

INSPECTION REPORT

ELMORE GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bloxwich

Walsall

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104153

Headteacher: Mr A Bailey

Reporting inspector: Mrs A Dawson
11608

Dates of inspection: 8 – 12 May 2000

Inspection number: 191851

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Elmore Green Road
Bloxwich
Walsall

Postcode: WS3 2HW

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs S Lemm

Date of previous inspection: February 3rd 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|-------------------|----------------------|--|---|
| Anna Dawson | Registered inspector | Religious education; under fives. | The characteristics and effectiveness of the school; the school's results and pupils' achievements; key issues for action; leadership and management; |
| Sylvia Bullerwell | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; partnership with parents and carers; pupils' welfare, health and safety. |
| Alan Hardwicke | Team inspector | Science; music; physical education; equal opportunities. | Teaching and learning. |
| Jennifer Taylor | Team inspector | English; information and communication technology; art; design and technology. | Quality and range of opportunities for learning. |
| Pamela Weston | Team inspector | English as an additional language; Special educational needs; mathematics; history; geography. | |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is an average sized primary school for boys and girls aged 4 -11. It draws most of its pupils from the local council-owned properties that surround the school. There is little industry in the area and unemployment is high. Almost all the pupils transfer from the nearby nursery school. There are 258 pupils on roll, 113 girls and 145 boys. There are 45 pupils, 17 per cent of pupils, on the register for special educational needs. This is below the national average of 20 per cent. Five pupils have statements of special educational need. This is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is 28 per cent. This is above average. The national average is 19 per cent. There is one pupil who has English as an additional language. Overall the attainment on entry is below that found nationally. The characteristics are similar to those previously reported in 1997.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school because the quality of teaching is good, the school is well led and managed and there is determination to raise standards and to meet the needs of all pupils. Consequently pupils do well, achieving average standards in English, mathematics and science and above average standards in information and communication technology, art and design and technology by the age of eleven. Overall even though the unit costs are high, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils achieve above average standards in information technology, art and design technology and average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they are 11 years of age.
- The quality of teaching is good. and members of staff have worked effectively as a team to implement the national numeracy and literacy strategies.
- The school is well led and managed and there are good relationships between the pupils and the staff.
- Pupils enjoy school. They are very well behaved and are interested in their lessons.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and very good provision for pupils who have English as an additional language.
- The school takes very good care of its pupils and there are very good procedures in place for monitoring their personal and academic progress.
- The school provides an enriched curriculum and makes good provision overall for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What could be improved

- The quality of most pupils' writing and speaking skills, including their handwriting, when asked to speak and write at length about their work is below average.
- There are insufficient opportunities for the higher attaining pupils to study independently, by carrying out their own research and investigations.
- The attendance of pupils especially at Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory and there are many parents who do not support sufficiently their children's learning at home.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement overall since the previous inspection in 1997. The financial planning is improved and the governors have resolved all the issues concerning the accommodation from the last report. The quality of assessment is improved but this is still being developed across the school for some subjects. The quality of teaching is improved and the school has successfully implemented the national literacy and numeracy strategies. The curriculum provision is improved particularly for pupils with special educational needs and pupils under five. However, the presentation of pupils' work is variable.

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 |
| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 1999 |
| English | D | E | D | C |
| Mathematics | E | D | E | D |
| Science | C | D | D | B |

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

The inspection finds good improvement in English, mathematics and science this academic year. Pupils are now achieving average standards in English, science and mathematics and above average standards in information technology, art and design and technology. However, although pupils' listening skills are above average, their attainment in writing and speaking about their work at length is below average for the majority by the end of both key stages. The school has set challenging targets for further improvement. Over the past three years the improvement in the school test results has kept pace with the national trend and is exceeding it this year. In other subjects, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education standards are average. Pupils under five make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their set targets. The pupil with English as an additional language makes good progress. The number of pupils with special educational needs and the absence of some pupils at the time the national mathematics tests were taken, had an adverse effect on the overall average attainment of the class in 1999. Additionally, the varying attainment of the pupils causes fluctuations in results between year groups. The school has put appropriate strategies into place to raise further the attainment of the pupils in English.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are keen to learn, particularly in their literacy and numeracy lesson. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good. Pupils listen very attentively and concentrate well in lessons. |
| Personal development and relationships | Relationships between pupils and adults are very good. There is good provision for pupils' personal development overall. However there are insufficient opportunities for the higher attaining pupils to develop independent research and investigative work. |
| Attendance | Attendance continues to be unsatisfactory particularly in Key Stage 1. The school is working effectively towards targets to improve attendance. |

The positive behaviour programme adopted by the school is central to very good behaviour of the pupils and relationships within the school. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development and encourages them to have respect for themselves and others. The attendance as reported previously remains below average but is improving. The school has good procedures for encouraging parents and pupils to achieve good attendance but a small minority of parents do not encourage their children to attend regularly, which depresses pupils' attainment and progress.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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 good overall and a major strength of the school. It is excellent in 5 per cent of lessons. In 18 per cent of lessons it is very good. In 57 per cent it is good and in a further 20 per cent it is satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. There is little difference in the quality of teaching throughout the school. The basic skills are generally taught well. In subjects, the teaching of mental mathematics, and of experimental and investigative science is particularly good, while that of writing and speaking skills in English is average. There is inconsistency in the teaching of handwriting. Teachers' planning overall is very good. However, there are insufficient opportunities planned for the development of speaking and writing skills for all pupils and personal study for the more able pupils. Teaching is particularly successful where links have been made with other subjects and where teachers have used teaching methods from the national strategies.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | There is good provision for literacy and numeracy. Provision for speaking, writing and independent work for the most able pupils could be improved. The school ensures a rich curriculum by effectively linking subjects together when teaching topics. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. They are supported well and make good progress. The school involves their parents from the earliest stage in meeting the children's needs. The pupils under five make good progress, particularly in their personal and social skills. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | There is very good provision for pupils with English as an additional language. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | There is good provision for pupils' personal development. The school makes good provision for their spiritual, social and cultural development and very good provision for their moral development. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school takes very good care of the pupils and they are taught in a happy, safe and secure working environment. |

The school has a good partnership with parents. Parents feel welcomed into school and the school responds quickly to their needs. The vast majority of parents are appreciative of the work of the school, particularly the individual care given to their children. However, there are many parents who are not involved in the work of the school or in helping children's learning at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The school is well led and managed. Staff and governors work together well to achieve the aims of the school. They are successfully improving standards. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The governors are knowledgeable, experienced and supportive of the school. They receive good information from the headteacher and work well with the headteacher to meet the school targets. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The school has good procedures for monitoring teaching and learning. The headteacher and the staff evaluate teaching effectively to improve the quality of education provided. |
| The strategic use of resources | The accommodation is satisfactory overall. There are good resources to support the curriculum. The school makes good use of these to help children learn. |

The school is well staffed to meet the demands of the curriculum. The leadership is good in promoting the aims and values of the school and in monitoring the teaching and learning. The school has identified its strengths and weaknesses and staff work effectively together as a team to improve standards. There is very good management of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. These pupils make good progress. There is good management for pupils under five. The governors work effectively with the school to raise standards and good care is taken to ensure the school gets the best value in relation to its expenditure. Given that the pupils enter school with attainment below average, even though unit costs are high, the school gives good value for money.

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 enjoy coming to school; • The good quality of teaching; • The good progress children make; • The personal support given to pupils; • The effective leadership and the values promoted by the school. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of parents would like more information about the curriculum. • Some parents would like a greater range of extra curricular clubs and activities. |

The inspectors agree with the positive views that parents have of the school. The range of extra-curricular activities is within what is normally expected for a school of this kind. The school provides good information to parents about the curriculum and how to help their children at home.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. For pupils aged 11, the results of National Curriculum tests in 1999 show that pupils' attainment in English was below the national average for level 4, but close to the national average for the higher level 5. In mathematics and science, pupils' attainment was below the national average for level 4 and the higher level 5. In science, pupils' attainment was close to the national average for level 4 but well below average for level 5. In comparison to similar schools, pupils' attainment was average in English, below average in mathematics and above average in science. Pupils did better in science as more pupils reached the expected level 4 than in mathematics and English. In mathematics two of the higher attaining pupils were absent during the national tests, which had an overall adverse impact on the class average result. In English, less curriculum time and staff training has been spent on the development of writing, as the main focus has previously been the development of reading skills. However, the more able pupils achieved well in English overall.
2. For pupils aged seven, the results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests and assessments show that pupils achieved well below average standards in reading and writing and below average standards in mathematics. In the teacher assessed tasks in science, pupils achieved well below average standards overall. In comparison to similar schools, pupils achieved below average standards in reading and writing but average standards in mathematics.
3. Attainments at the end of both key stages differ from year to year because of the fluctuating number of pupils with special educational needs in each year group and because of some pupils' absence. This has an overall effect on the average attainment of the Year 2 and the Year 6 pupils.
4. The school has analysed the reasons for the below average standards. Most significant are those who are on the school register for special educational needs and those who enter the school with below average attainment. Only one pupil in school has English as an additional language. In Key stage 1, less time is given to pupils to write at length across the curriculum and there are many pupils who get little support for learning at home. The school has identified the need for curriculum development and in-service training in this aspect of English and this is a priority on the school development plan. The school is already responding positively to this issue. For example, small class groupings for additional teaching at the end of both key stages and the use of additional work to supplement the National Literacy Strategy are already having a positive impact on learning.
5. At Key Stage 2, pupils did well to achieve average standards in English. In mathematics the result would have been average discounting the two absent pupils in mathematics. In science pupils attained above average standards in comparison to pupils in similar schools. Pupils found it easier to achieve well in science in 1999. Investigational work is a high priority in school and children learn the factual content of the subject well, both of which benefit standards. The average and below average pupils find it more difficult to hypothesise and draw conclusions from their work in science, solve problems in mathematics or draw inferences from their reading in English. They do not always achieve the higher standards. Work is planned very well by the staff to meet the needs of all the pupils. All pupils work in three broad ability groups, which is influential in raising standards. Teachers are able to plan and meet the needs of all the pupils in these groups effectively and as a result most pupils achieve well in relation to their attainment. Yet there are insufficient opportunities for the higher attaining pupils to study independently, by carrying out their own research and investigations.

6. The inspection findings show that standards are rising and by the time pupils reach the ages of seven and 11, most at present achieve average standards in English, mathematics and science. The implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is helping to raise standards. The weakest area is writing where pupils could achieve more. Overall, this shows a much-improved picture from the test results of 1999, particularly in Key Stage 1.
7. Trends over the last three years indicate that the improvement in pupils' national test results broadly keeps pace with the national picture and this year standards are rising at a faster pace than nationally. The school has improved its curricular provision and teaching from the last inspection and is clearly moving forward. There is a clear focus on meeting individual needs and setting targets for improvement. The school has set appropriately challenging targets for the future in each year group and class, to raise attainment further.
8. Pupils do better where the school has prioritised curriculum initiatives and there is detailed guidance, such as in literacy and numeracy lessons. Both strategies have detailed guidance for teachers for each year group, which is having a positive impact on teaching and pupils' understanding of reading and mental mathematics. However, there are insufficient opportunities planned for the higher attaining pupils to take some responsibility for their learning through independent study and personal research.
9. In English, pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Pupils' listening skills are above average throughout the school. In speaking, the higher attaining pupils in both key stages speak fluently and confidently in discussions but most others are not as confident or fluent. Most read accurately and discuss their favourite authors and preferences in reading. Pupils enjoy reading a wide range of texts. Most enjoy writing poetry and stories and punctuation is generally accurate, but the quality of presentation is variable. However there are insufficient opportunities throughout the school for pupils to write at length.
10. In mathematics, pupils make satisfactory progress during both key stages. By the age of 11, they are developing effective mental strategies to multiply by 3 digits and divide by two. They are developing a sound understanding of number operations and measure successfully angles in degrees. By the age of seven, pupils are acquiring effective strategies for mental arithmetic as they work with numbers to 100. They know odd and even numbers and multiples of two, five and ten. The higher attaining pupils are able to double and halve numbers accurately.
11. In science, pupils make satisfactory progress during Key Stage 1 and good progress during Key Stage 2. The lessons motivate the pupils to investigate and find their own solutions to problems. The investigational skills of pupils are strength throughout the school. For example, by the age of 11, they learn about electricity and have a good understanding how switches and control electrical circuits. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils investigate forces and come to some early understandings of what constitutes a fair test.
12. In information and communication technology, pupils' attainment is above average by the end of both key stages and they make good progress. By Year 6, pupils use the Internet and CD-ROM programs effectively to research information and help them support other subjects such as writing stories in English. There has been significant improvement in resources and pupils have increased their skills. Standards were similar in the last report. The application of information and communication technology across the curriculum is a strength of the school.
13. In religious education, pupils' attainment by the end of both key stages is in line with the expectation of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils make satisfactory progress. By Year 6, pupils are aware of the similarities between the major world faiths. They are aware of the importance of beliefs that are not their own. In the last report, standards were above average.

14. In other subjects, the inspection finds that pupils achieve above average standards by the end of both key stages in art and design and technology, which are well established in the school. Otherwise in other subjects, pupils attain standards normally expected from pupils at ages seven and 11. From the previous report there has been an improvement in mathematics attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and design and technology at both key stages. At the time of the last report standards were better by the end of Key Stage 2 in religious education, history and music than they are now. However there are more demands made on curricular time than previously for literacy and numeracy.
15. From a level where pupils' attainment on entry to school is below average, pupils under five make good progress in all areas of learning, except in physical development where their progress is satisfactory. During both key stages, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress overall in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In mathematics, with the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, pupils are making good progress in their mental mathematics and in science their investigational work is a strength. Throughout the school, the best progress in the core subjects is seen in the reception classes, Years 2,3,5 and 6. Pupils learn well in response to good teaching in the reception classes and good and often very good teaching in the other classes. In other subjects, history, geography, music, physical education and religious education progress is satisfactory in both key stages. In art, design and technology, information and communication technology, pupils make good progress during both key stages. In science, pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2. Most pupils are challenged effectively and achieve well in their learning. There is an effective sharing of staff expertise in the linking of topics between subjects. The least progress is made in writing. Insufficient opportunities are planned for pupils to speak and write at length and some staff lack subject expertise in the development of writing skills.
16. Pupils with special educational needs and the pupil with English as an additional language make good progress. They are supported well through effective teaching from the support staff and their teachers. All these pupils are set appropriate targets for improvement, which are reviewed regularly. Their progress is especially noticeable in English and mathematics, where the national strategies are having a positive impact on their attainment and progress. The good progress pupils make in their subjects and personal and social education prepares them well for their next stage of learning.
17. There is no significant difference in the progress of boys and girls or between ethnic groups. Both boys and girls achieve equally well. The school has taken care to meet the needs of all the pupils, particularly at the end of the key stages in English. The additional smaller teaching groups are a successful strategy in raising pupils attainment, especially that of the boys. Resources are selected carefully to ensure they appeal to both boys and girls, which promotes positive attitudes to reading.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. Pupils show good attitudes to school. They settle quickly during registration and are keen and eager to be fully occupied. They sustain levels of concentration throughout the day.
19. Behaviour of the pupils is very good throughout the school. This is reflected by the school's record of having no exclusions for fifteen years. The pupils respond positively to the calm and orderly routines of the school that are promoted by members of staff who provide good role models. The calm and quiet atmosphere sets a positive climate for pupils' learning. The consistently good behaviour has a positive impact on children's learning and the standards they achieve.
20. There have been improvements in pupils' personal development and their involvement with the local community since the previous report. Pupils form good relationships with each

other and with the staff. A particular strength in their relationships is the pupils' respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs. This can be seen in many ways. For example, the pupils support several charity appeals, including Mencap and Age Concern. Year 3 pupils are responsible for raising funds to sponsor a child in Zimbabwe. Good relationships are evident during circle time, when each pupil listens attentively when others are speaking and expressing their personal views. They take part in activities other than lessons. Key Stage 1 pupils take part in an annual Christmas production and Key Stage 2 pupils perform a summer musical.

21. The school council, which has been recently set up, gives pupils a chance to voice their opinions and needs. It provides a good opportunity for them to be involved in decision-making and to take some responsibility for the school community. It is made up of an elected boy and girl from each year group, with the exception of Year 1 and Reception class children. Pupils discuss whole school issues such as behaviour and playground management. They also make the school aware of the needs of particular groups, such as the request for a mirror for the Key Stage 2 girls. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development.
22. Attendance is well below the national average and lowest at Key Stage 1. It is broadly in line at the end of Key Stage 2. Unauthorised absence is above the national average. Absence interrupts the continuity of children's learning and adversely affects the standards achieved. To promote good attendance, the staff analyse the attendance of each year group and a chart on display in the hall is regularly updated to show which class is most successful. There has been a small improvement in attendance this year. There was a similar pattern of attendance in the previous report.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. The quality of teaching is good overall and has improved since the previous report. During the inspection no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. In 5 per cent of lessons teaching is excellent. In 18 per cent of lessons it is very good. In 57 per cent it is good and in a further 20 per cent teaching is satisfactory. There is little difference overall between the key stages, and for pupils under five.
24. It is a strength of the school that this good quality teaching is not confined to particular subjects or age groups but is spread fairly evenly both across age groups and in most subject areas. The teaching of mental mathematics and of experimental and investigative science is particularly good, while that of writing and speaking skills in English is average. There is inconsistency in the teaching of handwriting.
25. There are many factors which contribute to the good quality of teaching in the school. Planning is very good; with teachers ensuring the work is prepared appropriately for pupils of different abilities. Links across the curriculum are also strong so that pupils can benefit from their work in one subject when studying another.
26. Teachers have also been quick to make use in all subjects of effective teaching methods that are parts of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. For example, teachers now use evaluative sessions at the ends of lessons to review what has been learned. They also discuss the learning objectives of lessons with the pupils so that pupils can see what new knowledge and understanding they have gained.
27. In a Year 5 geography lesson, for example, pupils used the final evaluation session to discuss the design of a pedestrianised shopping centre, taking into account the needs of shoppers. Pupils show a good understanding of how people can change the environment.

28. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and consequently they are able to give clear explanations, and present work in an interesting way for their pupils. Standards of discipline are very good throughout the school. Teachers have high expectations, both in terms of behaviour in their classes and around the school, and of the quality of work expected. There is a consistent approach to behaviour management throughout the school which has a positive impact on standards. Support staff are well organised so that pupils with special education needs, as well as the classes in general, benefit. The school gives high priority to treating all pupils as equally important. This is apparent in many features of daily life, both within and outside the classroom and is a real strength of the school. Pupils feel safe to ask questions and seek solutions to their problems, knowing that their opinions are valued and respected and their questions will be answered. This is a most significant aspect in motivating the pupils to learn and helping pupils understand the main aims of the lesson.
29. Teachers also use assessment effectively both in formal testing and recording of results, and also in day-to-day judgements about how well their pupils are doing. The results of these assessments are well used to plan next steps in learning.
30. Homework is well organised and is effectively integrated with the work that pupils are doing at school. This means that homework makes a useful contribution to pupils' work, and enhances their learning overall.
31. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the higher attaining pupils to develop their independence and ability to make use of reference materials for themselves in personal study. There is also inconsistency at present in the teaching of handwriting. Whilst there is good practice in some classes, handwriting is not promoted in a systematic way as pupils move from class to class. Different teachers have different expectations and as a result pupils are unsure what is required. This often leads to untidy presentation of work.
32. Because teaching is good the standard of learning in the school is also good. Because the work is presented in interesting and, often, exciting ways pupils are encouraged to work productively, and at a good pace. Generally they make good intellectual, physical and creative effort. A marked feature of pupils' learning in the school is their capacity to concentrate and show interest in their work. Even when presenting their pupils with routine tasks teachers often approach the work skilfully so as to engage their pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Subjects are often combined, for example, in linking mathematics and information and communication technology. When learning is integrated in this way, it helps pupils understand the relationships and practical application of subjects and has a positive impact on their attainment and progress.
33. The learning of pupils with special educational needs and of those for whom English is an additional language, is also strength. Work is very well planned to match each pupil's individual needs, and very good use is made of support staff to help all pupils in their individual or group tasks. Consequently they achieve well on their set targets.

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

34. Curricular and other opportunities offered by the school are good. The curriculum provided by the school is broad, balanced, relevant and meets statutory requirements. The school has implemented the locally agreed syllabus for Religious Education. The curricular provision is good improvement from the previous report. For example, the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced which is having a positive impact on pupils' attainments.
35. There is a well-developed policy and scheme of work for personal, health and social education and provision for pupils' personal, health and social education is good. During Key

Stage 1, pupils benefit from 'circle time' and throughout Key Stage 2, the pupils are invited to take an active role in the School Council. Key stage 2 pupils are taught appropriately about sex education and the misuse of drugs. Visitors from the local constabulary and medical profession contribute effectively to this teaching. The railway police also visit school to talk about safety near railway lines.

36. The extra-curricular activities are principally based on sports activities of football, cricket and gym clubs for the older pupils and are satisfactory. Some pupils attend a music club organised each week by the Local Education Authority. Additional 'booster' classes are also available to further develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Opportunities are provided for pupils to learn to play instruments such as the violin and recorder. The pupils enjoy their lessons and are pleased to play their instruments for others in assembly. Outside visits are arranged to places of local interest to enrich the curriculum studied in school. For example, pupils visit the new Walsall Art Gallery and The Black Country Museum as well as making good use of their local environment for example in religious education, art, geography and history.
37. There is very good provision made for the pupil with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs. The recommendations of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs are effectively implemented. Teachers make good use of pupils' individual work programmes and targets when planning work. The pupils have a positive attitude to their work and gain in self-confidence. They benefit from the high standard of care provided by the staff and from the very good relationships that exist within the school.
38. Equal opportunities are promoted effectively within the school and all pupils are included and have full access to the curriculum. The school has very good links with the nearby nursery school. The headteachers work closely together to ensure that pupils' learning is continuous and that there is a smooth transition from the nursery into full-time education. There are satisfactory transfer arrangements when pupils transfer to their secondary schools. Pupils from the school move to various schools but all arrange liaison visits for staff and pupils prior to transfer and appropriate records are passed on to the pupils' next school.
39. The school has established good links with the community. For example, the pupils benefit from visiting the local supermarket to examine how certain departments work. Links are well established with the local church and a mock 'wedding ceremony' led by local clergy and involving other members of the school and community was held in the church to enable Year 2 pupils to understand the traditions surrounding a Christian ceremony of marriage.
40. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is a strength of the school and has improved since the last report.
41. Provision for spiritual development is good. There are well-structured programmes which link religious education and the daily act of worship. Daily assemblies are effectively planned and provide time for pupils to reflect on such issues as their uniqueness and their own special talents. This also helps to raise pupils' self-esteem and contributes effectively to their personal development.
42. Moral development is very good. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. All pupils are well behaved in the classrooms and around the school. They are polite to each other, to adults and to visitors. All adults in school provide a good role model and together the pupils and staff have created a happy, harmonious working environment.

43. Pupils' social development is good. School provides opportunities for social interaction through sporting, musical and artistic events with local schools. It is particularly noticeable how well the pupils work effectively together during lessons to enhance their learning.
44. Cultural development of pupils is good. There are good links across the curriculum to ensure pupils experience and gain understanding of other cultures and religions such as the important events in the lives of Muslim, Jewish and Hindu people. Pupils also study the work of major composers, for example Tchaikovsky. Art is a strength of the school and this is evident in the displays of work around the school. Pupils study and contrast the styles of well-known artists, such as Van Gogh, Dame Laura Knight, Picasso and Klee.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The school cares very well for its pupils. This is a major strength of the school. Good improvement has been made since the previous inspection. The pupils are well known by staff, and there is an appropriate range of procedures to cover the needs of the pupils. Class teachers are mainly responsible for the welfare and personal development of their pupils. They teach the personal, social and health education curriculum during 'circle time' up to Year 3. The programme of work is well planned and effectively documented. The work covers a range of topics, including strategies for good behaviour, health and personal development issues as well as personal safety awareness. The curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' personal development. It allows them to reflect on their own behaviour, feelings and beliefs as well as to value the opinion of others. At Key Stage 2, personal, social and health topics are integrated effectively into science, religious education, and history and geography topics. The police and the school nurse support specific issues for older pupils concerning the misuse of drugs and health education.
46. Good attendance is promoted well. The use of computer generated records for attendance allows reports to be raised to allow tracking to take place. The school is working to a well-defined agreement with good support from the Local Education Authority and the Education Welfare Officer on improving attendance.
47. There are good procedures for promoting good behaviour that are shared with parents and carers. Pupils are well behaved during playtimes and the recent introduction of play equipment encourages positive relationships with others. During lessons good behaviour and personal achievement is often recognised by the award of a sticker and praise from the staff.
48. The school has very good procedures to assess, record and monitor attainment, progress and personal development. These have improved from the previous report. Each pupil has a portfolio, which contains samples of work and end of year reports from their time in school. Staff keep records of children's academic and personal development, including sporting and musical achievements.
49. Very good assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is put to good use when teachers are planning their lessons. The grouping of pupils throughout the age range, helps the teacher effectively to support and guide pupils to raise their achievement and make sound progress.
50. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by their teachers and staff, and benefit from working alongside their peer group. The school makes good use of a range of visiting specialists.
51. Health and safety matters relating to the accommodation were identified for improvement at the time of the last inspection. There has been good improvement since then. The school now carries out a regular risk assessment and a link governor monitors any issues identified. There were no issues outstanding during the inspection week. The school is a safe and secure

environment. Effective procedures are in place for monitoring or addressing any issue of child protection and the administration of first aid.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. Almost all parents who returned the parent questionnaire, say their children like school, are expected to work hard and achieve their best, make progress and are helped to become more mature and responsible. They are happy to approach the school with any problems, believe the school is well led and managed and the teaching is good. The inspection team agrees with the positive views of the parents. There is good improvement in this aspect from the previous report.
53. Good links exist between parents and the school. Parents receive a range information about the school including the prospectus, governors annual report to parents, end of year reports of their child's attainment and progress, behaviour policy, a home/school agreement and regular newsletters, including half termly class newsletters with information covering aspects of the curriculum to be studied.
54. The good quality information they receive sets out the high expectations of pupils and asks parents for support in matters of attendance, behaviour and safety. It contains helpful information on how parents can be involved with school and how to be a part of their children's learning at home to help them raise their achievement. The staff are keen to have more parents involved in their children's learning and regular class letters have suggestions how this can be promoted by parents.
55. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed and involved in the progress of their children. They are invited to discuss their child's targets for learning and to provide additional support at home, if possible.
56. A small group of parents have recently formed an informal 'friends of the school' group that raises monies to support educational outings and resources for the school. Some parents and governors regularly come into school to hear reading and help children learn in the classroom, particularly in the reception classes. This support is invaluable in helping small groups of pupils achieve their learning objectives. They accompany them out of school. For example, a recent visit to a local supermarket gave the pupils the opportunity to experience the feeling of belonging to a wider community and to examine their physical surroundings. Although a significant minority are very involved in working with the pupils in school and with their children at home, a majority are less involved in extending the work of the school at home. When parents are involved in their children's learning, it has a positive impact on raising children's confidence and self esteem and the standards they achieve.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. There is effective leadership and management of the school. The school places a high priority on raising standards in English, mathematics and science and developing the confidence and achievements of individual pupils. The headteacher provides strong but caring leadership and is committed to moving the school forward. Most parents are pleased with the way these aims are reflected in pupils' achievements. Pupils are encouraged to work hard to achieve good standards by the time they leave school. The main strengths and weaknesses of the school have been identified and challenging targets have been set for improvement and the school is meeting them so far which is evident in good improvement since the previous report.

58. The staff work together effectively with a common purpose and are good role models for the values and attitudes that the school promotes. The school is very successful in meeting its aims of raising pupils' academic achievements and building pupils' self-esteem. The governors work effectively with the school on a day-to-day basis to achieve the aims of the school. Many are either regular visitors to the school or work on the premises and are thus in a good position to monitor curriculum developments. The school development plan is a detailed and an effective tool, based on raising standards upon which the governors make informed decisions for future. There are regular reviews and projections are set and carefully costed for the next three years. This provides a good basis upon which the governors are available to make informed decisions about the future. When new initiatives are prioritised for spending, best value for money is sought before committing to expenditure. Statutory requirements are met.
59. The headteacher ensures that all pupils are included in all aspects of the curriculum. There is very good management of special educational needs by the coordinator and the teachers and support staff. There is a named governor with responsibility for pupils' special needs who is well informed. The recommendations of the code of practice are closely followed. The needs of the pupils with statements of special educational needs are fully met and the pupils with special educational needs and the pupil with English as an additional language are integrated very well into their classes. Members of the support staff are appropriately trained and work closely with the class teachers. Together they make an effective team and contribute positively to the good progress made by the pupils. Most teachers have at least one area of subject responsibility. The number, qualifications and experience of teachers and other classroom staff match the demands of the curriculum. Staff are appointed for their teaching expertise which has been a successful strategy for improving the quality of teaching from the last report. As the pupil numbers have recently increased due to the closure of a nearby school and the school has prioritised smaller groupings to raise attainment especially in writing at the end of the key stages, additional members of staff have recently joined the school. There are effective induction procedures in place for staff who are new to the school and newly qualified teachers. All members of staff have professional development interviews and are appraised on their work and professional requirements by the headteacher. Their needs for in-service training are carefully prioritised in accordance with the priorities of the school as well as their personal requirements. There is good management of the pupils under five. The staff who work with pupils under five have a good knowledge of the desirable learning outcomes in all six areas and they plan accordingly to meet the needs of the pupils in these nationally expected targets as well as the beginnings of the national curriculum including the numeracy and literacy strategies.
60. The headteacher takes the leading role in day-to-day management and works closely with the two senior teachers of the senior management team. He regularly monitors effectively the quality of teaching and the standards achieved by the pupils. Teachers plan successfully together and informally share their expertise. They are given responsibilities for selecting and purchasing their own stock and monitoring their subjects. The coordinators are knowledgeable about the strengths and weakness in their subjects across the school and have developed action plans for the future, which form part of the school development plan. However there is insufficient planning for the provision for higher attaining pupils to take more responsibility for their learning. The school has detailed analyses of its data on pupils' performance, which is used well to identify strengths and weakness within subject areas and the progress of pupils through the school. A sharp focus is set for improvement as each class has set targets for improving pupils' achievements. Since the previous inspection, teachers have improved their expertise particularly in English, mathematics and in information technology. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have had a major impact on teaching techniques contributing to pupils' learning. The basic skills are taught well overall. However some staff still lack expertise in the development of pupils' writing and do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to speak and write at length.

61. The accommodation is satisfactory and it allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. However, the building would be difficult to negotiate for pupils with physical disabilities who need wheelchair access. The outdoor facilities are appropriate. There are large hard surfaced areas for pupils, which have been enhanced with seating, chairs and a small wildlife garden, which is used as a natural resource. The learner swimming pool adjacent to the school and owned by the Local Education Authority is used by the pupils for swimming lessons. Although there is no playing field this does not restrict the development of physical education. The school has recently taken over the land around the swimming pool to provide additional play space. The School Council is currently working hard to make improvements to this area. The accommodation for under fives is adequate overall, both indoors and outdoors. There is sufficient space for practical work. However, there is no large play apparatus for the development of climbing and balancing skills. The accommodation is very well maintained by the caretaker and premises staff. All previous issues from the last report concerning the accommodation have been resolved and the school has made good improvements.
62. Learning resources are good overall, both in quantity and quality. They are very good in mathematics and history. They are good in religious education, information technology, music, physical education, and geography. They are satisfactory for science and English. Resources are satisfactory in the reception classes. There are good resources for pupils with special educational needs.
63. The efficiency of the school is good. Financial planning is approved by the finance committee and then is taken to the full governing body. The school has made savings on staffing, has a high income per pupil and has built up reserves. These monies are designated principally to pay for building repairs and the salaries of additional staff. The specific grants the school receives to support pupils with special educational needs are used effectively and for the designated purpose. The school spends money allocated for the support of pupils with special educational needs in an appropriate manner.
64. The day-to-day administration of the school is good. The school administrative staff have a good understanding of both the school and the local authority systems. They ensure the smooth running of the school. All the points raised in the latest audit report have been resolved. The school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. The governors, headteacher and the staff should:

1. Further improve pupils' attainment in writing skills by:

- (i) providing more opportunities for pupils to speak and write at length;
- (ii) providing in-service training to improve the development of writing skills and the presentation of pupils' work;
- (iii) developing a literary environment to encourage and motivate pupils to write.

(Paragraphs 4,6,9,15,31,86,91,101,112)

2. Extend the learning of the higher attaining pupils by:

- (i) giving pupils more responsibility for their own learning through personal research and investigational work.

(Paragraphs 5,8,31,93,105,114,130)

Although this is not a major issue to address, the governors, headteacher and the staff should consider the following points for inclusion in their action plan:

Continue to develop strategies to improve attendance and encourage parents to be more involved in their children's learning. *(Paragraphs 5,22)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 65 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 26 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 5 | 18 | 57 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Nursery | YR– Y6 |
|--|---------|--------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | | 258 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | | 73 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | | 5 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | | 45 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 1 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 26 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 12 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 6.6 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 1.5 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 1999 | 19 | 16 | 35 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| | Girls | 10 | 9 | 13 |
| | Total | 23 | 23 | 28 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 66 (50) | 66 (69) | 80 (84) |
| | National | 82 (81) | 83 (81) | 87 (84) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 12 | 14 | 8 |
| | Girls | 9 | 12 | 2 |
| | Total | 21 | 26 | 10 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 60 (49) | 74 (69) | 29 (84) |
| | National | 82 (81) | 86 (85) | 87 (86) |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 1999 | 15 | 15 | 30 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 7 | 6 | 13 |
| | Girls | 12 | 13 | 12 |
| | Total | 19 | 19 | 25 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 63 (45) | 63 (54) | 83 (69) |
| | National | 70 (65) | 69 (59) | 78 (69) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 7 | 9 | 14 |
| | Girls | 11 | 10 | 12 |
| | Total | 18 | 19 | 26 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 60 (44) | 66 (55) | 87 (69) |
| | National | 68 (N/A) | 69 (N/A) | 75 (N/A) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 4 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 |
| Indian | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 1 |
| White | 206 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 3 |

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) | 11 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 23 |
| Average class size | 17 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 6 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 75 |

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|--------|
| Financial year | 1998/9 |
|----------------|--------|

| | £ |
|--|---------|
| Total income | 437,797 |
| Total expenditure | 462,586 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1,866 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 90,669 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 65,880 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 258 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 122 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 65 | 32 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 65 | 32 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 58 | 36 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 50 | 43 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good. | 74 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 44 | 40 | 14 | 2 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 65 | 32 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 77 | 20 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 43 | 41 | 10 | 1 | 5 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 66 | 30 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 59 | 39 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 37 | 40 | 13 | 2 | 8 |

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

66. The majority of children attend the nearby nursery school. They leave the nursery to enter full time education in one of the two reception classes in the year in which they will become five. There are 52 pupils in the reception classes, 23 of whom are under five. Their attainment in all areas except physical development is below average in comparison to most other children of similar ages. In physical development their attainment is average. Most children make good progress in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development. The children with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets, especially in their personal and social development. Most of the children reach the nationally expected Desirable Learning Outcomes as they become five. A few of them exceed these outcomes and a few are not yet achieving them. The provision is effectively planned and managed by the teachers and the nursery nurse with additional help from governors and parents.

Personal and social development

67. Children achieve well in this area. When they start in the reception classes, many of the children have poor skills in sharing and co-operating. During their time in the reception classes they successfully build on previous learning and achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes they are expected to attain by the time they are 5 years old. This is very similar to the position identified during the previous inspection.

68. From entry into school children grow in confidence, begin to show more independence and to take more responsibility for their own actions. For example, they are independent in getting themselves ready to go out at playtimes, in choosing their activities or sitting down at the beginning of the sessions for registration. Children obey the simple rules that exist. For example, they know that only a few can participate in certain activities because of the space and resources that are available. They soon become adept at taking turns and working in small groups. During 'snack times' the children acting as monitors hand out milk or fruit for example, and all are encouraged to respond with good manners. Children handle equipment with great care and know that the resources they use are for sharing with others. The children behave well and there are very few incidents where children show poor behaviour and this makes a positive contribution to the calm working atmosphere. Relationships at all levels are very good with particular care given to children with special educational needs. Children willingly go to adults if they need help.

69. The teaching of personal and social development is good. These skills are planned well into all day-to-day activities. All the adults working in the reception classes are consistent in their approach to issues related to children's personal and social development. For example, they reinforce the need for good manners, sharing and caring. Staff are quick to praise children which motivates them to achieve and builds their self-confidence.

Language and literacy

70. There is a wide range of children's attainment on entry to school. The majority of them have levels which are below those expected nationally in reading, writing, speaking and listening skills when compared to children of a similar age. Their achievement in this area of learning is good. Those with special educational needs receive effective support and make good progress towards their set targets. By the time they reach the age of five, most children are on line to achieve average standards for this area of learning. A few of the children exceed the learning outcomes and a few have still to achieve them.

71. The school sets a high priority on the development of language and literacy. Most children make good progress. Where children are involved in activities that are directed by a member of staff they make good progress in speaking skills, as they are encouraged to talk about their experiences. Staff give children confidence in speaking, for example, by skilfully introducing new vocabulary or extending children's understanding. For instance, in a discussion about the story of the 'Little Yellow Chicken', children respond well to the questions asked and their knowledge and understanding of the names of the characters and the development of the story are extended. The staff give a high priority to developing positive attitudes in the nursery. Children listen very attentively and value what others have to say. They are most sensitive to the needs of others and patiently wait to speak one at a time. They enjoy traditional stories, rhymes and songs such as 'The Little Red Hen' and most are able to successfully recall and retell the important points clearly and accurately. Most enjoy books and are beginning to read. They are beginning to identify rhyming words in stories and know and read some simple two and three letter words. The more able children read simple sentences. The children enjoy participating in role-play in the café. Staff are skilled at participating in play with children and intervening at appropriate times to move the discussion and children's thinking forward. Resources for early reading and literacy are of good quality. The recent introduction of big books for reading as part of the National Literacy Strategy assists the teaching and motivates pupils to read. Children and parents are encouraged to take books home each week and this supports the development of literacy skills. This makes a significant contribution to developing positive attitudes towards books and reading. In their writing, most are developing good pencil control. The curriculum is well planned for children to write for a variety of purposes and audiences. The higher attaining children are writing sentences independently. However a small group of children are at the very early stages of reading and writing. Children have very good relationships with each other and adults. They behave and work together well. They have very positive attitudes to learning and enjoy their activities. Books and games are treated with respect and handled with care.
72. The quality of teaching is good overall. All staff know the children well and praise and motivate them to learn. Activities and resources are always very well prepared and accessible to the children. Systems for the assessment of children's attainment have improved since the last report. However, they are still not sufficiently detailed to provide an effective baseline for the monitoring of children's progress. Where the teaching is good staff take every opportunity to consolidate what the children know and then extend their speech with the introduction of new ideas and vocabulary. Where teaching is not as effective, as for instance, where some of the questions demand a one-word answer, it is less productive in promoting children's understanding and thinking of ideas and vocabulary. The additional support given by other adults makes a significant contribution to the progress these children make.

Mathematics

73. On entry to the school the children's attainments is below that normally expected. The majority of children make good progress in mathematics and achieve well. By the time they are five most attain the national outcomes for children of this age. From the wide range of attainment, a small number exceed the national standards and a very small number fall below them.
74. Children learn to count, sort and recognise numbers to twenty and beyond and are developing mathematical vocabulary well. A range of counting experiences is planned across the curriculum and children enjoy reciting and singing some well-known number rhymes. The average and more able pupils count to one hundred and are beginning to count in twos, fives, and tens to fifty and beyond which is above average. Such activities effectively build a good understanding of number and lay a good foundation for their learning through The National Numeracy Strategy. Most children recognise basic shapes of square, circle, rectangle and

triangle. They are taught well to apply their knowledge to a wide range of activities such as recognising these shapes in patterns around them. Those with special educational needs make good progress toward their targets. The children enjoy mathematics, have very good attitudes to their work and persevere on their chosen tasks.

75. The quality of teaching is good. The staff intervene effectively to promote mathematical thinking. Tasks are well planned and organised and where teaching is good, staff work hard to promote children's thinking and learning. As children begin to solve simple problems vocabulary such as 'bigger than' and 'smaller than' is reinforced, for example, as children work out their solution to numbers bigger than five but smaller than ten. The staff support children with special educational needs effectively in their learning. The staff know the children well and keep up to date termly records, which are shared with parents. An effective contribution to the pupils' attainment and progress is made through the voluntary help of parents and governors. The curriculum is well planned to the National Numeracy Strategy and children enjoy the practical tasks and activities that are advocated. The school has improved its systems of assessment of children's work since the last report. However, the initial assessment record is insufficiently detailed to be a fully effective tool to plan future learning. .

Knowledge and understanding of the world

76. The majority of the children make good progress in gaining knowledge and understanding of the world and most achieve the national standards by the age of five. This area of learning is a strength of the school and children achieve well, particularly in information technology. The visits to the local shops and places of interest and the visitors into school such as the local services extend the children's understanding of the wider world. These experiences provide a good foundation for historical, geographical, scientific and technological learning. The celebration of major festivals and stories and the study of other countries contribute effectively to the children's growing multi-cultural awareness. The children are beginning to be aware of the different ways people live. For example, the children study how bread is made and look at the types of bread found in supermarkets and find out their county of origin. They are keen to locate countries such as France, India, America and Greece. As they find the countries on the world map they are beginning to come to an initial understanding of location. The staff plan effectively for visits to the immediate locality. For example, on their return from a walk to a local supermarket, the questioning of the teacher prompted a recall by the children of their journey. They confidently make use of technology. They accurately control simple computer programs. For example, children use the mouse with good control to use a range of programs to support their learning. They know that switches on the computer control the machine and they show that they can carry on without direct adult supervision. Children enjoy learning on the computer. They use the equipment carefully and are prepared to take turns fairly. The staff provide positive role models for good behaviour and attitudes to work. The children follow their example and are sensitive to others' needs such as when they take turns at the computer, which makes a good contribution to their personal and social development.
77. The quality of teaching is good in this area of learning. A wide range of opportunities is provided for the children to explore the world around them and to ask questions. The reception is a rich environment with attractive displays from all areas of learning, sited at the children's eye and hand levels so that they can investigate them. For instance, the children enjoy observing the plants grow which they have planted.
78. The curriculum balances well the scientific, technological, historical and geographical aspects of the curriculum. The planned work gives the children good opportunities to develop their feelings and excitement in new learning such as when they observe the new growth of plants or the work of the machines in the local supermarket bakery. Staff and other adults work

consistently and effectively together to ensure all pupils have equal access and opportunities to participate in all the activities.

Physical development

79. Children make satisfactory progress in their physical development and their achievement is satisfactory. The majority attain the expected learning outcomes anticipated by the time they are five. When they start in the reception classes the majority display skills that are average for their age. The work carried out in this area helps the children to gain confidence and control in physical movement. The provision for outdoor play is satisfactory but there are insufficient resources for the development of balancing and climbing. This is a similar position to the previous inspection.
80. When using the outside play area children show that they handle wheeled vehicles with ease. Many children show good control and can change speed as necessary. They manoeuvre the vehicles expertly and know how to stop their vehicles quickly. However the children do not have sufficient regular access to large climbing and balancing apparatus to develop a good balance and control of their bodies. They have good awareness of others around them as they play games, which help them to work together in an effective and safe manner. When working on small group activities, children are able to assemble construction apparatus successfully to make a model. They also cut and glue effectively during their daily activities with the minimum of help. Children's behaviour is very good. In outside play situations they are able to take turns and wait for a vehicle to become available. All children are keen to play outside at their allotted times. The children know and respond well to the routines. The opportunity for the children to use the learner pool once a week, when it is in use, helps them to become confident in water and paves the way for them to become successful swimmers.
81. The teaching is satisfactory for this area of learning. The children respond very well to their tasks but there are insufficient planned opportunities for balancing and climbing activities the children need. The school has recognised that this area of the curriculum needs further resourcing and regular outdoor activities should include opportunities for pupils to develop their climbing and balancing skills. This area is prioritised on the school development plan. Each member of staff is fully aware of what they want to achieve and although assessments are informal the adults are able to pick up significant issues related to individual children.

Creative development

82. Children achieve well in this area of their learning and make good progress. Most achieve the expected learning outcomes by the time they are five. This is an improvement from the previous inspection report.
83. The children's paintings have detailed features that display levels of skill appropriate for children of this age. They use paint and other materials well to create a range of interesting pictures to reflect what is happening at school such as their responses to stories like 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. The children also use a computer effectively to create interesting drawings and their attainment is above average. Daily role-play in the class café provides good opportunities to extend children's imagination as they play out the actions of the various roles of customer, cook, and waiter or waitress. The children enjoy singing their well-known rhymes and songs such as 'Five Currant Buns'.
84. Teaching is good for this area of learning. The adult intervention at key moments in their role-play for example, is helping the activities that the children are engaged in to become more challenging and interesting and effectively promotes speaking skills.

85. The curriculum has been well organised with staff seizing on opportunities to extend children's creativity. There is a good range of resources available to enable staff to make the activities more interesting. The recording of children's progress is informal but does give adults a good picture of how well children achieve in this area.

ENGLISH

86. Pupils are attaining average standards in English overall by the ages of seven and eleven. Pupils' standards in reading are average and their listening skills are above average. Pupils are competent in writing simple sentences, spelling and giving short answers in discussion. However, when they are asked to write and speak at length the skills of most of the pupils are below average.
87. Most pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress. The school has recognised the need to raise attainment further in speaking and writing skills and has already put strategies into place to help pupils improve.

Speaking and listening

88. By the time pupils are seven and eleven standards in speaking are below average. Listening skills are above average. On entry many pupils have limited speaking and listening skills, but by the end of both key stages, they are able to listen carefully and make good progress. Speaking skills are less well developed. The younger pupils are able to respond appropriately to questions but many lack confidence and the vocabulary to speak independently for more than a few sentences. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils participate in drama, for example, developing plays and in Year 6 they report orally in Science lessons. Pupil members of the School Council are given chance to contribute to discussion. The School Council is a relatively recent innovation and as yet the pupil representatives need encouragement to state their views. The evaluative sessions at the end of most lessons gives an opportunity for pupils to express their views and opinions, but within a restricted framework and time limit. However pupils still need to develop further their speaking skills in order to talk confidently and at length about their work.

Reading

89. By the time pupils are seven and eleven they achieve average standards. During both key stages pupils achieve satisfactory levels of attainment in reading. They employ a range of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils are able to read independently, with accuracy and fluency. Younger pupils follow structured reading programmes and all participate in the home-school reading programme. Pupils of all ages are able to discuss the work of their favourite author and most are able to use contents pages and an index of non-fiction material.
90. Non-fiction texts are stored in the Library and are classified according to the Dewey system. Reading schemes are stored neatly in the Hall and fiction books are available in most classrooms to provide easy access for pupils to change their books.

Writing

91. Pupils' attainment in writing by the ages of seven and eleven is below average but the standards in both key stages are improving. The focus of teaching is to ensure that pupils experience writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences. Pupils know how to analyse characters, how to structure narrative and the grammatical construction of text. Older pupils show how they compose Haiku poems about the seasons and younger pupils produce a written analysis of the character 'Big Bad Bill' with guidance. Emphasis is currently on the

technical aspects of writing consequently there are few occasions available for pupils to practise and demonstrate their creativity and writing in depth. The development of handwriting is inconsistent. Pupils are introduced to a print form with the intention of transferring to a joined style of writing at the age of seven. Formation of handwriting is variable and consequently is reflected in the presentation of written work.

92. Pupils with Special Educational Needs are well supported and make good progress towards the targets identified in their Individual Education Plans. These form part of the overall teacher planning. When necessary, work is suitably modified to ensure pupils have full access to the English curriculum.
93. There is a strength in the consistently good behaviour throughout the school, which has a positive impact on learning. There is a calm, orderly, pleasant environment that enables pupils to learn effectively. The pupils have good attitudes to their work and they enjoy the challenges presented to them in the Literacy Hour. The literacy Strategy is having a positive effect on standards overall. Pupils gain new skills at a satisfactory pace and consistently learn and use new vocabulary. Most particularly enjoy new books and reading. It is very evident during pupils' evaluation of their own work at the end of each lesson they respect each other's values and beliefs. They acknowledge that it may be possible to learn more from mistakes and they use this technique constructively. All pupils' efforts are positively acknowledged and valued by the staff. However, lack of opportunity for personal study and the chance to take responsibility for their own learning, particularly for more able pupils, is an area for further development.

Teaching and learning

94. Overall teaching is good and was excellent in two lessons observed. Information and communication technology is used well to support pupils' work. Teachers show good knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology as well as English. Teaching methods are effectively used and the teaching of basic skills is satisfactory. The quality of assessment is good and is used positively to inform planning. The effectiveness of teacher planning is very good, as is class management and the use of time. Pupils settle quickly to the given task and sustain interest and concentration for the period of the lesson. Support staff are organised very well to help pupils with special educational needs. Homework is managed effectively to ensure understanding and to consolidate learning in the classroom, which helps pupils to improve their work. Pupils' achieve satisfactorily by the end of Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieve well.
95. The English curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. This is evident in the collaborative working, meaningful discussions and the consideration pupils and staff show for each other and for the materials they use.
96. Resources are satisfactory. They are generally in good condition and are accessible. The non-fiction books in the Library area are catalogued and there is a useful guide to enable users to locate the books they need. Non-fiction books are displayed around the school as part of topic displays but they were rarely seen in use. Fiction books are stored in classrooms, usually in boxes. However books are not displayed sufficiently well to attract and to stimulate pupils' interest in literature. All pupils experience a broad, relevant English curriculum that follows the National Literacy Strategy guidelines. Literacy is planned into all subjects effectively. However, at present there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length. The subject is coordinated well overall and the monitoring of teaching and learning as well as the consistency in the implementation of The National Literacy Strategy is having a positive impact on standards and there is good improvement for the previous inspection, particularly in reading.

MATHEMATICS

97. By the age of seven and eleven, pupils' standards in mathematics are average and there is a strength in pupils' mental mathematics which has improved from the previous inspection. There is good improvement in standards from the results in 1999 and standards are rising. For example, the smaller booster class across Years 1 and 2 and 5 and 6 for less able pupils is effective. The narrower range of ability in groups is enabling teachers to set targets, measure progress and adapt work accordingly, lesson by lesson. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is also proving beneficial through its structured approach, emphasis on basic numeracy skills, and development of strategies for the manipulation of numbers. The mental mathematics at the beginning of each lesson not only gives valuable practice in recalling and thinking about numbers but also motivates the pupil for the rest of the lesson.
98. By the time pupils are eleven, most multiply and divide three figure numbers by two figure numbers, with the majority able to multiply by three figure numbers. They thoroughly enjoy using the new strategy taught to achieve this. Others manage this with smaller numbers. Pupils are gaining confidence in their ability to cope with other aspects of mathematics, when constructing models and when drawing or using shapes, they can measure and draw angles to the nearest degree and use language associated with angle. They can understand graphs and diagrams, including pie charts and draw conclusions. Overall pupils are achieving satisfactorily in relation to their starting point. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress toward the targets set in their individual education plans due to well focused teaching specifically directed towards their needs.
99. By the time pupils are seven their attainment is similar to that expected for seven year olds. Bearing in mind the attainment in number skills on entry to the reception classes is below average and the current standards of work are average, pupils are achieving well. The formation of a smaller class for less able pupils from Years 1 and 2 enables teachers to set targets, measure progress and adapt work to suit the needs of the pupils. Great emphasis is given to the quick recall of number facts, the use of different strategies for calculating number problems and the daily practice of mental mathematics. By Year 2, pupils are familiar with number sequences and can work with numbers up to 100, for example, when using the number square, pupils were able to recognise the pattern of 5. Higher ability pupils understood the concept of doubling and halving. The less able pupils still work with simple numbers and achieve best when under the direct supervision of the teacher or support assistant. Pupils can measure common objects using centimetres. They are familiar with and name two and three-dimensional shapes and interpret data imaginatively as demonstrated in classroom displays. Here pupils use information technology to enhance their work, as they did when conducting a traffic census. Good emphasis is placed on the use of correct mathematical vocabulary.
100. Mathematics is used well to support other subjects. Pupils' growing confidence and mental agility in applying numerical skills is filtering into other subjects. For example, after a geography lesson to consider improvements to Bloxwich town centre, pupils go on to cost their suggested improvements using an information technology program. The whole activity was well planned and achieved its purpose in encouraging pupils to experience success in the practical application of mathematics in everyday situations. Calculators are used competently when appropriate, a good example of this was in Year 4 when pupils set each other the task of finding the missing number to make 1000 when given a three-figure number. The calculator was used to check that their work was correct.
101. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2, mainly because teachers in both key stages are finding that the innovative National Numeracy

Strategy is adding structure to the lessons and focusing attention in the progressive acquisition and use of mathematical skills. This is having a significant impact on pupils' learning and improving standards of work. The lively mental work at the beginning of lessons gives it a brisk start and gears the pupils up to manipulate numbers. Consequently they are motivated throughout the rest of the lesson, because all teachers have developed good relationships with the pupils, and also because of their very careful planning and organisation, a good educational atmosphere is created in the classroom. Pupils are thus well motivated to learn, give of their best and behave very well. Teachers have a good knowledge of mathematics and use this to make lessons interesting so that the pupils enjoy their work and self-esteem is raised. The pupils rightly have confidence in their teachers and co-operate well with them. Teachers use appropriate methods that suit the requirements of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils. Consequently, pupils concentrate on their work and do not waste time. However, there are few opportunities to extend the skills of the higher attaining pupils through independent investigational work.

102. The enthusiastic subject co-ordinator monitors the work in the classrooms, talks to the pupils and looks at their work to ensure that the teachers planning is fruitful. There are effective assessment procedures throughout both key stages so that accurate targets can be set and progress tracked across the key stages. Attainment has fluctuated somewhat since the previous inspection. Current evidence shows steady improvement in Key Stage 1 over recent years and an upturn in Key Stage 2 in 1998. There is good capacity for further improvement, particularly in view of measures that have recently been initiated. These include the formation of two smaller classes across Years 1/2 and Years 5/6, which will enable teachers to focus on a smaller range of ability, and the well thought out and relevant homework set regularly and given a high profile by teachers. Resources are very good with very good use made of information technology. The school is fortunate in having the considerable expertise of a leading mathematics teacher and the co-authors of a published mathematics scheme of work.

SCIENCE

103. Standards at the ages of seven and eleven are average and pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2.
104. In the last inspection report standards in science were found to be above average for pupils aged seven and eleven and pupils made sound progress. The 1999 National Curriculum tests found that at the end of Key Stage 2 the percentage of pupils reaching level 4 or above was close to the national average, while the percentage reaching level 5 or above was well below the national average. The trend over the last 4 years has been slightly below the national average. When compared with similar schools, results are above average. Teacher assessments for pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 showed standards to be well below the national average.
105. Taking all these factors into account, together with observations of lessons during the inspection, and careful study of pupils' previous work, the school is maintaining satisfactory standards overall. Variations between the outcomes of teacher assessments, scrutiny of work, and lesson observations can be accounted for by factors such as the composition of particular year-groups and changes in assessment methods. The evidence shows that there is a good match between the work given, and pupils' abilities and aptitudes, including those with special educational needs. For the more able pupils, however, work is sometimes insufficiently challenging, and these pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their research skills through independent investigations.
106. During Key Stage 2, pupils learn well. They continue to develop their investigative skills in a systematic way, in the context of their work in the different areas of science. Work

on experimental and investigative science forms the basis of pupils' learning, and so they develop a good understanding of how to carry out investigations, how to ensure that tests are fair, and how to control variables. All of this is presented to pupils in ways which are appropriate for their ages and abilities, and in the setting of interesting, often exciting, practical activities. These activities give them opportunities to work like real scientists, putting forward ideas, working out ways of checking them, and then discussing their findings.

107. During Key Stage 1, pupils' learning is satisfactory. All aspects of science are given appropriate coverage, and pupils are given a good grounding in carrying out investigations from the beginning. Their lessons are particularly challenging and interesting in Year 2. In their work on forces, pupils enjoy investigating how far a car will travel down a slope tilted at varying heights.
108. Because of this practical approach pupils generally show interest and enthusiasm for their work. Teachers provide a good balance between talk and discussion, practical work, and writing and recording. At the end of a lesson on the properties of rocks Year 3 pupils explain their experiments and results to each other. They are proud of what they have discovered, and show that they can use and understand new vocabulary well.
109. Teachers generally manage their classes well, so that very good working relationships are the norm in the school, both between teachers and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves. Behaviour is very good, with pupils showing sensible, sharing and co-operative attitudes as they work. Practical activities contribute significantly to pupils' social development, teaching them to share, take turns and listen to the ideas and opinions of others.
110. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching seen during the inspection is satisfactory at Key Stage 1, and good at Key Stage 2. Lessons are generally well planned, with activities for pupils of different abilities clearly mapped out. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and are therefore able to give clear explanations, and present the work in a stimulating and engaging manner. Standards of pupil management are high and teachers use assessment well. They question their pupils skilfully and are able to adapt the work to individual needs.
111. In a Year 6 lesson on electrical circuits the teacher has high expectations, and motivates the pupils very well. A lively pace of work is established and pupils are challenged to think and respond quickly through very good use of interactive questioning skills. This questioning also requires the pupils to use correct scientific vocabulary, and so makes a good contribution to their basic language skills. They use words such as circuit, circuit diagram, motor and switch in context, and show that they understand what they mean.
112. When planning work teachers need to give more attention to the learning of the more able pupils. In lessons observed during the inspection, and in pupils' previous work examined, there are often times when these pupils are not sufficiently challenged and extended by the given activities. When reporting back on their investigations pupils should be given opportunities to report in a variety of ways, including through extended, individual writing. At present this aspect is too dominated by teachers giving pupils sentences to complete, and this can restrict opportunities for more individual and detailed responses. The more able pupils would benefit from a more flexible approach, as would pupils of all abilities. The high quality of planning and thorough approach to assessment has contributed to raising teaching standards throughout the school.
113. The subject is well managed and the co-ordinator is experienced and knowledgeable. The co-ordinator has spent time monitoring science in other classes, and plans to continue this by focusing on the teaching of Experimental and Investigative Science. Work has also been done on checking cross-curricular links so as to track science coverage in other subjects. In-

service training activities are planned, to include work on teachers' individual knowledge of different areas of the curriculum.

114. Resources are sufficient, and of reasonable quality. They are efficiently and safely organised, and readily accessible to staff. The school has an outdoor area suitable for use for environmental science work, and the accommodation in general is suitable for the teaching of all areas of the curriculum.

ART

115. Pupils' attainment in art is above average by the age of seven and eleven. Art is a strength of the school. It permeates the whole school to create an attractive, stimulating learning environment. Pupils' work is displayed in all classrooms, corridors, hall and library. Judgement has been based on the scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers planning, displays and photographic records of earlier work.

116. By the age of eleven, pupils are skilled at observational drawing. They study the work of Van Gogh noting his style and technique. As the teacher has very good subject knowledge she challenges the pupils well to observe style, tone and use of colour in Van Gogh's painting of sunflowers. They enjoy drawing their own flowers in his style. Towards the end of the lesson, they evaluate perceptively and comment on the achievements of others, which helps them all with their work. Some pupils use information technology well to find out more about Vincent Van Gogh.

117. By the age of seven, pupils work confidently from their imagination as they produce bold and well-proportioned paintings. They learn to mix their own colours and tones, and develop skills of drawing as they represent the world around them. By Year 2, pupils respond to the work of other artists and produce work of a high quality, such as their collage reflecting the style of Klee. Some of their work is carried out on the computer such as drawings about their traffic survey.

118. As the pupils progress through the school they make good progress. Their work is planned to ensure it includes the teaching of specific skills building on previous learning. For example, painting on wood using a fine brush. Comparison of work throughout both key stages shows that artistic skills are consistently developed over time. This was particularly evident in a display of every child's observational drawing of a bicycle. Paintings and drawings show that pupils can use colour effectively and sensitively, for example, illustrations for science to show cross-sections of an apple. Several examples illustrate the range of media and resources available to create two-dimensional Tudor portraits or to create textile patterns to emulate the work of the contemporary artist, Michael Brennan Wood.

119. Art is used to enrich all areas of the curriculum and there are strong links with information and communication technology. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 worked on the computers to create the modernist style of Picasso and oriental patterns to illustrate Islamic prayer mats. The Internet and e-mail were used effectively to contact the artist Michael Brennan Wood and to gather further information about his style and technique.

120. Pupils often work collaboratively. They become engrossed in their given tasks, for example, painting with fine brushes to transfer a design from paper on to a narrow strip of Balsa wood. They enjoy their work and soon become involved in what they are doing. Most sustain a high level of concentration for a prolonged period of time.

121. Pupils are encouraged to study a wide range of different artistic styles through the works of artists, such as Van Gogh, Klee, Klimt, Brueghel, Picasso. Those pupils with

special educational needs have full access to the Art curriculum and appropriate support is given to those who may experience learning or physical difficulties.

122. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned, taught effectively and most conclude with a period for the evaluation of the activity and the product. During this time pupils show respect for each other's work, efforts and feelings. There is a good relationship between teachers and pupils that allows this time to become an effective part of the assessment process.
123. The subject is effectively managed. Teachers' knowledge, understanding and interest in the subject is reflected in the quality of the work produced from the under fives to the top of key stage 2. Teachers' expectations are high which also contributes to the quality of the artwork. A wide range of resources is available which are of good quality and are easily accessible in the Art store. The previous report identified art as a strength of the school and this continues to be so. Art makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, social, cultural and personal development of the pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

124. Pupils achieve above average standards by the ages of seven and eleven and make good progress in the subject. Although only two lessons were observed, evidence was gathered from past work and discussions with pupils and their teachers.
125. By the age of eleven, pupils understand the function of gears and explain how they work to make a model move using correct terminology such as input, output, axle and mechanism. They make detailed designs of fairground models with correct labelling as a good basis for construction and compare the efficiency of gears. By the age of seven, pupils learn to make simpler models of vehicles with fixed and free wheels. Pupils experiment with different types of axles and wheels to find the best for their model. There are many illustrations of pupils' work on display including objects designed to fulfil specific purposes such as purses. There is evidence that mechanisms are disassembled and experiments to improve the efficiency of machines were demonstrated.
126. Pupils' attitudes are good. The pupils take pride in their work and they are keen to discuss what they are doing. They behave very well and listen very carefully to the class teacher. They work well together and help each other as they work. The pupils, when they were making their models, were prepared to share equipment and resources well. Their work in groups helps pupils achieve well as they learn and evaluate others' work. All pupils achieve well including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. One pupil with a physical disability resisted the sensitive offers of help from others because she took a great deal of satisfaction in her own achievement. This was typical of the response of most other pupils.
127. The quality of teaching from the two lessons observed is very good at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. In both key stages, teachers have good subject knowledge, lessons are well planned and pupils are effectively challenged to make a working model. Help is given to the pupils when required but they respond better when they are challenged to seek their own solutions and revise their ideas when they are not always successful straight away.
128. The subject is well co-ordinated and the knowledge and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator has a positive effect on the standard of teaching and learning. The scheme of work is well planned and shows that the development of skills is planned to coincide with the teaching of concepts of design and building. Teaching throughout all key stages is good and ensures that pupils continue to make good progress. When appropriate cross-curricular links are made.

129. There is effective co-ordination of the subject. The quality of the resources is high. They are stored well and are accessible. Emphasis has been placed on the quality and range of resources to ensure that pupils do not waste time preparing components and that the finished product will be attractive and of a higher standard. This attention to detail enables the pupils to focus on the given task and increases motivation and interest. Pupils show respect for the resources and for the finished product. They are encouraged to evaluate their models sensitively and objectively and this forms part of the assessment procedure.
130. The previous report indicated that opportunities for pupils to increase their knowledge and understanding through independent investigation were not provided which is still the case to a large extent. The opportunity for the more able pupils to devise their own investigations is a target for development.

GEOGRAPHY

131. Pupils' attainment by the ages of seven and eleven is average. The previous report indicated that progress in both key stages was satisfactory. This has been maintained. The pupils with special educational needs receive effective support in lessons and make good progress.
132. By the age of eleven, pupils extend their studies to human and physical geography. Younger pupils compare what they thought India was like and what they found out. For example one pupil thought that all children would go to school, but found out that more boys than girls go to school in India. They consider improving the local environment and redesigning the school swimming pool area becomes a topical project. This provides good opportunities for planning and good links with other subjects as they plan exactly where to place, for example, the paths and flower tubs. These skills are extended further up the school when pupils consider the traffic problems of Bloxwich and suggest that the town centre should be pedestrianised. They consider the need of the pedestrians, if they make these changes, for example the need for good drainage. This activity is extended when pupils, using a database program draw up a budget for their proposals. A valuable link has been established with a school in Burton in West Wales. To find more information about Burton the pupils use the Internet and using maps they plot their route to Burton from Bloxwich. Here they have the use of a digital camera, database and a drawing program to collect information and to construct maps. Year 3 pupils sponsor a child in Zimbabwe. Exchange of letters and views enables pupils to gain first hand information about life there.
133. By the age of seven, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the immediate environment. Pupils walk around Bloxwich and identify attractive and unattractive features. They look at road signs and road markings and consider their importance to the traffic and the pedestrians and how to make the town safer, and this helps to develop their responsibility as future citizens. They conduct a traffic survey and in their mathematic lesson they consolidate their learning by producing their findings in graph form. They look to the wider scene when studying the seaside and make comparison between Bloxwich and the West Coast of Ireland. The activity is personalised when they bring postcards from home, of places that they have visited and locate them on the map. This ties in very well with the topic 'Where in the world has Bradley Bear been' which encourages the pupils to look at and become familiar with the world map.
134. The quality of teaching is good in throughout the school. Teachers have a good knowledge of geography and their interest is a significant factor in motivating pupils. As a result pupils concentrate well and work enthusiastically. Where the teaching was good, pupils were encouraged to use their acquired literacy skills to write about their findings. There was good use of homework and pupils were encouraged to work independently using their

information technology skills. The use of independent research using for example, library skills is not as firmly developed throughout both key stages. Well thought out grouping of pupils enables more able pupils to support the learning of those less sure. This was particularly effective in information technology when Year 5 pupils produced their budget for a pedestrianised town centre.

135. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and through this create an effective educational atmosphere in their classrooms, where the pupils behave well and give of their best. This, coupled with effective planning and suitable teaching methods, leads to worthwhile and interesting lessons.
136. The previous inspection found that teachers planning lacked clarity at Key Stage 1. This is no longer the case. Planning is now very good and there is a comprehensive scheme of work in place, which gives valuable support to the teaching of geography. There are good assessment procedures to assess pupils' progress in geography. Resources are good although there is a shortage of local and ordnance survey maps. Software available for information technology is good and is currently being used consistently. Geography makes a worthwhile contribution to the social and cultural development of the pupils through the study of localities at home and abroad.

HISTORY

137. Pupils attain average standards at the ages of seven and eleven. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets as they are supported effectively in their learning. Overall most pupils achieve well and make satisfactory progress in the subject.
138. By the age of eleven, pupils build on their knowledge of the past through the study of people, civilisations and important events within living memory. Pupils enjoy their work on Greece and are very interested to relate the 'Olympic Games' to the Greeks. They decide that the most important legacy of the Greeks was school. "Without it we would not be able to read or write". Towards the end of the key stage pupils are introduced in greater depth to more recent history through the study of life during the Second World War. This becomes more relevant when a visitor is invited into the school to talk about her experiences in wartime as an evacuee. There are good links with other subjects a good example of this is the writing of Charles Dickens' biography. The displays in school are of good quality and make a worthwhile contribution to the educational environment in the school.
139. By the age of seven, pupils have a clear understanding of events happening in the past rather than the present. For example, the younger pupils look at holidays in the past and recall events from the previous year. Pupils understand what a holiday is and when they occur on the school calendar. Over half the class are able to order and write Christmas, Easter and summer on a time line. They can recognise the similarities and differences between homes of today and homes of the past. All are able to identify five objects not found in living rooms 100 years ago. As part of the school's emphasis on living history, a visiting history theatre group provides an exhibition of toys from the past. Pupils have the opportunity of first hand experience when they play with these toys and are able to make comparisons with the toys of today. The older pupils in Year 2 study three family holiday photographs and by looking for clues such as buildings, colour, clothes and hairstyles they are able to decide whether the holiday is taking place now or in the past. The majority of pupils are able to correctly place the pictures on a 100 year time line. Five pupils provide a fashion show of bathing suits through the ages. After correctly ordering the pupils on the time line, opportunity is given for the pupils to reflect which outfit they would prefer to wear for the beach. All choose modern day swimsuits and can give reasons why this is so.

140. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching overall was good and the teachers' enthusiasm stimulated pupils' interest. Teachers successfully aim to make history 'come alive'. They motivate and challenge the pupils well so that they sustain interest in the topics over a period of time. The very good relationships established with the pupils create an educational atmosphere in which the pupils develop confidence, work with enthusiasm and behave very well. The teachers' knowledge of history and how to teach it is good. The contribution of the subject to the development of literacy skills is an integral part of teachers' planning.
141. There is an overall curriculum plan so that teachers know which area to cover and when. These are supported by educational visits; for example, Year 3 pupils when studying Egypt visit Birmingham Museum. Very good use is made of visiting theatre groups who visit school and provide the pupils with first hand experience of life in the past about for example, the Tudors and Victorians. Pupils are assessed at the end of each topic and good records are kept. The school has a very good supply of resources to teach the subject and uses the local museum and schools' library service to provide useful artefacts. History continues to make a valuable contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

142. Standards achieved in information and communication technology are above average by the ages of seven and eleven. All pupils have access to a number of computers and good use is made of the digital camera and camcorder. Most computers are situated in an area of the Library and classes are timetabled for specific information and communication technology lessons. In addition pupils are encouraged to use them during their own time to practise their skills. Consequently all pupils including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress.
143. By the age of eleven, pupils use spreadsheets in their work. They are able to set up a formula to change data in response to mathematics questions about area and volume. Coordination of the subject is also good and there are links to all other areas of the curriculum. Mathematics and geography are linked with information and communication technology in the local study project. Pupils visit the nearby High Street and to consider, plan and budget for pedestrianisation. This means that pupils plan using two or three-dimensional diagrams. In addition pupils select street furniture in accordance with the financial budget shown on the integrated spreadsheet. Information and communication technology further supports mathematics by consolidating pupils' knowledge and understanding of the formulae for volume and area. Pupils show that they are able to integrate graphics and use simple word processing skills to produce simple books.
144. By the age of seven, most pupils are able to use the fundamental commands necessary for simple word processing and basic graphics. They are able to explain the functions of such commands as 'clear all'; 'fill' and 'menu'. The quality of teaching in discrete lessons is good. The youngest pupils are introduced to information and communication technology and are encouraged to understand the functions of the basic controls, for example, on/off and the 'mouse'. They are also encouraged to develop correct keyboard skills from an early age.
145. All pupils treat the equipment with care. The use of time and resources are carefully planned and managed to make sure that the best use is made of the time available in the specialist area. If technical problems arise, the school has the benefit of a specialist technical manager available immediately to rectify any problems. This increases the confidence of staff and pupils.
146. The quality of teaching is good. Coordination of the subject is good. Particular care has gone into planning to ensure information and communication technology is used to

enhance the teaching and learning across the curriculum. For example, maths and geography were linked through a particular programme so that two and three-dimensional diagrams of a pedestrianised area were made and a spreadsheet to inform budgeting was integrated into the work. Opportunities to consolidate learning in other areas of the curriculum are provided, for example, in the revision of the formulae for volume and area, creation of sounds for music. All lessons begin with a good introduction that usually includes a teacher demonstration of the task reproduced on a large visual display unit that ensures all pupils have a clear view of the screen. Pupils are then encouraged to work in pairs. They work very effectively together and with a high level of co-operation, pupils achieve well. The pupils make very good use of this time to learn from each other. Each lesson concludes with a resume of the lesson and evaluation of their work. Pupils share their experiences and views and everyone's opinions are valued. Although the information and communication technology suite is used efficiently the use of individual computers within individual classrooms is less apparent. Consequently opportunities for independent learning and investigation are restricted.

147. The school has access to the Internet and e-mail. It is hoping to establish e-mail links with its 'twin' school in South Wales as soon as the other school is connected to the network.

148. The subject is well co-ordinated and informal assessment is used to inform planning. Integration of other areas of the curriculum within planning is good, but records of skills development requires further development. There is a great deal of expertise on the staff and the governing body to ensure that programs and machines are appropriately maintained and that problems are immediately sorted out. In the previous report information and communication technology was judged to be a strength of the school. The standards achieved continue to be above average.

MUSIC

149. Pupils attain average standards at the age of seven and eleven. They are given a series of worthwhile experiences in music and make satisfactory progress overall as they get older. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

150. By the age of eleven, pupils perform both confidently and accurately. They sing two-part songs, and achieve planned effects with instruments and voice by using musical elements and structures expressively. The school's annual musical performance, put on by Year 5 and 6 pupils gives opportunities for all aspects of performance, and high standards are achieved. Pupils listen attentively to music and appraise it, identifying changes in musical character and mood. They use appropriate musical vocabulary in discussing their work. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, the whole class practises a recorder piece in preparation for a performance in assembly. The sharing of music making, with every pupil fully involved and giving of their best, produces a 'special moment' of high quality musical experience.

151. By the age of seven, pupils can sing a range of songs and play simple pieces using tuned and untuned instruments. They can listen carefully to different sounds and pieces of music and recognise elements such as changes in rhythm and tempo. In a Reception class lesson, for example, pupils are learning to listen and respond to music. They listen to 'Dreamings' by Schumann, and they know the names of composers and what composers do. They then develop their sense of rhythm and co-ordination in singing 'Little Green Frog' with accompanying actions. They find this very enjoyable, and their sense of participation promotes good learning.

152. At all stages pupils show very positive attitudes to music. There is a sense of enjoyment and enthusiasm, both in music lessons, and on the many occasions on which music is used to enrich the life of the school. Music is well used in assemblies, where pupils learn

the names of famous composers, and listen to some of their works. Pupils from different classes regularly perform during assembly, and those listening are encouraged to show their appreciation with applause. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language are able to participate fully, and to gain enjoyment and enrichment through the work.

153. The teaching of music is good. There are no music specialists on the staff, and teachers rely on the well-constructed policy and schemes of work which support non-specialist teaching effectively. Lessons are conducted at a lively pace, and most are well structured, including opportunities for both listening and performing activities. Good use is made of recorded accompaniments, and a friend of the school comes to play the piano for assemblies and special occasions. In class lessons teachers show enthusiasm and enjoyment and this is communicated to the pupils. A peripatetic teacher gives instrumental lessons once a week and pupils from the school attend the local music centre one evening per week for violin lessons. Pupils from the school will be taking part in the Walsall Millennium Concert.
154. Resources are well organised and readily available. Teachers make good use of a range of resources including a good variety of instruments, tapes, and compact discs, which hold pupils' attention and stimulate interest and participation. Both the instruments available and the music chosen for lessons reflect a range of different cultures. Pupils are given experience of a wide range of different musical styles, which give them insights into different countries and cultures, and provide useful links with work in subjects such as geography and religious education.
155. The co-ordinator is working well to develop the subject in line with the school's needs. She has introduced the teaching of the ocarina at Key Stage 2, as a way of making instrumental work accessible to a wider range of pupils. This is part of an ongoing review of the curriculum to provide better opportunities, particularly at Key Stage 2 for composition and performance. Plans include the development of more systematic assessment of work in the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

156. Standards are average throughout the school, and pupils are given worthwhile experiences in all areas of the curriculum, with the exception of outdoor and adventurous activities. These activities were formerly carried out as part of residential visits, but no such visits have been undertaken for the last few years. The school is aware of this deficiency, and is exploring ways of sharing the costs with another school so as to be able to provide opportunities in this area in future. At the time of the last inspection standards at the ends of both key stages were in line with expectations, and the school has therefore maintained satisfactory standards in the subject.
157. By the age of eleven, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, learn to share well, take turns, and participate in sporting activities in a spirit of fair play. They build successfully on their previous experiences to improve their performance. In a Year 5/6 games lesson, for example, teacher and pupils discuss attacking and defending roles in team games, and how these can be used to improve performance. Standards in swimming are satisfactory, with most achieving their 25 metre competence by the time pupils are eleven years old.
158. By the age of seven, pupils put a series of movements together to show balancing skills. They build effectively on their previous work with correct vocabulary. They have good control in balancing and understand the effect that exercise has on their bodies. Pupils are well organised in safely getting out and putting away the equipment and resources. The teacher has high expectations of them and constantly encourages the development of new

ideas. As a result the pupils make good progress in the lesson observed evaluating and developing their ideas.

159. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall as they get older, and the quality of learning is satisfactory. Girls and boys show equal enthusiasm for the subject, and work well together without self-consciousness at all stages. They obviously enjoy the subject, participate with enthusiasm, and behave very well.
160. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Good attention is given to all areas of the curriculum, and teachers display an enthusiastic attitude to the subject. Class control is of a high standard, both during lessons and during the movement of pupils between the classroom and gymnasium or playground. Teachers show satisfactory subject knowledge. The teaching of swimming is effective. In physical education lessons as a whole, teachers have high expectations of their pupils, and time and resources are used well. In a Year 2 gymnastics lesson, for example, the teacher shows good subject knowledge and expectations are high. Pupils of all abilities are well supported as they work on sequences of movements, which involve balance. In some lessons seen during the inspection, however, pupils are not given enough opportunities to comment on each other's performance, and teachers do not make sufficient use of pupils to demonstrate activities to others. The way in which the school timetable is organised at present means that some lessons are over-long, and this puts additional strain on teachers in maintaining interest, particularly with the younger pupils.
161. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular sporting activities is provided, including cricket, football, tennis coaching and a games club. These activities are well supported by pupils, especially those from Years 5 and 6, and boys and girls have equal access.
162. Since the previous co-ordinator left about two years ago the role has been taken by the headteacher. This arrangement is effective, and the subject is efficiently co-ordinated. The school's resources for physical education are well organised and used effectively. Although it has no field the school has a large purpose-built gymnasium, as well as a large playground with markings for different games. The school's resources and accommodation is satisfactory overall. The school's schemes of work ensure good attention to all areas of the curriculum. The school is fortunate to have access to a local education authority swimming pool on the school site, which ensures that this area of the curriculum is well covered. Physical education makes a worthwhile contribution to pupils' personal development

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

163. Pupils' attainment by the age of seven and eleven is average and meets the expectations of the local education authority's agreed syllabus. Standards in the last report were above average. Pupils throughout the school including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in the subject.
164. By the time pupils reach the age of eleven, pupils have a clear understanding that different faiths have similar features and that faith is a very personal issue. They have a significant understanding of reflection. For example Year 6 pupils write a personal response about their preferences in some of the major world faiths such as Islam, Hinduism and Judaism. Pupils have a good awareness of Christianity and know that being a Christian means going to church and believing in Jesus. As part of their study of holy books pupils understand the importance of the Bible. For example, they effectively role play the story of Mary Jones who went through personal hardship to get a copy of the Bible and retell important experiences relevant to their own lives which required personal responsibility and hardship. Though their studies of other faiths pupils reflect on their own experiences and appreciate and respect the traditions and beliefs of others.

165. By the time pupils reach the age of seven, they study the symbols of a Christian wedding. Year 2, in an excellent lesson participated in a mock wedding at the local church. The local clergy who has close links with the school had the service specially rewritten so the children would understand the meaning of the ceremony. All the class took on their roles effectively and while understanding the seriousness of the service also celebrated the occasion and enjoyed eating their wedding cake. Pupils were able to talk about the symbolic meaning of the occasion such as the rings, flowers, and wedding dress. The experience was a spiritual, moral, social, cultural and memorable occasion for the pupils, excellently planned for pupils' learning.
166. Pupils' response, personal development and behaviour are very good. They listen carefully and want to know more, showing interest and respect for what others say. They respond very well to the quiet times for reflection in lessons and during circle time are willing to put forward their own ideas and suggestions. As a result of these positive attitudes, pupils including those with special educational needs, achieve well. They develop an awareness of their own feelings and beliefs and those of others. By the time they leave school, they understand some important similarities and differences between the major world religions.
167. The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well. The staff have good subject knowledge and are supported effectively by a comprehensive scheme of work. In the most effective lessons, the pace of learning is brisk and teachers question pupils effectively to assess their understanding and extend their thinking. The evaluation and recap of important learning points at the end of the lesson is a very positive feature, which consolidates learning and reinforces the important points of the lesson. Teachers keep their own records of pupils' learning, which helps them plan future lessons. However there is variability in the quality of these across the school. There are high expectations of pupils' behaviour and showing respect for others' contributions. However, fewer opportunities are given for pupils to speak at length about the subject. The teachers use resources well, to aid the pupils' understanding and consolidate their learning. Overall satisfactory progress is made in the subject throughout the school
168. The curriculum is also closely linked to the school assemblies. Resources are good and very effectively organised to promote a greater understanding of the subject. The coordinator has a good knowledge of standards for the development of the subject across the school, as she carefully monitors pupils' work. The coordinator has planned well for future developments such as a school assessment system and set challenging targets for the improvement of standards.