 and 11. In information and communication technology, by the pupils' attainment is in line with that expected nationally by the age of 7 and above the average by 11. Across the school, pupils achieve appropriately in most other subjects, which shows that standards have been maintained since the previous inspection, except in English by the age of 11. Most pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards their targets over time, although procedures to make proper provision for these pupils have slipped recently in the absence of a properly designated special educational needs co-ordinator, and are in need of improvement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils show very positive attitudes and enjoy school. They are keen to learn and show interest in their tasks.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour both in lessons and in and around the school is very good and is a strength of the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships at all levels are very good and are a strength of the school. Pupils' personal development is very good and they show very good levels of responsibility.
Attendance	Attendance is in line with the national average. The school successfully

	promotes and monitors pupils' attendance and punctuality.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
57 lessons seen	Good	Good	Satisfactory

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.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers effectively meet the needs of most of their pupils. Across the school, over nine out of ten lessons are satisfactory or better. Just over half of teaching is good or better, including approximately one in ten lessons which is very good. The quality of teaching and learning in English is good in the infant classes, and ranges from good to unsatisfactory in the junior classes. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good throughout the school. The skills of literacy are effectively taught overall, while those of numeracy are well taught throughout the school. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach and plan well. They have appropriate expectations of pupils' work and set them suitably challenging tasks most of the time. They manage pupils well and foster good relationships. Pupils are well motivated in lessons and show good levels of interest, concentration and independence. The impact of teaching on pupils' learning is that pupils in the Foundation Stage, and by the age of seven, make good overall progress. However, by the age of 11, this rate of overall progress has not been maintained in some important areas, notably English. The quality of teaching for most pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall and results in satisfactory progress for most pupils over time, although there is room for improvement in some junior classes.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets statutory requirements. Most pupils are provided with a good range and quality of learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs and pupils with EAL	Unsatisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs. Work is not sufficiently well planned currently to meet all pupils' needs. Provision for pupils with English as an Additional Language is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Adults provide good role models. Pupils have very good opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a close-knit, secure and happy environment. Child protection procedures are good. Assessment procedures are good in most subjects.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides effective leadership and has a clear vision of the direction the school needs to follow. The senior management team are committed and effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very supportive of the school's management. It makes a good contribution to the leadership and management of the school and acts effectively as a 'critical friend' of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's evaluation of its performance is satisfactory. Where areas have been identified the school considers and implements

	ways to improve them.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses the money it receives efficiently and deploys its resources well.

The quality of the school's accommodation is satisfactory. The levels of appropriately qualified staff are good and learning resources are satisfactory, except in relation to the quality of reading books and resources for the library. The school applies the principles of best value effectively in purchasing equipment and resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and they would feel comfortable approaching the school. • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. • The high standards of behaviour the school promotes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework their children are set. • The information they receive about their children's progress. • The expectations of what their children can achieve. • The leadership and management of the school. • The range of activities offered to pupils outside the planned curriculum.

The school's partnership with parents is very good. The quality of information provided is good and parents effectively support pupils' learning both in school and at home. Parents' views are generally supportive of the school. Inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views.

Inspection findings show that the school is effectively led and provides pupils with a sound standard of education, which includes high standards of behaviour and very good personal development. Inspectors judged the range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school to be good and that the information parents receive about their children's progress is also of a good standard.

Inspection findings agree with parents' concerns about homework, and that expectations of what some pupils can achieve are too low. The homework policy is not consistently applied across the school, and neither is the quality of homework set consistent from class to class.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In the 2000 national tests the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level 4, and above, by the age of 11 was above the national average in mathematics, and in line with the average in English and science. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level (Level 5) was well above the national average in mathematics, and close to it in English and science. Trends over the past three years show that standards of attainment by the age of 11 have declined from a position where they were well above the average to one where they are now in line with the national average, except in mathematics, where they have remained above the average. Compared to the performance of pupils in similar schools, pupils' performance in English was well below average in 2000, below average in science, and in line with the average in mathematics. Test results over time indicate that girls attain higher standards than boys, although inspection evidence shows no significant differences between the two. In 2000, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level (Level 2) and above, by the age of 7, was very high in comparison to the average in reading and writing, and well above the average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 3) was very high in comparison to the national average in writing, and well above the national average in reading and mathematics. Inspection findings show that, by the age of 7 pupils' standards of attainment are above average in English and mathematics, and in line with the average in science. By the age of 11, standards of attainment in mathematics are above average and in line with the average in science. These subjects have maintained a steady rate of progress. However, standards in English have slipped by the age of 11, notably in writing. Although standards in English by the age of 11 are about the national average, this represents an unsatisfactory rate of progress for pupils from the age of 7.
2. Although there is a range of attainment among pupils in the Reception class, baseline assessment shows that the majority of children are of above average attainment on their entry into the Reception class. The good teaching ensures that the children make good progress and by the time they are five the majority of the children have attained the early learning goals in language, literacy and mathematics, in personal and social development, in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development.
3. Standards of attainment in English are above the national average for pupils at the age of 7, and in line with the average for pupils at the age of 11. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall in English. They make good progress in the infant classes, but unsatisfactory progress in the junior classes, particularly in writing. By the age of 7, pupils confidently demonstrate good speaking and listening skills when discussing the life of an illustrator. By the time they are 11, pupils talk confidently and use a wide range of vocabulary during discussions. In reading, pupils' attainment is above the national average at both 7 and 11. By the age of 7, most pupils are fluent and accurate readers. They use expression well and self-correct their mistakes. In the junior classes, good reading patterns established in the infant classes are not continued, particularly in the lower juniors, when too little attention is paid to the progressive development of these skills. Despite this, by the age of 11, many pupils are reading at above the expected level. They express well-considered preferences for authors and different types of books. Pupils confidently contribute to discussions relating to the plot or characters in books by a wide range of authors. In writing, by the time they are 7, most pupils attain standards in writing, which are above national averages. Writing is generally grammatically correct and there is some imaginative work of high quality. Most pupils are stimulated towards the adventurous use of language. Handwriting is well formed and spelling is good. By the age of 11, pupils' writing is in line with that of other children aged 11 and many pupils have not made the progress expected from their achievements at the age of 7. This disappointing progress is due mainly to a lack of rigour and too great a focus on the skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation in the lower junior classes, with too little emphasis on the ability to write fluently, extensively and creatively.
4. Pupils achieve well in mathematics. Their attainment is above the levels expected at the age of both 7 and 11. Most pupils achieve well and make good progress across the school. By the time

they are 7 the pupils have a very good understanding of place value, most are able to multiply by 2, 5 and 10 and they work out halves and doubles of two digit numbers using halves in the answer. The pupils recognise and extend number sequences, recognise a range of two-dimensional shapes and identify the properties that each one has. They tell the time using half and quarter past the hour. They are given a good introduction to data handling using Carroll and Venn diagrams to display and interpret information. By the age of 11 most pupils manipulate and calculate using large numbers and numbers with 3 decimal places. They are especially confident when adding, subtracting and multiplying although some pupils are finding it hard to use written methods of division of larger numbers. The pupils accurately draw and measure angles. They find and justify probabilities in simple situations and calculate the mean, mode and median of groups of numbers. They calculate equivalent fractions, decimals and percentages.

5. In science, pupils' attainment is in line with the national average by the time pupils are 7 and 11. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. By the age of 7, pupils have a sound knowledge of the topics covered. They know and understand from their investigations how to change the shape of materials by twisting, stretching and bending them into shape. In other work most pupils predict which materials will be strongest or weakest in a simple experiment. They record their observations and draw simple conclusions from the results of their investigations. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to understand the concept of a fair test in an investigation of ship shapes. By the age of 11, most pupils know that gravity is a force which pulls things towards the centre of the earth, and that air resistance is a force which slows moving objects. Higher attaining pupils use the term 'upthrust' in its correct context. Most pupils have sound knowledge of electricity and of classification keys in their work on living things. They use terms like 'germination' and 'pollination' in their correct context. In their work on materials, pupils develop a clear understanding of reversible and irreversible change. They learn how to separate salt from sand and water. Pupils have a clear understanding of the scientific process. In their investigative work, they use clear procedures and have a sound understanding of fair testing. Higher attaining pupils use scientific knowledge in their conclusions to an experiment comparing mass and air.
6. In information and communication technology, at 7 pupils achieve satisfactorily and their attainment matches the expected level. By the age of 11, the attainment of most pupils is above the level expected. By the age of 7, most pupils know how to save and print their work and use word processing facilities appropriately to change the colour, size and style of text in producing work. They use a range of software for different purposes and work well both independently and in small groups. By the age of 11, most pupils download images from the Internet or import them from clip art into a document and add their own text. They use a web cam to capture a still image, paste it into a document, re-size it and print out. They are confident with e-mail and regularly communicate with pupils at Tresco on the Isles of Scilly in a 'net pals' project.
7. By the ages of both 7 and 11, pupils achieve well in religious education and attain standards above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In the infant classes, pupils are introduced to concepts of taking responsibility for their own actions and are encouraged to think about how they would behave in a given situation. By the age of 11, most pupils have a good understanding of other religions, their symbolism and the differences and similarities between them and Christianity.
8. By the time they reach the ages of 7 and 11, the standard of pupils' work is at the level expected in art and design, design and technology, history, geography, music and physical education. This shows that a steady rate of improvement has been maintained in all of these subjects since the previous inspection. Pupils achieve satisfactorily, and in lessons progress is usually satisfactory or better. It was good or better in approximately one-half of lessons. Over time, pupils make good progress in mathematics, religious education and information and communication technology in the junior classes. Progress in English is good in the infant classes, but unsatisfactory in the junior classes. Pupils make sound progress in science, history, geography, physical education, art and design, music, and design and technology. No significant differences were observed in the progress made by boys and girls. The school has made satisfactory progress towards achieving the targets it has set itself.

9. Across the school, pupils' literacy skills are developed effectively through other subjects. Pupils are given opportunities to develop writing through other subjects. During the inspection, examples were observed in history, geography and science. However, the quality of work that results from these learning opportunities is in need of improvement in the junior classes in relation to developing extended writing. Pupils also use their skills in information and communication technology to improve the presentation of their writing both in literacy and other curriculum areas. Pupils' numeracy skills are used effectively in subjects across the curriculum, for example, where pupils use their numeracy skills to record the results of their scientific investigations using line graphs and tables. In information and communication technology, pupils use their numeracy skills to good effect in creating spreadsheets to work out the average weather in Tresco on the Scilly Isles.
10. The standards and progress of pupils with special educational needs in the Reception class are good. In Years 1 and 2, standards and progress are satisfactory. In the junior classes, standards and progress are satisfactory for most pupils with special educational needs in mathematics. Progress in English, however, could be improved further, if the provision for these pupils fulfilled all requirements. Pupils from ethnic backgrounds who are bilingual make good progress in Reception and in the infant classes. They make satisfactory progress in the junior classes. There are no significant differences between the attainments and achievements of these pupils and all other pupils in the school.
11. Factors that affect the standards of attainment in the school include the changing school population. The school has had an increasing number of pupils from outside the school locality, and also an increase in the numbers of pupils with special education needs. The school has also suffered, to some degree, from pupil mobility in and out of the school during the school year. However, these factors only partially explain why standards of attainment by the age of 11 have not kept pace with the national trend. The inspection findings clearly show that there is a need to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the junior classes overall to the level of the rest of the school. In addition, in some of the junior classes, especially in English, there are low expectations of what pupils should achieve and the work they are set to do is too easy, which leads to unsatisfactory progress over time. The school is aware of these weaknesses and is already taking steps to address them. In addition, more use needs to be made of assessment information in setting specific targets against National Curriculum levels.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils have maintained the high standards of behaviour, personal development and attitudes reported by the previous inspection. Their attitudes to learning and relationships are strengths of the school. Pupils are very eager to learn. In more than 75 per cent of the lessons seen, pupils' attitudes were good or better. They concentrate very well and stay on task. They respond with enthusiasm and enjoyment in the many lessons where teaching is good. Pupils show a true love of reading. Writers such as Jacqueline Wilson and J K Rowling capture older pupils' imagination. Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to work and generally concentrate well on the tasks they are provided with. Pupils give very good support to activities in sports and the performing arts. For example, 50 pupils take part in the dance and drama club. Pupils like the school and are proud of it.
13. Behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are very well disciplined in not calling out during the quick-fire question and answer parts of the literacy and numeracy lessons. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents commented on how well the whole school, from Reception to Year 6, behaved at a recent science presentation. Pupils maintain very good standards of behaviour in the hall at lunchtime, and do not become too noisy. There was no disruptive behaviour at breaktimes observed during the inspection. The school has not excluded any pupil in the present year or at any time in the recent past. Pupils welcome visitors with great courtesy. They show very good freedom from oppressive behaviour, racism and sexism. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds participate harmoniously in the life of the school. One parent did express concern that her child had suffered bullying. However, parents at the meeting said that bullying happens only very rarely. Ninety four per cent of parents answering the questionnaire agree that pupils behave well.

14. The children behave very well in the Reception Class. They come into school happily and confidently, and know the routines of the classroom, for example, organising their drinks for snack time and putting their reading books in their drawers. They enjoy learning, concentrate well and are reluctant to stop when the time comes for them to move to a new activity. They play and learn very well, both alongside one another and together.
15. Pupils' personal development is very good. Parents answering the questionnaire agree that the school helps their children become mature and responsible. Even the youngest children in Reception start to take on responsibilities such as looking after their equipment and keeping their classroom tidy. From Year 1 upwards, two pupils from each class take part in the fortnightly meetings of the school council. They put forward ideas from their class and help to make them happen. For example, they asked for a basketball net in the playground and found out which type to buy, and the cost. Three pupils took part in a district training session and presented the school's ideas to a large audience of pupils and teachers from other schools. Pupils build their self-esteem by taking part in extra-curricular activities. Pupils in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2 perform the Christmas entertainment and the juniors put on a show in the summer term. Pupils sing and dance for the school's cabaret evenings. The school has successful teams in soccer, netball, rounders, cricket, swimming, athletics and cross-country running. The girls' soccer team took part in a district football tournament and a recent pupil won a place in the county side. Pupils put forward ideas and write their own plans for charity collections. They devise games and help on stalls at the summer fair.
16. Pupils relate very well to each other and to the adults at school. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 read as 'book friends' with Reception and Year 1 pupils. Pupils have a very good understanding of the effect of their actions on others. They are caring, considerate and sensitive in supporting pupils who have disabilities. They value the courage of these pupils and help them play a full part in the life of the school.
17. Attendance at 94.4 per cent in 1999/2000 is satisfactory. It precisely matches the national average. It has, however, gone down since the previous inspection. The previous report said that a significant number of pupils arrived late. Punctuality has improved, as almost all pupils now arrive on time. The prompt start to lessons has a positive effect on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers successfully meet the needs of their pupils in over nine out of ten lessons. Teaching is good or better in just over half of lessons, including just under one in ten lessons, which is very good. The quality of teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection, although there have been shifts in where the best, and unsatisfactory, teaching are found. For children in the Foundation Stage, five out of six lessons observed were judged to be good or better. In the infant classes, standards of teaching have improved with almost three-quarters of lessons good or better, including very good teaching in one out of 7 lessons. In the junior classes, just over three out of ten lessons were judged to be good. Six per cent of lessons in the junior classes were judged to be unsatisfactory. This amounted to two lessons, both of which were in English.
19. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, although there is room for improvement in some junior classes. The definition of special educational needs applied in school is not completely in line with that in the Code of Practice and although teachers are clear about the definition of special educational needs, this factor has an impact on their work. They rely mainly on support staff to deliver the provision for pupils who have statements of educational need. Teachers plan collaboratively with non-teaching assistants, who work well with the pupils. However, teaching does not always ensure that activities are sufficiently well planned to meet pupils' needs.
20. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. The teacher plans the learning activities to ensure that there are good opportunities for the children to have access to all six areas of learning, following the national guidance of the 'stepping stones' and the literacy and numeracy strategies. The teaching has a number of strengths, including the effective use of questions and talk to promote pupils' thinking and communication skills, together with the very

good organisation and management of children and their activities. Children make good progress in the basic skills of reading and number work because they are well taught in the literacy and numeracy sessions. Very good use is made of the classroom assistant to support individual and group activities.

21. For pupils in the infant classes, the quality of teaching is good. In the lessons seen, teaching was always satisfactory or better, and is good or better in approximately three-quarters of lessons. The good quality of teaching provides pupils with opportunities to apply their intellectual and creative effort in their work and to achieve well. Teachers plan well and use clear lesson structures that include setting pupils high expectations of what is required of them. They sustain the pace of lessons and use challenging questions that extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. They use a wide range of strategies to provide a stimulating range of activities such as paired talk and problem-solving activities. An example of very good teaching was in a numeracy lesson when pupils were learning tens and units up to a hundred. The lesson was extremely well planned with a clear focus at each stage of the lesson and pupils fully involved in their learning. Work was well matched to the needs of all pupils and the teacher had consistently high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Learning was sustained at a good pace through very good teaching of basic skills.
22. Between Years 3 and 6, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The teaching was satisfactory or better in approximately four out of ten lessons, but unsatisfactory in six per cent of lessons. In the best lessons, teachers sustain pupils' interest with lively approaches which include focused demonstrations to illustrate teaching points when needed. Teachers have secure subject knowledge which they use effectively to stimulate pupils' learning and increase their knowledge and understanding. They challenge pupils to think and develop their questioning skills through problem-solving approaches, such as in mathematics. They use a satisfactory range of methods to stimulate their pupils. These include investigations using artefacts in history, collaborative work in information and communication technology and mental activities in mathematics. An example of good teaching occurred in a numeracy lesson when pupils were making a prediction based on a set of data. The lesson was well planned and organised with objectives linked to information and communication technology. The warm-up maintains a good pace and is well-managed using wipe-boards. Pupils are fully engaged in their learning. The whole-class focus is clearly explained and subject knowledge is used well to ensure that pupils had a clear idea of what is expected of them. Pupils find the task challenging and have clear instructions and success criteria for collecting data and developing their recording methods. Where teaching is unsatisfactory in the junior classes, work is without sufficient difficulty, ineffectively matched to the needs of pupils' abilities and with too little focus on the extension of writing skills. Learning objectives are not always shared clearly with pupils and this leads to a lack of clarity about what is expected of them, particularly for more able pupils. In the long term, insufficient use is made of assessment information to set pupils targets for improvement within the National Curriculum level descriptions.
23. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. Particularly well-taught subjects are English in the infant classes and mathematics throughout the school. All the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage are well taught. Information and communication technology is well taught in Year 6 and physical education is well taught in the lower junior classes. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has helped to improve the teaching of English through the use of a wide range of teaching strategies, which include whole-class work, paired, individual and group work, but in the lower junior classes the level of expectation and difficulty is not always as high as it needs to be. In most classes, pupils are challenged to develop their ideas through clear questioning and a variety of activities. The teaching of basic literacy skills is good in the infant classes, but satisfactory overall in the junior classes. The teaching of basic numeracy skills is good throughout the school. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and are implementing it confidently and effectively. Lessons follow closely the recommended structure with appropriate amounts of time allocated to the different sections of each lesson. Every lesson commences with a brisk mental or oral mathematics session that, in the best lessons, fully involves all the pupils and gives them opportunities to explain and discuss the strategies they employed in finding the answer.

24. Homework is not always used effectively to support the work in classrooms. It is used to promote the development of reading and mathematics, and also to develop pupils' ability to work and research independently. The setting of homework and its quality in terms of challenging pupils to improve, is inconsistent across the school. In the best examples of homework seen, pupils' learning is extended but this is not always the case. In some classes homework is merely an extension, or repeat, of work done in class. The homework policy, which states what homework pupils should be set, is not always consistently applied. A significant minority of parents are unhappy with the amount of homework given.

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

25. The school has maintained its curriculum provision since the last inspection and the good quality and range of learning opportunities have a positive impact on pupils' learning. The school provides a broad, balanced curriculum which is relevant to the needs of all its pupils, apart from those with special educational needs, where provision is unsatisfactory. The school meets fully the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school has carefully analysed the requirements of Curriculum 2000 and completed good schemes of work in all subjects, which provide a basis for the curriculum planning processes.
26. The new Foundation Stage curriculum has been well implemented in the Reception Class and the children have access to all the areas of learning. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when the curriculum for children under five was a key issue. There is now a good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated tasks resulting in the children developing an independence in learning, for example, in writing and in using skills of exploration and inquiry to gain knowledge and understanding of the world. The children with special educational needs are identified at an early stage. Good support is given to enable them to fully participate in all the activities planned for the Reception class and for them to make good progress in learning.
27. The strategies for the teaching of literacy skills are good in the infant classes, and are satisfactory overall in the school. This is because in the younger classes in the juniors too little attention is paid to hearing pupils reading and ensuring that the material provided is suitably challenging. In addition, there are too few opportunities for pupils to extend their extended writing skills, which reduces pupils' standards in English by the age of 11. The planning and teaching of the National Numeracy Strategy are good throughout the school and opportunities for developing numeracy skills across the curriculum are well planned. The use of information and communication technology to enhance learning in other subjects continues to improve, particularly in the use of Internet, and is good. The school plans further improvements in the resources available.
28. Pupils have equality of opportunity in respect of the school's curriculum. For example, there are football teams for both boys and girls. However, where teaching is unsatisfactory and lessons fail to provide appropriate levels of challenge for all pupils, equality of opportunities is less assured. A good programme for personal, social and health education has been established which has a positive impact on pupils' personal development as they move through the school. This programme of study includes sex and drugs education.
29. The school makes unsatisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs, since the school does not have a named special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). Procedures in school for these pupils have slipped recently. The requirements of the special educational needs Code of Practice are not fully met and annual reviews of targets, undertaken with parents, are not properly undertaken.
30. The school makes good provision for pupils to learn by joining in activities outside of the normal school day. These include an after school club, a drama club and a range of sporting activities. The school is involved in competitive sports including, for example, football, netball and swimming. The school provides all Year 5 and 6 pupils with two opportunities to attend a residential activity centre for five days and holds this in September each year to ensure that staff and pupils learn about each other. This greatly improves the relationships between staff

and pupils. The school also provides a range of other activities that enhance the curriculum provision such as trips to art galleries and theatres and visits by artists, authors and musicians. The school provides satisfactory opportunities to involve the local community in pupils' learning through the involvement of parents, local churches and businesses. The school has well established links with a number of training institutions and offers placements for teachers in training on a regular basis, providing good support and mentoring.

31. Overall, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and has improved since the last inspection. The spiritual development of pupils is good. Daily acts of collective worship, both as whole-school assemblies and as class assemblies, provide good opportunities for pupils to sing hymns, pray together and to listen to stories which encourages them to consider the beliefs and needs of others. In religious education and at other times pupils explore their own feelings and how their behaviour affects those around them. Good opportunities are planned throughout the curriculum for pupils quietly to reflect on and wonder about what they have learned; for example Year 5 pupils were asked to write "Questions to ask God" and Year 1 pupils discuss prayers and learn to write them.
32. The school promotes high moral standards resulting in good moral development for the pupils. Teaching and non-teaching staff provide good role models for the pupils through the emphasis they place on the importance of fairness. Moral issues, such as those relating to environmental issues and issues of right and wrong, are discussed during lessons. For example, Year 1 pupils were encouraged to consider what were the results of the actions of characters in a story. The school is also seeking Eco-school status through good work being done in the lower junior classes. In many classes teachers use questions and prompts well to deepen pupils' thinking. As they move through the school pupils are increasingly aware of the difference between right and wrong. They adhere to school and class rules and respect them.
33. Very good provision is made for pupils' social development. Pupils are encouraged to relate to each other with kindness and consideration. The message is consistently reinforced in all areas of school life. The headteacher sets a good example to pupils as he engages in conversation with them in and around the school. Pupils enjoy these interactions and learn from them. Consequently, older pupils demonstrate very good interpersonal skills with each other and particularly with adults visiting the school. They address each other in a respectful manner and convey caring attitudes effectively. Residential experiences make a valuable contribution to the pupils' social development, providing good opportunities for pupils to relate to each other in different contexts. All pupils are given opportunities to use their initiative and to take some responsibility for class routines. Pupils' social awareness is enhanced through regular involvement in fund raising activities for a number of national and local charities. For example, the school is raising money for a guide dog for the blind through "Project Guide Dog". There is a school's council, which involves pupils in discussing issues within the school.
34. The school makes very good provision to extend pupils' knowledge of their own and other cultural traditions. Teachers ensure that different religions are presented in a positive light so that pupils appreciate and understand the belief of others. The school makes full use of opportunities to involve local musicians or artists to enhance pupils' awareness and understanding of cultural richness. In art, geography and history pupils gain insight into other cultures through well-presented studies of, for example the Chinese New Year in Year 2. Year 5 pupils learn about Egyptian hieroglyphics and in Year 3 in the Autumn Term 2000 pupils learnt that some Hindus worship Lakshmi and that Divali is the start of the New Year for Hindus. Good opportunities to compare and contrast the different cultures in other parts of the world are provided in geography.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school continues to provide good care for its pupils and has maintained the strengths noted in the previous report. The school is presently revising its health and safety policy. The health and safety team checks the premises regularly and has recently put right a number of items needing repair. The school has good procedures for child protection, updated in accordance with local authority guidelines. The deputy headteacher is the designated teacher for child

protection and has received full training. She ensures that staff are aware of the requirements. Two members of staff with current certificates co-ordinate the good arrangements for first aid.

36. The school provides good monitoring of pupils' academic and personal development, and provides satisfactory educational and personal support and guidance for pupils. There are good procedures for monitoring personal development. Teachers know pupils well and have established very good relationships with their classes. A good feature is that teachers keep records on pupils' attitudes and personal development. They comment verbally to parents in the termly meetings and in written reports at the end of the year.
37. Pupils get good personal support from the school, which prides itself on the pastoral care it achieves. Pupils respond very positively to the behaviour policy. The house point system encourages good social and personal development. The different houses display their points in classes and there is keen rivalry. Pupils also have 'smart cards' on which they build up the total points they have won individually, mainly for certificates. The school has very good procedures to resolve bullying and unkindness. It encourages pupils to care for one another. Since the last inspection, the school has also developed pupils' use of circle time lessons, in which they take turns to describe their feelings and to build up friendships with others in their class. The school council started last year, through which the school aims to help pupils take increasing responsibility for its running. Pupils have already contributed ideas that appear in the current school development plan.
38. The school has good procedures to promote regular attendance. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. At that time, recording and checking of absences were inconsistent. Teachers now maintain the registers correctly, and remind pupils if the family has not sent the reason for absence. The office staff also contact families to remind them about absence notes. The previous report found that many pupils were arriving late and methods of recording latecomers were largely ineffective. The school now closes the doors at registration time and records lateness in a 'late book'. As a result of these procedures, punctuality has improved. The school works hard to discourage families from taking holidays in term time. The educational welfare officer gives support when necessary.
39. Children in the Reception class come into school happily and there are good arrangements in place for day-to-day exchange of information between parents, carers and the school staff. Arrangements are in place for the children to leave school safely in the care of a known adult. Soon after entry into the Reception Class a baseline assessment is carried out with the children and the information is used to target areas for development with individual children. The teacher knows the children well; she has good arrangements to check how well they are learning and whether they are making enough progress. She uses the information to plan work, which enables them to make good progress. The teachers and other adults establish a very good rapport with the children; this encourages the children to work hard and to behave well.
40. Assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs have not been as consistently applied recently because of the lack of a specifically designated co-ordinator. Too few pupils have listed review dates for their individual education plans.
41. The school's procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are good. Baseline assessments are made shortly after pupils enter Reception and regular assessments are made in each year using a combination of standardised tests and optional tests in English and mathematics. The results of these tests are used to set learning targets for all pupils, which are shared with parents. In addition, the results of national tests are analysed to monitor the performance of pupils with special educational needs, higher and lower ability pupils, pupils for whom English is an additional language, and by gender. Any teaching and learning issues that arise from this analysis are fed back into pupils' learning through revisions of the schemes of work. There is also regular teacher assessment in the core subjects of different aspects of subject development. Writing and speaking and listening are assessed twice a year and science and mathematics are also assessed each half-term. The school is also beginning to monitor pupils' individual progress through the National Curriculum levels over time. However, despite all of these procedures, there is insufficient use, as yet, of assessment information to set end-of-year,

or end-of-phase, targets for individual pupils in the National Curriculum levels. Neither is assessment information used sufficiently yet to target specific groups of pupils for short and medium-term improvement. These aspects of the use of assessment information are both in need of improvement and development. In information and communication technology, and most of the non-core subjects, assessment procedures are good. The exception is music, which is not assessed at present, and where the introduction of assessment procedures is a planned development. There is a clear and well-organised assessment timetable which targets the assessment of each subject across the school year. Each subject has a 'target month' during which teachers assess and record pupils' progress against the National Curriculum level descriptions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. Parents' opinion of the school is favourable overall. They value its strong ethos and the way it encourages pupils to respect and care for one another. Positive comments by parents interviewed include a child 'flying high' for the whole of last year. However, parents expressed concerns at the parents' meeting. They say the standards of the older pupils are not high enough, especially in mathematics. The inspection findings are that teaching and learning in mathematics are good, but inspectors share parents' concerns about achievement in English by the age of 11. A significant minority of parents responding to the questionnaire express concern about homework, the information they receive about their children's progress and the range of activities outside lessons. Inspectors agree that the setting of homework is variable across different classes. However, outside activities and the systems for providing information about progress are good.
43. The school has very good links with parents. They meet the class teacher formally every term to discuss their children's progress. At these termly meetings, governors in turn make themselves available to discuss parents' comments or concerns. Parents speak informally with the class teacher almost every day. In response to concerns in the last report, the headteacher has set up regular 'coffee and chat' sessions for parents. There have also been well-attended meetings to introduce the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The school invites parents to concerts, sports days and assemblies. Large numbers of parents come to the school's Christmas and summer productions and the cabarets where pupils and teachers together show their talents. There is a thriving parent-teacher association, which strongly supports the school. Throughout the year, events such as school discos enhance pupils' social skills.
44. The school has good arrangements in place for the introduction of the Reception children to school; these include visits, a party and meetings for parents. The teacher builds on the work done at the nursery schools and playgroups from which the children transfer into school. The parents are asked to fill in a questionnaire about their child and are given good information on how to help their children at home, for example, with reading. The teacher is readily available to the parents and carers to discuss any day-to-day problems and regular evenings are arranged to cover the overall progress made by the children. Parents and carers are encouraged to come into the Reception Class to help and support the children in their learning and a number do this on a regular basis, helping for example with reading and computer skills. The parents are supportive in assisting the school to improve the facilities for the Reception Class, in ways ranging from helping to build the new outdoor learning area to providing airline tickets for the travel agents role-play area.
45. The school provides very good information for parents. The annual reports to parents on their children have a very good format. They describe what the child has been studying in every subject and give a very detailed account of how the child has progressed in the year. An unusual feature is that the reports also describe pupils' attitudes. The prospectus gives a clear picture of how the children will be learning. Each month the school sends home the 'Little Aston Chronicle' and the parent-teacher association sends a newsletter. The school has its own website. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are available but in some cases they have not been fully discussed with parents.
46. Parents make very good, enthusiastic contributions to their children's learning. Groups of 12 parent volunteers train for 10 weeks with a tutor from Tamworth College. They help each week in class. They receive further training in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and using hand-tools in design and technology from teachers in the school. Other parents bring special skills and experience. For example, an Islamic mother came to school to tell pupils about the Qur'an. Despite some parents' reservations, many take an active part in their children's homework, and most parents of younger children share books with them at home. Continuing support by parents of older children means that the school has some very eager readers. Parents generously support events offered by the parent-teacher association.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher provides effective leadership and, with the support of the senior management team, gives a sufficiently clear direction for the development and improvement of the school. The key issues for action identified in the 1996 report have been fully addressed and improvement has taken place in a number of other areas of the school. The headteacher, governors and staff have striven to raise the quality of education the school provides for its pupils and have also managed effectively the implementation of the literacy and the numeracy strategies. The school is well aware of what it needs to do to address the issues it faces in order to improve further pupils' standards of attainment and the quality of education provided.
48. The school has a clear mission and aims, which embrace the development of the whole child, with raising standards of attainment as a core purpose. The school is aiming to build a caring community in which pupils and staff are challenged to develop and improve in partnership with the parents of the school. In realising this ethos, the headteacher and staff have strongly promoted pupils' personal development and a clear moral code. The headteacher and senior management have also monitored the performance of the school, analysing strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment to develop short and longer-term priorities. There is room for improvement in this process in identifying targets against the National Curriculum level descriptions for individual pupils and targeted groups of pupils. Teachers' planning is monitored and the quality of teaching in numeracy and literacy has also been monitored. There are plans in place to enable curriculum co-ordinators to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects and for members of the senior management team to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in other curriculum areas.
49. Curriculum co-ordinators have an effective role in managing their subjects and are developing their role in monitoring standards of pupils' work. They have undertaken book analyses and receive copies of the planning for their subjects. They have not yet monitored the quality of teaching in their subject areas, although they have undertaken training in lesson observation and there are plans for a programme of lesson observations by subject co-ordinators to take place within the foreseeable future. Most curriculum co-ordinators have a clear vision of the direction they need to take in relation to subject development, and also understand how to achieve their aims. The headteacher delegates responsibility well to the senior management team who appreciate this partnership approach and readily accept and fulfil their roles. The senior management team meets regularly on a formal basis, and informally as required. This process works effectively as a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance on a day-to-day basis.
50. The school's overall response to the requirements of the special educational needs Code of Practice is in need of improvement. The current division of the role of special educational needs co-ordinator amongst the members of the senior management team means that provision is not cohesive and has a negative impact on standards. The school's special educational needs policy is satisfactory but the stages of assessment are unnecessarily complicated, particularly at Stage 3, and are in need of clarification. The complication is because the school is expected to follow local authority procedures, which specify a two-tier approach at Stage 3. Monitoring of pupils' attainments and achievements is satisfactory through the school's overall assessment procedures.
51. The overall co-ordinator with responsibility for Early Years is the Deputy Headteacher. The management structure has contributed to the clear direction and the shared vision for the improvement of the curriculum for the Reception children. The classroom for Reception children provides the range of practical activities expected and the furnishing and decoration is lively and colourful. Much of the work to provide this bright and stimulating environment has been carried out by the class teacher and her teaching assistant. Together with parents they have also worked to provide the designated outdoor area with suitable resources for physical development.
52. The school development plan has proved a useful, practical document and an important element in the strategic development of the school. The plan is devised after a thorough

analysis of the school's needs, taking account of the local and national initiatives. Governors are well involved in the process, through the summer term strategy meeting. The plan is linked to the school's budget and is specific and sufficiently detailed. Subject co-ordinators have also been involved in developing subject action plans for the overall school development plan.

53. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well and all statutory requirements are met. It is very supportive of the school's management and does sufficiently fulfil its role as a 'critical friend' of the school. Governors are well involved in the planning and monitoring of the school development plan and setting the priorities for the school based on its prior achievements. There is a well-developed committee system, each of which has a clear function and role. The chair of the governing body has a clear view of the strategic direction the school needs to take and an astute awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but recognises that the role of the governing body needs to focus more on the quality of teaching and learning in the school. The governors effectively oversee the finances of the school and are continuing to develop their strategic role. Some governors are linked to subject areas within school and many have links with classes.
54. The school has an appropriate range of aims and policies which are implemented well. These provide suitable guidance on most aspects of school life and underpin the very good ethos of the school. These aims are published in the school brochure. Almost all of the parents who returned a questionnaire to the inspectors consider that the school's values have a positive effect on their children.
55. The school makes good, appropriate use of its funding. Its financial procedures are effective. Spending priorities identified in the school development plan are linked suitably to the school budget. At the time of the inspection, the school accounts showed a relatively large carry forward at the end of the financial year. The new computer suite will require approximately half of this money. Other imminent expenditure includes a new storage area for resources and new fascia boards. The carry forward that remains for contingencies is reasonable and prudent. The finance committee monitors the budget at meetings twice each term, reporting to the full governing body. The office staff undertake the day-to-day financial and administration procedures efficiently. They and the headteacher make good use of the computer system. Teaching and support staff make good use of computers and other facilities in information and communication technology. For example, pupils taking part in an athletics lesson took digital photographs of each other's technique to help them improve future performance. The school makes good use of specific grants, such as those to support pupils with special educational needs and staff training.
56. The teaching staff have an appropriate range of qualifications and experience. The school has a good system for induction of new members of staff. A suitable system of appraisal is in place and is linked very closely to staff development through the Performance Management process, arrangements for which are in place, and are good. The classroom support staff are suitably matched to the needs of the school and provide an effective contribution to pupils' learning. The school is making particularly good use of the assistants in Reception and the infant classes. There is an adequate number of support staff in the school to support pupils with special educational needs and the school has a generous allowance of non-teaching support for those pupils who have statements. Generally, all support is used effectively but too few of these staff are sufficiently well trained to undertake the difficult tasks of teaching literacy skills to pupils who have learning difficulties.
57. The school's accommodation is satisfactory overall. The Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 classrooms are roomy. The Year 1 and 2 classrooms, in the older part of the school, have sufficient space. The Foundation Stage children have a good classroom and a very good, newly created outside area for learning and play. The hall is spacious. However, the library is a converted storage area beside the hall. It is cramped, stuffy, with no access to daylight and therefore unsuitable for lengthy reading and research. The school has plans to build a computer suite in the immediate future. It has a large playing field. However, the playground is only adequate in size and the school development plan sets improvement of playground facilities as a priority.

58. Resources in the school are satisfactory overall. The school does not, however, have sufficient books, either fiction or non-fiction. The present number of computers, 12 for 210 pupils, is below the national primary average. The school will install more computers in the new computer suite and these will increase the school's stock of computers to a good level. Learning resources for pupils with special educational needs are adequate and many materials are made by staff.
59. The school makes good use of its limited budget. It has strengths in pupils' attitudes and behaviour and in its ethos and care for pupils. However, standards in English have fallen, particularly achievement by pupils at the end of Year 6. In the light of these factors, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. In order to continue the rate of improvement achieved over the last four years, and raise standards of attainment further, the governors, headteacher and staff of the school should:

- i. raise standards of English for pupils by the age of 11 by:
- providing consistent levels of challenge to all pupils to think creatively and imaginatively in their writing;
 - extending ideas through use of interesting and wide-ranging vocabulary;
 - providing pupils with a wider range of opportunities to develop their writing in subject areas;
 - enabling the subject co-ordinator to monitor the progression of standards in English across the school

(Discussed in paragraphs 49, 76 and 79)

- ii. further improve the quality of teaching in the junior classes, to that of the best by:
- ensuring that all lesson plans identify precisely what pupils of all abilities will learn;
 - pupils are consistently challenged to achieve their best;
 - using assessment information to set challenging targets for pupils, using National Curriculum level descriptions;
 - monitoring the quality of teaching and learning across the key stage in subjects across the curriculum.

(Discussed in paragraphs 22, 41 and 48)

- iii. improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs by:
- appointing a co-ordinator for special educational needs;
 - revising the school's policy for Special Educational Needs to meet the requirements of the Code of Practice;
 - ensuring that all annual reviews are properly undertaken;

(Discussed in paragraphs 29, 40 and 50)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

The school should consider including the following issues in its action plan:

- improve the quality of reading books and non-fiction books in the library;
- (Discussed in paragraphs 58 and 75)
- improve the consistency and quality of homework pupils are set in different classes in the school.

(Discussed in paragraph 24)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	8	44	44	4		

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the 7 categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	212
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	25

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	37

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of the infant classes

Number of registered pupils in final year of the infant classes for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	16	13	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	16
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	28	28	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (100)	97 (96)	97 (96)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	16	14
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	27	29	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (89)	100 (93)	93 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of the junior classes

Number of registered pupils in final year of the junior classes for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	19	13	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	15	15
	Girls	12	10	13
	Total	23	25	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (79)	78 (86)	88 (93)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	14	17
	Girls	11	12	13
	Total	25	26	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (86)	81 (86)	94 (86)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	22
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	182
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.0
No. pupils per qualified teacher	27.5
Average class size	30.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	144

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	333,930
Total expenditure	339,600
Expenditure per pupil	1,633
Balance brought forward from previous year	39,810
Balance carried forward to next year	53,478

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	210
Number of questionnaires returned	108

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	38	7	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	30	50	10	6	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	45	4	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	39	30	6	1
The teaching is good.	33	50	7	4	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	25	54	12	6	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	35	6	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	39	18	4	1
The school works closely with parents.	29	55	11	4	1
The school is well led and managed.	25	44	12	16	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	56	8	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	40	25	11	5

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

61. The children begin school in the September before their fifth birthday. There are currently 29 children in the Reception Class, which is the Foundation Stage. Although there is a range of attainment, baseline assessment shows that the majority of children are of above average attainment on their entry into the Reception class. The good teaching ensures that the children make good progress and by the time they are five the majority of the children have attained the early learning goals in language, literacy and mathematics, in personal and social development, in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. This represents a similar picture to that which emerged at the time of the previous inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

62. The children's progress in personal, social and emotional development is good and most achieve above what is expected by the age of five. When they come into school the children settle quickly and happily and they have very positive attitudes to learning. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good and ensures that the children become confident and develop a clear understanding of what is expected of them. The teacher has high expectations of the children's behaviour and ability to take care of themselves. For example, when dressing and undressing and in taking care of their personal hygiene the children are confident and independent. The children's personal and social skills are well developed as they are provided with good opportunities to work and play together. There are very good relationships between adults and children. The children respond well to questions from their teacher and other adults and speak confidently to adults and each other. There is a good balance of teacher-directed tasks and of children-chosen activities in the class and this provides opportunities for the children to show self-reliance, for example, in writing and in using skills of exploration and inquiry.

Communication, language and literacy

63. The majority of children enter the Reception classes with above average language skills. They make good progress and by the end of the Reception year the proportion of the children who achieve the early learning goals is above average. Teaching in this area is good. The teacher develops and builds on the children's early reading skills through the sharing of books and stories and good teaching of phonic skills. The children have a good introduction to the Literacy Hour, for example in a lesson on the book *The Bear and the Picnic Lunch* the teacher extends the children's vocabulary and increases their understanding of how stories can be set in different contexts. She encourages the children to join in the reading, which they do with enthusiasm. The children enjoy hearing stories and they listen carefully to the teacher. They respond well to events in the story and they are keen to add their comments. They regularly take reading books home to share with parents and carers.

64. Throughout the Foundation Stage the children acquire a good understanding of the writing process. They hold pencils correctly and are taught the correct way to form letters. There are good opportunities planned for the children to encourage them to write for a variety of purposes. For example, they learn to write invitations and to develop speech for different characters in a story. They recognise, read and write their names. The majority of children know individual letters of the alphabet and can sound out the letters for simple words. They recognise many words by sight and use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them read and write unfamiliar words. The Reception classroom has alphabet charts and labels that enable the children to link letters and sounds and encourage them to read words themselves.

Mathematical development

65. Children enter the school with above average skills in mathematical development and they make good progress in mathematical understanding. By the end of the Reception year, the

proportion of the children who have achieved the early learning goals is above average. Teaching is good and the children are given a good introduction to number work through the Numeracy Strategy. The teacher provides good opportunities for the children to count and use numbers, and this enables them to develop their understanding of the number system. They recognise numbers one to ten in digits and most of the children can count to at least 30. The children enjoy counting together and some can correctly find who is seventh or tenth in a circle when starting at different points. They understand the concept of simple addition and some have an understanding of subtraction. The children make good progress because the teacher knows what they have learnt and she then plans the next stage of work in number and the development of mathematical understanding. Good work was seen when the children learnt to identify a line of symmetry and to make symmetrical patterns. The children's thinking was extended by the use of a grid with beanbags when they had to place the bags to make both sides symmetrical.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66. By the time they are five, most children are likely to achieve beyond the level expected in knowledge and understanding of the world. The quality of teaching is good in this area because good activities are planned and then appropriate interventions by all the adults are made. The children use the materials from their travel agency with enthusiasm in a variety of learning situations and this develops an understanding of travel and distances and how other countries are different to their own. The children make good progress in understanding the life cycles of butterflies and frogs. They are given many opportunities to use the computer and use it to discover information about homes and transport. They know how to use the mouse with the paint program to create symmetrical pictures and patterns. The children explore and investigate the very good collection of sea creatures and are captivated by being able to 'hear the sea' in the shells. They discover that wet sand makes better sandcastles than dry sand and that stones change colour when they are used in blue water to make a mermaid's rock-pool.

Physical development

67. In the Reception Class, the children develop their physical skills through the indoor and outdoor sessions and by the age of five, most children exceed the national expectation in this area of learning. The teaching in this area is good and enables the children to make good progress. In a dance lesson, the children show a good awareness of space by not bumping into each other as they make the shapes and movements of sea creatures with skill and imagination. The teacher invites the children to make suggestions about how the class performance of the sea scene could be improved and the children are able to suggest additions and changes. There are many opportunities to develop fine motor skills using paintbrushes, pencils and scissors and the children in the Reception class are able to dress and undress themselves with occasional help with fasteners. There is a range of resources for climbing, balancing, throwing and catching and the children have opportunities to develop their skills on wheeled outdoor equipment and climbing area.

Creative development

68. The children make good progress in creative development and most attain and exceed the early learning goals before they enter Year 1. The quality of teaching is good because overall there is a wide range of activities planned to promote this area of learning. The children imaginatively interpret the good variety of role-play situations provided, such as taking orders in the seaside café or using the travel agents to book their holidays. They know a good range of songs and nursery rhymes and sing and join in with actions and words competently and enthusiastically. In their dance lesson, there is gentle seascape music to listen to which helps them to develop their movements with imagination. The children know a range of colours and paint underwater scenes using a wax resist method with enjoyment and confidence. However, opportunities to explore creative situations independently are more limited and on a few occasions the materials provided are not suitable for the planned task. For example, when the children are asked to make model food they are given mixed blue and green modelling clay.

ENGLISH

69. Inspection findings show that by the end of Year 2 pupils are attaining standards that are above the average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. By the end of Year 6 pupils are attaining standards which are above the national average in speaking and listening and reading, but in line with the average in writing. Standards of attainment in English by the age of 11 are therefore in line with the national average overall. Pupils make good progress overall in the infant classes, but unsatisfactory progress overall in the junior classes, notably in writing. At the time of the last inspection pupils at the age of 7 were judged to be attaining in line with the national average, whilst pupils at the age of 11 were judged to be attaining above the national average. This represents unsatisfactory progress overall in improving standards of English by the age of 11. No discernible differences were found between the attainment of boys and girls during the inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in the most classes in relation to the targets they are set.
70. In the 2000 national tests for 11 year olds the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level and the higher levels was in line with the national average. When these results are compared to schools with similar pupils, the pupils' performance at the expected level was well below the average. In the 2000 tests for 7 year olds the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level and the higher level in reading was well above the national average, and very high in comparison with the average in writing. When the results in reading and writing are compared to similar schools, the number of pupils attaining the expected level was well above the national average. Over the last three years standards of attainment in English have been maintained for pupils at the age of 7, but the average points score for pupils at the age of 11 has gradually been falling to be in line with the average. This trend can be partially explained by changes in the make-up of the school population but, as inspection findings show, there are low expectations of what some pupils can do. In addition, a lack of difficulty in the work they are set has also had an impact on overall standards of attainment and has led to unsatisfactory progress over time for a significant number of pupils.
71. By the age of 7 the majority of pupils attain good standards in speaking and listening, including those pupils with special educational needs. Pupils listen well to their teachers and are keen to speak in front of others when supported by imaginative teaching that involves them creatively. For example, in a Year 1 class, pupils are able to provide good suggestions as to why litter left on the ground may be dangerous to animals and respond with enthusiasm to the teacher's use of a bunch of wilted flowers. In Year 2, pupils confidently demonstrate good speaking and listening skills when discussing the life of an illustrator.
72. Attainment in reading at the age of 7 is above the levels expected nationally, with some higher attaining pupils achieving well. Pupils in Year 1 benefit from the good grounding they have received in the Reception class, consistent homework and from the wide range of opportunities for pupils to read, not only during the literacy hour but on many other occasions when working in other subject areas. Consequently, many Year 1 pupils read accurately with good expression. In Year 2, all pupils know how to break a word down when faced with a new word and many use a full range of other strategies, for example, picture and contextual clues and punctuation.
73. By the age of 7, most pupils attain standards in writing, which are above national averages. In Year 1, teaching has high expectations which results in good quality writing. For example, Year 1 pupils write confidently about their holiday with good spelling, emerging punctuation and with good use of adjectives by more able pupils. In Year 2, pupils are able to write in sentences when asked to write a diary of a passenger on the Titanic. Work is well organised to meet the needs of individual pupils. In Year 2, pupils write for a variety of purposes and audiences. The majority construct sentences well and some pupils are adept at simple paragraphs. Writing is generally grammatically correct and there is some imaginative work of high quality. Most pupils are stimulated towards the adventurous use of language. Handwriting is well formed and spelling is good.
74. By the age of 11, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is generally above national averages. Teachers use a lively approach and ask searching questions. Pupils talk confidently and use a wide range of vocabulary during discussions. In the junior classes, there are good opportunities for pupils to participate in debates, performance and presentations. For example,

in a Year 3 class pupils listened intently to the story of Snow White and then discussed, in groups, how they would mime a part of the story. In Year 6 pupils are able to develop a sentence using subordinate clauses, a list of expressive adjectives and find words to illustrate despondency.

75. The good reading patterns established in the infant classes are not continued in the junior classes, particularly in the lower juniors, when too little attention is paid to the progressive development of these skills. Despite this, by the age of 11, many pupils are reading above the expected level. They express well-considered preferences for authors and different types of books. Pupils confidently contribute to discussions relating to the plot or characters in books by a wide range of authors including Homer, Dickens, Shakespeare and a number of modern authors. There are planned opportunities for pupils to read and talk about books in a critical way. The range of texts studied throughout the juniors is not as extensive as it might be because of the limited range of books in the library. Poetry, play reading and newspapers and magazines are all used and the majority of pupils read with suitable expression and intonation.
76. By the age of 11, pupils' writing is in line with that of other children aged 11 and many pupils have not made the progress expected from their achievements at the age of 7. This disappointing progress is due mainly to too great a focus on the skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation in the lower junior classes, with too little emphasis on the ability to write fluently, extensively and creatively. Expectations in these classes are too low and too much of the work lacks difficulty and merely covers what pupils already know. Considerable opportunities are missed to capitalise on pupils' enthusiasm. The lack of difficulty in the homework given is also an additional factor. For example, in a lower junior class, pupils are given spellings to learn which clearly do not improve their learning ability. When challenged, pupils are able to vary their writing style well to suit the purpose, can use effectively punctuation and include speech-marks and other forms of punctuation in their writing. They spell complex words and record their feelings, demonstrating a good use of grammar. However, insufficient opportunities are provided for the development of more creative and imaginative approaches to writing, especially in the lower junior classes. In Year 6 pupils show good written skills when asked to prepare a project on a topic of their choice for homework and many word-process their work and present it well.
77. At both key stages opportunities to use information and communication technology to enhance pupils' learning in English are beginning to be used more extensively. This is an improving aspect of provision.
78. Overall, the quality of teaching in English is good in the infant classes and satisfactory in the junior classes. In the infant classes, teachers plan well to develop pupils' imagination and set challenging targets for them to achieve. Work is set at a good pace and pupils are encouraged to take care, attend to detail and always produce their best work. There is some good teaching in the older junior classes, but in the lower junior classes some unsatisfactory teaching was observed, where work is too easy, ineffectively matched to the needs of pupils' abilities and with too little focus on the extension of writing skills. In these classes, there is too little drafting and re-drafting of work undertaken to enable pupils to increase the complexity of sentences. This aspect is given sufficient attention in the older junior classes. Throughout the school, pupils show good attitudes to English and enjoy discussing and debating. They are less willing to produce extended written work and to translate their obvious linguistic skills into good quality writing. Teaching is good where lessons are planned which actively involve the pupils and provides work which extends the pupil's knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils considered an advertisement for a theme park and then wrote persuasive sentences of their own. The teaching of literacy is sufficiently supported across the curriculum with good work being done in religious education, geography and history. For example, in a Year 5 religious education lesson pupils wrote poems about what they thought a "World without trees or flowers" would be like. However, pupils should be given greater opportunities to develop extended writing in other subjects.
79. The school's progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory because the good standards reached during that inspection have not been maintained over time, and standards by the age of 11 are not as good as they were at the time of the last inspection. Scrutiny of pupils'

work presents a clear picture that, over time, pupils' progress in the junior classes is no more than satisfactory. This is linked to weaknesses in the monitoring procedures for reading and the marking of written work. In some classes homework is not regular. Throughout the school, there is too little celebration of pupils' written work and displays are not actively used to motivate pupils to improve their writing skills.

80. The school has improved the space allocated to the library and a number of new books have been purchased. The school library service also enhances the library provision. However it is still unsatisfactory, being too small, poorly ventilated and underused by pupils for research work.
81. There are good schemes of work in place and the school has implemented the Literacy Strategy well in the infant classes. In the junior classes too little emphasis has been placed on the establishment of good writing habits in the younger classes so that pupils are more reluctant to extend their writing when required to do so in the older classes, with a resultant drop in standards. In addition, the school does not yet use the information it gains from assessing pupils' progress to set specific targets for individual improvement against the National Curriculum levels.

MATHEMATICS

82. Inspection findings show that at the ages of both 7 and 11, pupils are attaining standards that are above the average in mathematics. Standards of attainment in mathematics by the age of 11 are therefore above the national average overall. Pupils make good progress in both the infant and junior classes. At the time of the last inspection pupils at the age of 7 and 11 were judged to be making good progress and attaining standards above the national average, which represents satisfactory progress overall in improving standards of mathematics by the age of 11 since the previous inspection. No discernible differences were found between the attainment of boys and girls during the inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in most classes in relation to the targets they are set.
83. The results of the national tests for 11 year olds in 2000 show that standards are above average when compared to all schools and in line with those of similar schools. The results of tests for 7 year olds in 2000 show the school's performance in mathematics was high in comparison with the national average and in comparison with similar schools. Based on work seen during the inspection, the pupils' attainment is above average at the end of both key stages and the pupils achieve well. The school has used information from tests to identify areas for development in teaching and learning in order to maintain standards at a high level. In order to address areas for improvement, the school has recently introduced target-setting for individual pupils. The targets are shared with parents, but not made explicit to the pupils. Nor are the pupils aware of what they need to learn to achieve specific levels of the National Curriculum.
84. By the time they are 7 the pupils have a very good understanding of place value. Most are able to multiply by 2, 5 and 10 and they work out halves and doubles of two digit numbers using halves in the answer. They recognise and extend number sequences, recognise a range of two-dimensional shapes and can identify the properties that each one has. They tell the time using half and quarter past the hour. Pupils are given a good introduction to data handling using Carroll and Venn diagrams to display and interpret information.
85. In Year 3, the pupils work out problems to do with money. They work on area and shape and they use their knowledge of angles to programme a floor robot to move in a prescribed pattern. The Year 4 pupils learn to divide using hundreds tens and units and remainders. By the time they are 11 the majority of pupils manipulate and calculate using large numbers and numbers with 3 decimal places. They are especially confident when adding, subtracting and multiplying although some pupils are finding it hard to use written methods of division of larger numbers. The pupils accurately draw and measure angles. They are beginning to understand and use ratio and proportion in calculations. The pupils find and justify probabilities in simple situations and calculate the mean, mode and median of groups of numbers. They calculate equivalent fractions, decimals and percentages. However no work was seen using negative numbers or of plotting co-ordinates using all four quadrants, nor of any extension of earlier work on finding the perimeter and area of regular shapes.

86. The overall quality of teaching is good, with some very good features. The teachers have a good knowledge of the numeracy strategy and how to teach it. They use appropriate vocabulary and open-ended questions to extend the pupils' understanding of the mathematical topics. They share the learning objectives of the lesson with the pupils and check at the end to see who has understood the new work and who needs to have more help. Teaching ensures a good pace and challenge in the opening part of the lesson. Most pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons and enthusiastically and confidently offer answers to questions. They work well both independently and in small groups. They count and calculate accurately and quickly and are able to use calculators to check their answers. The pupils explain how and why they have reached an answer and often other pupils suggest alternative ways of working out. The pupils are given very good opportunities to solve problems using all four numerical operations. However they are not as confident with problems needing division as with other areas. In a few lessons the pace of the central part of the lesson is too slow and the effectiveness of the learning opportunities is lessened. In most lessons the teachers have high expectations of the pupils' ability to use intellectual effort, to concentrate and explain their answers. A good instance of this was seen in a Year 1 lesson when the pupils made very good progress in adding tens to tens and units numbers by using mental imagery of the numbers. This work was supported by good use of a hundred square. The teachers have put in place good procedures to check how well the pupils are learning and whether they are making enough progress. The teachers then match the work well to the needs of different groups of pupils. However the teachers do not yet ensure that individual pupils know what they are to learn and what they need to do to achieve the next level of the National Curriculum. In most classes the pupils are given homework on a regular basis, which extends work done in class, but on occasions this is more erratic and the homework is given irregularly or is not connected with the work being covered in the class.
87. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, knowledgeable and hard-working. They contribute to an on-going evaluation of the subject and are committed to raising standards in the school, although opportunities to monitor the subject have so far been limited to looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning. The school analyses the results from the regular half-term assessments and yearly, standardised tests. This information is being used to place the pupils into similar attainment groups so that they can work at a suitable level and is helping them to make good progress. The school is considering extending this system to cross-age groupings. However, the school does not yet use this information to set specific targets for individual improvement against the National Curriculum attainment levels. Mathematics is being given a high profile in the school, for example, the co-ordinator has organised evenings for parents to experience the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy and plans to do this again in the near future. In most of the classes there are interesting and interactive displays to support the teaching and learning together with an adequate range of resources. Information and communication technology is well used to support the mathematical work in school, for example, by the use of the floor robot, data handling programs and calculators.

SCIENCE

88. Owing to timetable arrangements it was not possible to observe any science lessons in Years 5 or 6 during the inspection week. Judgements on standards at the age of 11 are made on the basis of the observation of Year 3 and 4 lessons, analysis of pupils' work, displays and discussions with pupils in Year 6. Inspection findings show that at the ages of both 7 and 11, pupils are attaining standards, which are in line with the national average. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in both the infant and junior classes. At the time of the last inspection, pupils at the age of 7 and 11 were judged to be making sound progress and attaining standards in line with the national average in science. Therefore, there has been satisfactory progress overall in improving standards of science by the age of 11 since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in most classes in relation to the targets they are set.
89. In the national tests for 11 year-olds in 2000 the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was just below the national average, but the proportion reaching higher than the expected level was in line with the national average. The results were below the average when compared with pupils from similar schools. In the teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2000 the

proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected level was in line with the national average, with the proportion reaching higher than the expected level well above the national average.

90. Attainment by pupils by the end of Year 2 is broadly in line with the national average, with a significant number of pupils working at the higher than expected level (Level 3). Pupils have sound knowledge of the topics covered. Year 1 pupils recognise a range of different properties in materials, and are beginning to sort materials according to their properties. Year 2 pupils know and understand from their investigations how to change the shape of materials by twisting, stretching and bending them into shape. In other work most pupils predict which materials will be strongest or weakest in a simple experiment. They record their observations and draw simple conclusions from the results of their investigations. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to understand the concept of a fair test in an investigation of ship shapes.
91. Between Years 3 and 6, this sound rate of progress continues. In the lower junior classes, pupils reinforce and develop their understanding of concepts such as magnetism. They also develop their knowledge and understanding of different habitats through an investigative approach focused on the school grounds. They learn about food chains and the interrelationship between different life forms in food webs. By the age of 11, most pupils attain in line with the levels expected at this age, with a significant minority of pupils attaining above the level expected. Year 6 pupils know that gravity is a force which pulls things towards the centre of the earth and that air resistance is a force which slows moving objects. Higher attaining pupils use the term 'upthrust' in its correct context. Most pupils have sound knowledge of electricity and of classification keys in their work on living things. They use terms like 'germination' and 'pollination' in their correct context. In their work on materials, pupils develop a clear understanding of reversible and irreversible change. They learn how to separate salt from sand and water. Pupils have a clear understanding of the scientific process. In their investigative work, they use clear procedures and have a sound understanding of fair testing. Higher attaining pupils use scientific knowledge in their conclusions to an experiment comparing mass and air.
92. The quality of teaching in science is satisfactory throughout the school. One of the strengths of teaching is the planning of activities, which integrate the investigative process with the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding. There is a clear focus for pupils' learning. Good lessons have clear learning objectives that are shared effectively with pupils through practical demonstrations. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and set them challenging tasks that build on their prior learning and develop new knowledge. Pupils' attitudes to science are good throughout the school, as is behaviour. Pupils show a real sense of interest in what they are doing and are keen to learn. They respond positively to their teachers and sustain their interest and concentration well. Pupils in Year 1, 2, 3 and 4 organise themselves well and show initiative and independence when working in groups. Relationships between pupils are always good and this results in productive cooperative work. Concentration is sustained and pupils remain well on task. Teachers make particularly good use of questions to develop pupils' ideas and challenge their thinking, for example, in Year 1 where pupils investigate how materials can be sorted in a variety of ways. The pupils are organised into groups to work co-operatively and undertake a carousel of activities with a variety of investigations. Resources are well prepared and used, and pupils are well managed and organised into groups to investigate different problems.
93. Science teaching makes an effective contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. At both key stages pupils are encouraged to talk about their ideas and what they see and do. There is appropriate use of scientific vocabulary in all classes observed. Year 4 and 6 pupils have used flow charts to classify and identify animals. Mathematical skills are developed as pupils record and present their findings using line graphs.
94. The leadership and management of the subject are effective. The curriculum co-ordinator has a clear idea of priorities in need of development if standards are to be maintained and improved. The scheme of work has been revised to take account of Curriculum 2000, and ensures a balanced coverage of all the required aspects of science. Investigative work is fully integrated into teachers' planning and forms a good base for teaching the knowledge and understanding required within the science curriculum. The curriculum co-ordinator has monitored pupils' books to assess the effectiveness of the scheme of work. Pupils' attainment is assessed every half

term and recorded to monitor pupils' progress. Areas for development are identified through this process. However, targets for improving pupils' attainment are not yet set on the basis of the previous year's results. Addressing this issue would help to raise standards in the subject further.

ART AND DESIGN

95. Standards in art are broadly in line with national expectations by the age of 7. By the age of 11, these standards are maintained and in some activities, for example, the designing of large models of animals in Year 4, national expectations are exceeded. All pupils are making satisfactory progress, and some individual pupils make good progress, particularly in the skills of drawing. Therefore, there has been satisfactory progress since the previous inspection.
96. Younger pupils enjoy art and approach the subject with enthusiasm. Teachers' planning ensures that all pupils are suitably challenged and effectively supported so that they achieve satisfactorily. In Year 2, the teacher has good subject knowledge and uses skilful prompts to encourage pupils to make pertinent observations in response to questions, which was observed in a lesson about getting a ship into a bottle. Pupils then designed their ships and their sails with care. The understanding they gained from the process was reflected in their own work as they used papers to create different textures and colours to depict a storm and carefully considered where to place their models in the bottles. They talk enthusiastically to each other about their work and offer suggestions as to how certain pieces could be improved. Pupils' work in Year 2 is imaginative and has vitality. Pupils show good attitudes, sustain their interest and are enthusiastic for the subject.
97. In the junior classes, pupils make satisfactory progress and some more able pupils make good progress in drawing. Teaching is at least satisfactory. In Year 3 pupils undertake experiments with magnets and iron filings to draw pattern and shapes. They show good attention to detail in this difficult task. Their sketch books show that they have learnt about surfaces, textures and patterns. Pupils learn to control tools and the use of wire, art straws and pipe cleaners to plan and create structures and shapes. In Year 4, pupils enjoy using a full range of materials as they produce three-dimensional pieces based on jungle themes. In Year 5, pupils consider the use of images to tell a story and use a simple jungle story to create their own tapestry, design the individual parts and choose a range of textiles with a variety of colours and textures. Pupils' sketchbooks reflect the satisfactory progress in drawing and sketching and in building up a picture from sketchbook studies. By Year 6, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. They extend work done on landscapes during their visit to Stanley Head into developing their understanding of colour and how to use shades of colour to create a feeling of distance.
98. Teachers encourage pupils to assess the quality of their own work and that of others. In the lower junior classes, teachers help pupils know what to look for when assessing the quality of a piece of work. By the age of 11, pupils analyse the strengths and weaknesses of a given piece of work very well.
99. The co-ordinator has sound subject knowledge and is keen to provide support and advice for colleagues wherever required. The curriculum is broad, balanced and well planned to maximise opportunities for cross-curricular links. Reviews of pupils' learning show that pupils experience a range of techniques and use a range of media and materials in their art work - model making, computer graphics, collage, printing and montage as well as painting and sketching. Displays in and around the school are used well to celebrate pupils' artistic and creative achievements. Good use is made of a visiting artist to develop new techniques and there are several examples of work undertaken in this way around the school. Classrooms are mostly of a good shape and size for teaching art and adequately resourced to enable pupils to use a full range of media. Pupils are beginning to use computers to draw images and to use clip-art to provide illustrative graphics. They use pictures taken with a digital camera to look at areas around the school and to study shapes and sizes.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. Owing to timetable arrangements, only one lesson was observed during the inspection. In this lesson teaching was good and the standard reached by pupils was in line with national expectations. Scrutiny of past work suggests that standards of work are in line with national expectations at the ages of both seven and 11. The work seen suggests that this is a similar situation to that at the time of the last inspection.

101. In the infant classes, pupils learn to assemble construction kits to carry an injured whale and design and make models of other vehicles. Year 2 pupils are involved in designing and making a ship to fit into a bottle. During this lesson they demonstrate an adequate range of technology skills of cutting and gluing. In other lessons they investigate materials to keep themselves warm and design a coat for a polar explorer. Between the ages of 7 and 11, pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding through the use of a wider range of tools and materials. By Year 6, the quality of both design and finished product is in line with national expectations. Designs of toys in Year 5, which move by using cogs and cams, and the design of shelters in Year 6 show a satisfactory acquisition of design and technology skills. Pupils are less able to evaluate their finished products and make suggestions for their improvement than expected. This is an aspect of the subject that is in need of improvement.
102. The co-ordination of design and technology is satisfactory. The school has recently introduced a scheme of work for the subject which takes into account the requirements of Curriculum 2000. The co-ordinator has a good model for teachers to follow when teaching pupils the design process and this is in use throughout the school. The school has satisfactory resources, with some stored centrally and other resources within classrooms.

GEOGRAPHY

103. At the ages of both 7 and 11, the attainment of pupils is in line with national expectations and the pupils make satisfactory progress. This is a similar situation to that at the time of the previous inspection. In Year 1 pupils match flags to countries using a world map to develop their locational knowledge. By the age of seven, pupils suggest ways in which they could improve where they live, and explain their likes and dislikes about an area. They identify the differences between where they live and a contrasting seaside location.
104. In the junior classes, pupils continue to develop appropriate geographical skills and knowledge and understanding of places. In Year 4, they formulate their own questions to find out about the differences and similarities between life in Little Aston and Chembakoli, a village in southern India. They investigate the weather, houses, school life and food in Chembakoli. By the age of 11, most pupils have made satisfactory gains in their geographical knowledge, understanding and skills. Year 6 pupils, along with Year 5 pupils, investigate geographical and environmental issues on a residential visit to Stanley Head. They make very good use of information and communication technology to support their learning in an e-mail project with the Year 6 class in Tresco on the Isles of Scilly. They exchange e-mails, digital photographs of each other's school, information about the weather and local environmental issues. This has been a lively and imaginative way for the pupils to learn about a contrasting area to their own. Year 6 pupils consider the advantages and disadvantages of tourism in a class discussion focused on building a new hotel in the Alps.
105. The quality teaching in the lessons seen during the inspection was satisfactory, with some good features. In the best lessons, good planning and preparation of resources prompts the pupils to consider the information and evidence they have and to justify their opinions. For example, Year 2 pupils were shown two rucksacks with contrasting contents for an explorer setting off for a desert island. In a Year 6 lesson the pupils had to support their views about the effects of tourism in a mountain area. The teachers use good questions to extend the pupils' geographical vocabulary and understanding of the issues. This led to good discussion when the pupils had to decide where they would build a settlement on the island, or whether a hotel should be built in the mountain resort. Where the teaching was less successful, the expectations of what would be achieved in a lesson were lower, the pace of the lesson slower and learning opportunities less effective. On a few occasions, work is not completed or the work that is provided lacks challenge for the pupils for whom it is planned. However, the school has made good improvements in the arrangements to check how well the pupils are learning and whether they are making enough progress. They are beginning to use the information to plan what pupils should learn next.

106. The school has made good progress in the implementation of Curriculum 2000. It is using national guidelines to plan the work for the pupils together with its own previous planning and this is enabling the requirements of the National Curriculum to be fully met. The pupils learn about cultures and places that contrast with their own; this helps them to gain an understanding of the different ways in which people live and the reasons for these differences. The work done in geography makes a significant contribution to the social and cultural education of the pupils.
107. The geography work is well led. The teacher in charge of geography has good subject knowledge and an enthusiasm for the subject. She checks the work done in the rest of the school through discussion with the teachers and by looking at pupils' books and displays of work. Resources are adequate for the topics that are covered in the school, with additional resources acquired through donations from the parent-teacher association. The work done in school is very well supported by residential and day visits made to a range of places to investigate geographical features being studied.

HISTORY

108. Owing to timetable arrangements it was only possible to observe one lesson in history in the infant classes. Judgements on standards at the age of 7 are made on the basis of this observation, analysis of pupils' work, displays and discussions with pupils. Attainment by pupils aged 7 and 11 is broadly in line with the expected standards. Standards are similar to those observed at the time of the last inspection.
109. Pupils in the infant classes show an awareness of the differences between the past and the present and the concepts of old and new. For example, they know that the Mayflower was an old ship. By the age of 7, most pupils have developed a clear understanding of the differences between the past and the present. In their studies of the Mayflower, they show knowledge of the main events and people. They know that the Mayflower went to America, and that its journey took sixty-six days. They develop an increasing sense of the concept of time and correctly sequence ships from different periods of history on a timeline. Higher attaining pupils successfully sequence ships from five different periods of history.
110. In the junior classes, pupils continue to develop their historical knowledge and understanding, and sense of chronological awareness through their historical studies. They investigate Life in the Tudor period, making comparisons between the lives of rich and poor people at that time. They also explain accurately why Henry VIII divorced his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. By the time pupils are in Year 6, they identify characteristics of life in the Second World War, including changes brought about because of the war to the status of women. They use first-hand evidence to research life in the 1960s and show appropriate understanding of changes in everyday life since the 1960s.
111. The quality of teaching in history is satisfactory. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge and understanding of the subject. They use a variety of artefacts and other materials to bring the subject alive for the pupils. They use questions effectively to stimulate pupils' ideas and to retain their interest in the subject matter. Pupils respond well to this stimulation and have good attitudes towards the subject. They enjoy being challenged to think and are interested in how people lived in past times. They are keen to explore new ideas and exchange these with each other. They behave well and co-operate well with partners in paired and small group activities. Increasing use is being made of information and communication technology to further enhance pupils' research skills, particularly through the Internet. Pupils in Year 2 use the Internet to research information for the factual work on pirates, and Year 6 pupils download information from Internet sites in research into Life in the 1960s.
112. The curriculum co-ordinator is an effective manager of the subject and has been successful in implementing the scheme of work in line with the proposals for Curriculum 2000. It is based on the proposals of the Qualification and Curriculum Authority, and is well organised and structured to provide pupils with continuity and progression in their learning. The co-ordinator has undertaken a scrutiny of pupils' work in order to monitor the effectiveness of the teaching of the scheme of work. Standards of pupils' work are monitored effectively through the assessment records developed by assessing pupils' work within the whole school assessment timetable.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

113. After a break when modern foreign languages were not part of the curriculum, French was reintroduced to the school in the summer term 2000 and is now taught to Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. At the time of the inspection, Years 4, 5 and 6 had completed just over one year of French and Year 3 two and a half terms. It was not possible in these circumstances to judge progression over a long period. A part-time specialist teacher visits the school for one afternoon a week and each class has one half-hour lesson.
114. Pupils' levels of competence in listening and speaking are sound in the immediate situation, with good recall and with ready and usually accurate responses to questions testing short phrases and simple vocabulary. Recall of earlier lesson material is not always so secure. Accents are generally satisfactory; they are good amongst the younger pupils, but are more varied in quality in Year 6.
115. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are conducted enthusiastically and a good pace is maintained throughout. Visual aids are prepared carefully and used effectively. Gesture and tone are used to good effect to convey meaning and to add variety. The teacher's French accent is satisfactory, but occasional linguistic lapses are reinforced through repetition. Vocabulary acquisition rather than language structures is emphasised. Most pupils respond positively to French and are well involved with the lessons. They are enthusiastic and concentrate well. A minority, however, especially amongst the older boys, fail to concentrate fully on their work and show less enthusiasm. There is an over-reliance on the use of English for instructions and explanations, resulting in little feel for French as a live means of communication in the classroom. In addition there is no identifiable French area in the school. There is currently no use of communication and information technology in French lessons.
116. The teaching and learning of French are satisfactory but are adversely affected by a lack of appropriate resources and the timetabling restriction of only one thirty minute lesson per week. The school might wish to consider the advantages of providing shorter but more frequent French lessons for pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

117. Owing to timetable arrangements it was only possible to observe one lesson in information and communication technology in the infant classes. Judgements on standards at the age of 7 are made on the basis of this observation, analysis of pupils' work, displays and observation of pupils using information and communication technology to support their learning in subjects. Attainment by pupils aged 7 is in line with the expected standards, and by the age of 11 is above the level expected. Standards of attainment by the age of 11 have improved since the time of the last inspection.
118. By the age of 7, most pupils know how to save and print their work and use word processing facilities appropriately to change the colour, size and style of text in producing an Anthology of Sea Poems. They use drawing programs to produce their own pictures and use the tools within the programs to add colours, shapes and effects to their work. The digital camera has been well used to investigate patterns around the school. They enter data and produce simple bar charts of data on topics such 'types of power' and 'presents we liked'. In a history lesson a group of pupils use Roamer effectively to plot the route of a 'pirate ship'. The Internet is also used by pupils to research factual information in different subjects.
119. By the age of 11, the attainment of most pupils is above the level expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in the subject. Pupils in Year 3 make good use of information and communication technology to compose simple tunes in music, and in Year 5 they input data into a spreadsheet in a mathematics lesson to develop their understanding of using and handling data. They use the calculator facility with confidence to aggregate and average their data. By Year 6, most pupils download images from the Internet or import them from clip art into a document and add their own text. They use a web cam to

capture a still image, paste it into a document, re-size it and print out. They are confident with e-mail and regularly communicate with pupils at Tresco on the Isles of Scilly in a 'net pals' project. They use a computer to control an external device when they use a dacta control lab. They develop their own spreadsheets and use simple formulae to calculate the average weather in Tresco.

120. The quality of teaching is sound throughout the school, and good in Year 6 where pupils make good progress across the course of the whole year. In the most effective lessons teaching challenges pupils to develop their skills and matches work effectively to the ages and abilities of pupils in mixed-ability classes. In Year 6, pupils of different ability are set a task to create a spreadsheet that matched well with their ability and prior experience in using information and communication technology to support their learning. Planning ensures that lessons build on pupils' prior learning experiences through the systematic use of the scheme of work. Teachers have developed clear strategies for managing their classes for information and communication technology and for providing pupils with opportunities to practise and develop their skills, although they sometimes face difficulties because of having only one or two computers in their classrooms for classes of over thirty pupils. They set closely focused tasks, use time targets well and encourage pupils to work collaboratively on the set tasks. Pupils respond well to their teachers and have positive attitudes towards information and communication technology. They focus well on the tasks they are set, concentrating well and sustaining their interest and enthusiasm. They are keen to volunteer to demonstrate their skills and show good levels of respect for the contributions of others. In a Year 2 history lesson, pupils showed good levels of co-operation and worked well together in controlling a floor robot. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and give clear instructions and demonstrations. The modelling of activities is used well as a strategy to make clear to pupils what they have to do and what is expected of them. There is effective monitoring of pupils' work and progress, both with small groups and whole classes, with questioning being used well to check pupils' levels of understanding.
121. The leadership of the subject is good. The subject co-ordinator has a clear vision of how information and communication technology can contribute to pupils' learning. Staff development has taken place through the New Opportunities Fund scheme and this, along with other in-service provision, has resulted in increased staff confidence. Since the previous inspection, both hardware and software resources have been developed, but the ratio of pupils to computers is still low and below the national average. A major building development of a dedicated information and communication technology suite is imminent and will considerably improve the quantity and quality of resources in the subject. The current resources do have Internet access, which teachers make good use of, and the school also has other equipment, for example, a digital camera, which is used well. A whole-school scheme of work ensures that statutory requirements are met and that there is continuity and progression of pupils' learning. Pupils' work is assessed within the school assessment timetable, and pupils in the junior classes keep their own journal of work they have completed. The curriculum co-ordinator has focused on developing staff confidence and competence and is now ready to monitor practice in order to identify future priorities.
122. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology in a range of subject areas. Particularly good use is made to support pupil's learning in literacy, but information and communication technology also features strongly in mathematics and during the inspection was seen to support pupils' learning in most subject areas. The Internet is used well by pupils to research into a whole range of topics in different subjects.

MUSIC

123. Standards of attainment by the ages of both 7 and 11 are in line with those expected nationally and the pupils make satisfactory progress. This is a similar situation to that at the time of the last inspection. By the time they are 7, the pupils have learned to sing songs with the correct tempo and dynamics. They know a good range of songs off by heart and can sing in two parts. Younger pupils in the junior classes learn how music is written down and the use of musical terms such as stave and clef. The pupils often sing together and the good singing is a feature of the school. The pupils sing enthusiastically, tunefully and with expression. By the age of 11, the pupils have a wider musical vocabulary and understanding and some can recognise major and

minor keys. They make satisfactory progress when composing a chant to use with younger pupils to help them learn, for example, the letters of the alphabet. Many pupils know how to use and understand musical notation because they have instrumental lessons taught by peripatetic staff.

124. The overall quality of the teaching in music is satisfactory, with some good features in the lesson seen in the infant classes and in the Year 3 information and communication technology lesson. The teacher, who is also the music co-ordinator, has good subject knowledge. She explains the objectives of the lessons to the pupils and has appropriate expectations of their participation and involvement in the musical activities. In the junior classes, all of the teaching is done by the subject co-ordinator, who has specialist subject knowledge. Good use of information and communication technology was seen in Year 3 when the teacher introduced the class to a program to compose music using a variety of instrumental effects. The lesson gave opportunities for the pupils to learn how to change the tempo and loudness and softness of their composition. The pupils' response to music is generally good. Especially in the infant classes, the pupils are eager to become involved in the singing activities and they remain focused and attentive throughout the lessons.
125. The school is using national guidelines to plan what should be taught in each year group and to make sure that the pupils build on what they have learned before. Overall the learning opportunities provided for the pupils are satisfactory. For example, all the pupils are provided with learning experiences that enable them to make appropriate progress in listening to music, in singing and in composing. These opportunities occur in music lessons and also in assemblies and dance lessons. They also have opportunities to play a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. Although it is planned, at present there is no regular assessment of how well individual pupils are doing in music and what they could do to improve. Music and singing in particular are positive features of the school and are enjoyed by the pupils and the subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.
126. The pupils take part in various performances such as the Christmas concerts. The co-ordinator extends the opportunities for pupils outside of the lessons by organising a choir. There are opportunities for the pupils to learn to play the keyboard and violin. Parents pay for these instrumental lessons and a good standard of tuition is available. In addition, during this year, lessons in brass instruments have been available, funded by the local education authority. There is an adequate number of musical instruments and other resources which are stored in the subject co-ordinator's classroom.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

127. It was only possible to observe one lesson in physical education in the infant classes. Judgements on standards at the age of 7 are made on the basis of this observation and discussions with pupils. Attainment by pupils aged 7 and 11 is broadly in line with the expected standards. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in the subject. Standards are similar to those observed at the time of the last inspection.
128. By the age of 7, pupils explore simple skills and perform simple actions with increasing control and co-ordination, both when practising passing technique for netball and control technique in uni-hoc. They understand the importance of warming up and recognise the effects of exercise on their bodies.
129. In the lower junior classes, pupils benefit from specialist teaching from the subject co-ordinator. They throw and catch a ball properly, showing the ability to review their work in order to improve. They develop correct throwing and catching techniques, showing increasing accuracy and control in the execution of their tasks. By the age of 11, most pupils, in uni-hoc, control the ball, trap it, and pass it to a partner at an appropriate pace. They apply these basic skills in a competitive situation against another pair of pupils, and in a small team situation.
130. Although it was not possible to observe swimming lessons, records indicate that by the age of 11 most pupils reach the National Curriculum target of swimming 25 metres.

131. Pupils in all classes made satisfactory progress in the lessons observed during the inspection. It is clear from the lessons observed that, over time, most pupils make satisfactory progress in physical education. Their attitude in lessons is always at least satisfactory and sometimes very good. They enjoy the opportunity to engage in physical activity and almost all pupils behave well, even when they have to sit still, listening to the teacher or waiting their turn to demonstrate. They all follow safety rules well. Pupils co-operate with one another in pairs and small groups and use their initiative and imagination creatively.
132. The quality of teaching is sound throughout the school, and good when pupils receive specialist input from the subject co-ordinator. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the subject and all safety issues. In lessons teachers have sound, and sometimes high, expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance. In the lessons seen teachers demanded constant effort from all the pupils in order to extend their movements beyond a satisfactory level. Teachers monitor performance carefully and use pupil demonstration, and review, to show pupils how to improve their work. They build these assessment strategies into lessons and use them to check progress and inform the planning of future work.
133. The co-ordinator has good skills and specialist knowledge in the subject. She has worked hard to develop a range of extra-curricular activities, based around physical education and sport. The school has also, in recent years, excelled in competition with other schools, gaining success in football and netball in particular. Resources are satisfactory both in quality and quantity. A scheme of work has been developed for physical education, based on the proposals of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The organization of the scheme provides pupils with a well balanced and structured physical education based around rotations of gym, dance and games work. There are also good assessment procedures in place through opportunities within the assessment timetable. Pupils' performance is observed and recorded against the National Curriculum level descriptors.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

134. In the previous inspection attainment by the ages of 7 and 11 was broadly in line with national expectations. There has been an improvement in standards since the last inspection as a result of an increase in suitable resources, a well co-ordinated approach to this subject and the implementation of a new planning system. As a consequence, attainment is now above national expectations both at the ages of 7 and 11.
135. In the infant classes, pupils make good progress. Lessons are enhanced by a good use of artefacts and by visiting parents of other faiths who provide opportunities for pupils to question them about their faith and the rituals that surround it. Pupils listen carefully in these lessons, learn to respect the religions of others and to compare them with their own experiences and beliefs. Pupils are introduced to concepts of taking responsibility for their own actions and are encouraged to think about how they would behave in a given situation. Good use is made of dramatic reading and of the use of objects to focus the pupils' attention.
136. Teaching in the infant classes is always good and lesson planning is very good. Teachers manage pupils well and provide them with careful explanations. There is good coverage of the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils are able to describe aspects of other faiths they have studied. All lessons observed had a distinct religious content.
137. In the junior classes, pupils consider the story of the creation and develop writing from further discussions about the environment. They also show good respect for other religions and understand that most faiths have a "special book". In other lessons pupils gain knowledge about Paul's conversion and draw comparisons with the way in which Mohammed's experiences changed his life. They explore and gain an understanding of the prophet Mohammed as a "role model" and look up selected passages of the Qur'an. Pupils describe accurately how a shrine is looked after in a Hindu home and they understand the meaning of Divali. By the age of 11, most pupils have a good understanding of other religions, their symbolism and the differences and similarities between them and Christianity.

138. The quality of teaching in the junior classes is good in most lessons. Teachers challenge pupils to think for themselves and to make personal responses to the matters and issues being discussed, such as the nature of responsibility and its significance for members of a faith. Imaginative teaching strategies stimulate pupils' responses to their work. For example, the setting up of an altar in the classroom enriches pupils' understanding of its importance to Muslims. Pupils display good factual knowledge of events from the life of Jesus and discuss their significance. They are familiar with the church and name some of the ceremonies and festivals that are observed there. They describe work they are doing on Hinduism and some identify common features of the Hindu and Christian ceremonies. The good quality of teaching overall results in pupils displaying positive attitudes towards the subject and being keen to engage in discussion of issues. Some older pupils in particular pose searching questions about the nature of religion. The majority of pupils, including those who have special educational needs, make good progress.
139. The good quality of the scheme of work derived from the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus has a positive effect on pupils' response and attainment. Religious education makes a good contribution to the spiritual development of pupils, as do the class and whole-school assemblies, which also add to pupils understanding of religious concepts. Parts of the Personal, Social and Health Education scheme of work make a further contribution to the moral and spiritual development of pupils and enhances pupils' understanding. Good use has been made of grants for pupils for whom English is an additional language to improve resources to support the study of a broad range of religious faiths. Resources are now good. The Local Education Authority website provides teachers with additional information and further ideas for the curriculum.