

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **LINDENS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Streetly, Sutton Coldfield

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104212

Headteacher: Mr R Lloyd-Davies

Reporting inspector: Mr S O'Toole  
20891

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> May 2000

Inspection number: 191852

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 with Nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Hundred Acre Road  
Streetly  
Sutton Coldfield

Postcode: B74 2BB

Telephone number: 0121 353 9273

Fax number: 0121 353 8696

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr M Bate

Date of previous inspection: February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr S O'Toole	Registered inspector	Areas of learning for children under-five	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught How well does the school care for its pupils How well is the school led and managed What should the school do to improve further
Mrs P Willman	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents
Mr D Walters	Team inspector	Science Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
Mrs S Derrick	Team inspector	English Music Special educational needs	
Mr N Wales	Team inspector	Design and technology Physical education Mathematics	
Mr G Warner	Team inspector	Art Religious education Information and communication technology English as an additional language	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Lindens is a large primary school for boys and girls aged from 3 to 11. It has 324 full-time pupils plus 52 children who attend the nursery part-time either in the morning or afternoon. The school has more pupils than at the time of the previous inspection. When they start school, most children have levels of skill, knowledge and understanding above those typical of three and four-year-olds. About eight per cent of the pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds (mainly Indian) and about half of these pupils have English as an additional language, a figure which is above average. One in ten pupils has special educational needs and two have statements of special educational needs, figures which are below the national average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Pupils achieve above average levels in English, mathematics and science and standards in these subjects are as good as they should be. Children under five make good progress, quickly settle to routines and become confident learners. Most attain levels above those expected by the end of the reception year. Most of the teaching is good, and some very good, and the pupils are keen learners with positive attitudes. The headteacher is keen to move the school forward and has good plans for the future. However, the school pays insufficient attention to checking what has been taught and learned. The school has above-average costs, seeks to make good use of finance in buying supplies and services and provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils attain standards which are above the national average in English, mathematics and science; reading is done well and higher attainers in mathematics are encouraged very successfully.
- Children under five make good progress and attain standards which are above those expected for their age.
- About three-quarters of teaching is good or better, and it makes an effective contribution to the pupils' learning.
- The pupils form very good relationships, behave well and are keen to learn.
- The parents contribute much to their children's education and are supportive of the school's work.

#### **What could be improved**

- Insufficient attention is given by the subject leaders to ensure consistency in planning, teaching and learning.
- The pupils' skills in writing are not as advanced as in reading.
- There are gaps in the teaching of skills in art, design and technology, history and geography.
- The results of tests and assessment are not used sufficiently to plan work, and marking is rarely used to guide pupils on how they might improve.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the previous inspection in February 1997 has been satisfactory although much remains to be done. Standards are at about the same level as reported at the time of the previous inspection although there have been some variations over the last three years. The school's performance has kept pace with the improving national trend. The quality of teaching is better than before. The school has made good progress in developing information technology and in raising standards. There are improved opportunities for personal and social development; relationships are now very good and the pupils have more opportunities to use their initiative. The curriculum is not as good as reported at the time of the previous inspection. There has been insufficient improvement in monitoring planning, teaching and learning. Target setting has improved although the school does not use marking to guide the pupils on how they might improve.

## 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	A	A	B	C
Mathematics	A	B	A	C
Science	A	C	B	C

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

By the time they leave the school, pupils' standards in English and science are above average and in mathematics are well above average. Particular strengths are in reading, number work and knowledge of shape, space and measures. In science, the pupils have good knowledge of materials and living things but opportunities to investigate and design experiments are limited. Standards in information technology are average. In most other subjects, including religious education, standards are average with good achievement in swimming, dance and music. Progress is at its best in nursery, reception and in the Year 6 class.

Children start school with above average skills, knowledge and understanding for their age. They make good progress in the nursery and reception classes and standards are higher than those expected for five-year-olds. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make at least satisfactory progress. The school has maintained appropriately good standards in English, mathematics and science over three years, and the trend in improvement has kept pace with the national gains in performance. Although standards in history, geography and religious education are average there is insufficient challenge in the work due to an over-reliance on undemanding worksheets. The school has appropriately challenging targets for improvement in English and mathematics and is on course to meet them.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils enjoy school very much and are keen and well motivated learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The pupils are very polite and courteous. They move around sensibly, showing care and consideration for others.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good, with the pupils working together well. Personal development is good and the pupils enjoy taking responsibility.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average and almost all pupils arrive on time.

Children under five make good progress in their personal development and gain confidence as learners; they are equipped well for work on the National Curriculum. Pupils settle to tasks quickly and maintain concentration well. When using computers they are willing to experiment and try different approaches. They listen to each other and to their teachers and show appreciation for the achievements of others.

## 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.*

Most of teaching is good and ensures effective learning. Lessons are well organised. Literacy and numeracy are taught well, although the skills learned are not used sufficiently in some subjects. The school effectively meets the needs of all pupils, including those with English as an additional language. Where additional support is available, mainly in the infant classes, the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teaching of under fives is good, with staff having a clear knowledge and understanding of how young children learn. Strengths include teachers' very good management of behaviour and the wide range of teaching methods used but there are shortcomings in marking. Parents feel that there is need for more consistent practice in giving homework. Teaching is most effective in the nursery and reception classes and Year 6 class. In the lessons seen, 98 per cent of teaching was satisfactory or better with 18 per cent being very good or better. Two per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory or worse in lessons in physical education and music. The pupils respond well when challenged and have a good understanding of their own learning and what is expected of them.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Some weaknesses in overall planning with insufficient rigour in monitoring what is covered in each year group. Insufficient focus is given to developing the pupils' creative skills, use of computers in other subjects and awareness of the harmful effects of drugs.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. There are suitable individual education plans in place. The provision made for children under five and Years 1 and 2 is good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. No specialist help is available but the staff are supportive and take account of the pupils' needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. There is good provision made for cultural, social and moral development. Good use is made of visits to promote the pupils' interest in history. Values such as honesty, fairness and respect for the truth are taught effectively. Spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school is a caring place and all staff are supportive of the pupils.

The school has a good relationship with the children's parents. Parents are supportive in fund-raising and in helping in school. The under fives benefit from a good curriculum which includes a wide range of activities. The school is a caring place and the staff know the pupils well. There are very good procedures to prevent bullying, and thoughtful behaviour is encouraged. Although there are good procedures to assess progress, they are not used consistently to plan work.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy work together well, but senior staff, including the subject leaders, do not monitor planning, teaching and learning with sufficient rigour.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily. The governors understand the needs of the school. The school has appropriate plans for the future although more focus is needed when setting priorities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has set appropriate priorities. The governors review the school's plans but there has been insufficient rigour in remedying some of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report.
The strategic use of resources	Financial decisions are linked well to the school's priorities. Money is spent wisely.

The accommodation is good and the school has a satisfactory range of resources. There are sufficient staff and the classroom assistants provide good support. Finances are in good order and budget decisions are made in the best interest of the pupils, with governors seeking to use the funds available as effectively as possible.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children enjoy coming to school.</li> <li>• The children make good progress due to effective teaching.</li> <li>• The staff are approachable and listen to their concerns.</li> <li>• The way in which the school helps their children to develop mature attitudes.</li> <li>• Strong, fair and firm discipline.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A better balance in the work provided.</li> <li>• More information about how their children are making progress and better use of homework diaries in the juniors.</li> <li>• A wider range of activities.</li> <li>• More opportunities for independent learning.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views. The school provides good information about progress and provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. However, the school does not make sufficient use of homework diaries. The curriculum is satisfactorily balanced although more opportunities are needed to extend pupils' skills in a number of different ways.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. Since the previous inspection the school has maintained good standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. There has been some fluctuation in the results due to variations between cohorts, in some cases due to a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Standards overall at the school are good and pupils make at least satisfactory progress with good gains in reading and mathematics. Pupils of different abilities make sufficient progress. There is little variation between the performance of boys and girls in the test results at seven and eleven although, overall, girls do slightly better. Progress is at its best in the nursery and reception and in the Year 6 class, due to effective teaching and challenging activities. Those with special educational needs make good progress in the infant classes and satisfactory progress in the juniors. This is due to the effective and well-focused support available for the younger pupils. Those with English as an additional language do not benefit from additional support from outside agencies but the staff are well aware of and meet the pupils' needs. As a result, progress is good and, in most cases, those with English as an additional language attain good standards by the time they leave the school. The school has recognised some of its pupils with particular strengths in mathematics and is arranging for additional tuition for them in mathematics. These pupils make good progress. The school has appropriately challenging targets and is make sufficient progress in meeting them.
2. The school has maintained good standards in English, mathematics and science over three years, and the trend in improvement has kept pace with the national gains in performance. The main area in need of improvement is the use of literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Although the pupils have good skills in reading and calculating, and standards in history, geography and religious education are at least average, there is insufficient challenge in the work due to an over-reliance on undemanding worksheets. The school has appropriately challenging targets for improvement in English and mathematics and is on course to meet them.
3. Children under five are taught well in the nursery and reception classes and benefit from an interesting and challenging curriculum and effective teaching. They start school with above average skills, knowledge and understanding for their age; they make good progress in the nursery and reception classes and standards are higher than those expected for five year olds in most of the areas of learning. The children make very good progress in their personal and social development becoming proficient learners. They achieve good levels in their language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. Skills and knowledge are developed consistently between the nursery and reception classes. In their physical and creative development the children attain the levels expected of five-year-olds.
4. The results of National Curriculum tests at seven and eleven are above average overall with well above average attainment in mathematics. Standards are as high as they should be across the curriculum with particular strengths in literacy and numeracy, although the pupils have insufficient opportunities to apply these skills in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. In 1999, National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 2 showed that standards in reading and mathematics were well above average, with above average standards in writing. However, there is a wider difference between reading and writing when the results are compared with those of similar schools. This is due to a low proportion of pupils

attaining higher standards in their writing as a result of insufficient opportunities for the pupils to write for a wide range of purposes and to use joined writing in their work. The school has begun to remedy these weaknesses through more effective teaching and by adapting its approach to teaching literacy. In science, all pupils attain the average level with about a third attaining the higher level 3.

5. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards in mathematics are well above average and in science and English they attain above average standards. Particular strengths are in reading, number work and knowledge of shape, space and measures. In science, the pupils have good knowledge of materials and living things but opportunities to investigate and design experiments are too limited. When compared with similar schools, levels of attainment in all three subjects are average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 5 is well above average in mathematics and average in English and science. The strength in mathematics is due much to the consistent development of number skills and very effective teaching in Year 6 where the teacher has high levels of expertise and challenges the pupils. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the pupils investigate and solve problems. Pupils speak clearly and listen well.
6. Standards in information technology are average by the age of seven and eleven and this represents very good improvement since the previous inspection. In most other subjects, including religious education, standards are average with good achievement in swimming, dance and music. The curriculum for design and technology is not broad enough and there are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to design, make and evaluate products. Standards in this subject are below those normally seen.

#### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

7. Pupils' attitudes to school and the relationships they have with each other and with their teachers are very good. They are keen to talk about their school and confidently express their opinions about aspects of school life that they particularly enjoy. Their behaviour both in the classrooms and around the school is good and, in assemblies, it is very good overall and often excellent. Pupils respond enthusiastically when given opportunities to take responsibility and to show their initiative and their personal development is good. These positive features impact well on pupils' learning and attainment. The parents speak highly of these qualities. The school has made good improvement in remedying the weakness identified in the previous inspection report in providing opportunities for the pupils to use their initiative. During their time in school pupils successfully develop mature and socially responsible attitudes to the school community.
8. The children who are under five in the nursery and reception classes arrive at school in good time and settle happily into the day. They work constructively together with sustained levels of concentration, learning good social and collaborative skills. Their behaviour is very good and they listen carefully to each other and to their teacher. They share and take turns happily and many express their views with confidence, sometimes at great length. The children understand the routines of the classroom and respond with enthusiasm and often excitement to the opportunities provided. They enjoy coming to school and their attendance is satisfactory.
9. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, take part in all aspects of school life with enthusiasm and interest. The majority of parents who returned the questionnaire agree that their children like school and this was confirmed by conversations with the pupils. They respond with enthusiasm to their lessons, working hard and becoming involved in what they are learning. Throughout the school pupils' response to the structure and

challenge of the literacy and numeracy sessions is very positive and this has a significant impact on the good standards achieved in these subjects. The objectives of a literacy lesson in Year 1, for example, were shared with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson and they clearly knew what was expected of them. By the end of the lesson they were able to evaluate their own performance against the objectives set. In a Year 6 lesson on numeracy, the pupils rose to the challenge of their teacher's high expectations and applied themselves with enthusiasm to the tasks set. Pupils enjoy the creative activities of music and art and many junior pupils participate with interest in the extra-curricular activities.

10. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. In assemblies, behaviour is often excellent. Isolated instances of restless and, occasionally, silly behaviour in lessons were observed, for example in a Year 1 physical education lesson when there was a lack of purposeful activity and pupils became bored. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, have a clear understanding of the school's expectations with regard to their behaviour and respond well. They know the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and are well motivated by praise, trying hard to earn certificates for good work and behaviour. Pupils move about the school purposefully and sensibly. They have no concerns about bullying and there have been no exclusions.
11. The pupils' personal development is good and the relationships they have with each other and with their teachers are very good. This makes a significant contribution to the calm atmosphere in the school. They listen carefully to each other and take differing viewpoints into account in their discussions. In a Year 3 music lesson, for example, pupils were invited to help each other when they made mistakes and, in a gentle and sensitive fashion, they learned not to make fun of those who had made the mistakes. They are polite to adults and to each other and treat resources with care and respect. They go out of their way to smile at visitors and rush to hold doors open. They take care of each other, older pupils helping and supporting the younger ones and keeping an eye on their welfare. A particular example of this is the shared reading sessions where the kindness shown by the pupils in Years 5 and 6 to the younger pupils helped to develop their confidence and improve their reading skills. They respond very well to the opportunities to take responsibility for aspects of class and school life. They are involved in raising money for charity and for their school; for example, they are currently collecting money in empty sweet tubes to improve the playground environment. They support the extra-curricular activities in significant numbers and learn the rules of fair play and the rewards of working as a team. They are reliable and willing. They have many interesting views on school life but do not, at present, have any forum for discussing these views with the school management. As they move through the school, the pupils develop into increasingly mature and sensible young people, with a good sense of responsibility towards each other and the school community.
12. Attendance at the school is good. It is above the national average and rising. Parents co-operate well in advising the school of reasons for absence and unauthorised absence is insignificant. Pupils are mostly punctual, registration is quick and efficient and lessons start on time.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT

13. The quality of teaching is good and ensures effective learning, particularly in English and mathematics. Where support is available, mainly in Years 1 and 2, the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The school effectively meets the needs of all pupils including those with English as an additional language, although no additional support is available for these pupils from outside agencies. Teaching of under fives is good with staff having a clear knowledge and understanding of how young children learn. Strengths in the teaching include very good management of behaviour and the range of methods used, but there are shortcomings in marking. The pupils respond well when challenged and have a good understanding of their own learning and what is expected. Teaching is most effective in the nursery and reception classes and Year 6. In the lessons seen, 98 per cent of teaching was satisfactory or better with 18 per cent being very good or better. Two per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory or worse in lessons in physical education and music. In most lessons the pupils are learning as quickly and as well as they should. They are well motivated and interested in the subjects. Most stay on task throughout and persevere when meeting difficulties. However, in some lessons the teachers make insufficient demands and lessons go on too long, for example in some lessons in history in the juniors. As a result learning lacks sufficient rigour and the restricted opportunities for the pupils to write independently without relying too heavily on worksheets hampers progress in writing.
14. Lessons in literacy and numeracy are taught well, although the skills learned are not used sufficiently in history and geography and religious education where there is an overuse of undemanding worksheets. The staff have a good understanding of both the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies. These lessons have good pace and the pupils work productively during them. The basic skills of language, such as spelling and punctuation, are given much emphasis and pupils develop a thorough understanding of grammar. Reading is taught well and there are good opportunities to read at home. A very effective method involves older pupils with infants in paired reading, and this ensures good progress. Teachers keep accurate records of the pupils' reading progress and the involvement of support staff in withdrawal groups, with less confident readers, is effective. There is a good balance between teaching about the sounds of letters and learning new words. Regular practice at home keeps parents involved in the process and encourages good standards. The skills and techniques of writing are developed consistently and this has resulted in raising standards particularly in Years 1 and 2. Teachers encourage correct letter formation and neat handwriting although this is not consistent throughout the school. In a Year 5 and 6 history lesson the pupils were encouraged to use their note-taking skills effectively as they watched a video. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to write detailed and long accounts and to explore language in their written work.
15. A strength in the teaching of literacy and numeracy is the way in which teachers share with the pupils what is to be done and then refer to these targets through the lessons. This helps to keep the pupils on task and to be aware of what is expected and what they have achieved. The pupils work productively and persevere well. In mathematics, the teachers balance effective sessions on mental arithmetic with opportunities for the pupils to work in books. The lessons are brisk and well focused and objectives are clearly shared with the pupils. The teachers have good subject knowledge and use it well to plan interesting and challenging work. In an excellent lesson in Year 6, the teacher gave careful explanations, set challenging tasks matched well to the pupils' skills and reviewed progress throughout the lesson. The teacher's quick fire questions and obvious enthusiasm for mathematics inspired the

pupils. As a result the pupils gained a clear understanding of fractions, percentages and proportions. Good use is made of setting in English and mathematics and this helps the teachers to plan their work with a clear focus on pupils' abilities.

16. Teaching is good in the other subjects with the exception of design and technology. In information technology, good use is made of the computer suite to practise and learn new skills. The teaching is good, and monitoring how well the pupils are doing through effective records helps to ensure that teachers have good information to plan the next step in learning. In history and geography good use is made of visits to stimulate interest in the subjects. However, there is a tendency to rely too much on worksheets, which are helpful in ensuring coverage of the content of the curriculum but lack sufficient challenge to equip the pupils with skills to discuss complex issues and to write incisively. In addition, the teaching of art, design and technology, history and geography does not focus sufficiently on developing the pupils' skills consistently. In two lessons, in music and physical education in Years 1 and 2, the teaching was less than satisfactory due to weak subject knowledge, lack of pace and insufficient challenge. However, most of the teaching of these subjects was good.
17. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils. The staff work together well and, particularly in the infants, provided good support for those with special educational needs. Some excellent work is done by one of the support assistants who monitors progress and keeps detailed records which are shared with the teacher and parents. It is rare to see any behavioural problems as the staff consistently insist on high standards and expect much from the pupils. The teachers correct the pupils' work and in most subjects teachers add positive comments about the pupils' performance. However, marking lacks a critical edge and very limited written guidance is given to the pupils on how they might improve. As a result, some common mistakes are not picked up and pupils tend to repeat them.
18. The teaching of children under five is good. The staff in both the nursery and reception classes plan thoroughly and place much emphasis on developing the children's learning skills through practical activities. There is a good balance between direct teaching and providing opportunities for the children to investigate, play and work together. The staff focus well on children with special educational needs and make careful observations of their progress so that they provide tasks which are well matched and demanding. Children with English as an additional language receive good attention; the skilful way the staff encourage spoken language through role-play helps these children to gain a wide vocabulary, which gives them confidence and prepares them well for the National Curriculum. The staff keep good records which centre on skills and understanding and tracking progress. Much is expected of the children who respond with enthusiasm and interest to the activities. The children work hard and enjoy the positive and thoughtful way in which the staff praise and encourage them. Early reading, writing and mathematical skills are taught effectively. There are many opportunities to listen to and take part in story telling. Letter formation is taught well and reading is encouraged through regular practice and the learning of new words as well as teaching the sounds that letters make. The staff focus on the teaching of number through the use of apparatus and games as well as using rhymes to learn the order of number.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS**

19. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum which includes all of the National Curriculum subjects and religious education. The curriculum contributes to the pupils' academic, social and physical development and prepares them for the next stage of their education. However, insufficient emphasis is given to promoting creative

development through the art, design and technology and drama. The school seeks to promote pupils' awareness of health and there is appropriate provision for sex education although opportunities to learn about the harmful effects of drugs are too few. The National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies have been introduced successfully and are having a good impact on raising standards in English and mathematics. However, in subjects such as history, geography and religious education teachers in most classes do not provide sufficient opportunities for the pupils to use their writing skills. However, in the Year 6 class, there are good examples of independent and thoughtful writing allowing the pupils opportunities to develop independence and use their initiative.

20. Children under five in both nursery and reception classes benefit from a good curriculum, which effectively promotes their personal development and learning skills. Much emphasis is given to language development and the teaching of basic skills to prepare the children for the next stage in their education. Planning is well focused and the good co-operation between the staff and arrangements for grouping the children in reception by ability help to ensure that progress is good.
21. An appropriate amount of time is given to each subject although in history and geography too much emphasis is given to acquiring knowledge rather than developing the pupils' thinking skills. There is a satisfactory long-term plan for the curriculum to ensure coverage of the subjects. Teachers work together in year groups on developing termly plans but the emphasis on topic work tends to restrict the learning of skills in subjects. In literacy and numeracy, where there is a proscribed structure to lessons, the curriculum is at its most effective. However, insufficient work has been done on developing the curriculum and monitoring planning. As a result, there is some unnecessary repetition of work between Year groups and insufficient note is taken of what has already been achieved. The school has made good progress in developing the pupils' computer skills and the introduction of the information technology suite has helped to raise standards. There has been little headway in developing design and technology since the previous inspection. Insufficient attention has been given to developing the curriculum since the previous inspection as a heavy reliance on topic work inhibits the development of key skills in art, history and geography.
22. A small amount of time is given to teaching French in Years 5 and 6 and this helps to promote cultural understanding. The curriculum in the juniors is enhanced by good extra-curricular activities, for which six staff give freely of their time. Educational visits, including those to historical sites and an industrial park, make an important contribution to the curriculum. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. The school ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language, have equality of access to all aspects of the curriculum and to extra-curricular activities. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall and good in the infants and for under fives where support staff make an effective contribution to learning. Staff provide satisfactory individual education plans to guide the work set and the use of setting by ability for English and mathematics is beneficial. The pupils with English as an additional language participate in oral work and staff provide appropriate support, although there is limited help available from outside agencies. Staff are conscientious in checking that these pupils are making progress which is consistent with their peers.
23. The school has introduced a suitable homework policy. However, there is inconsistency in the use of homework to support learning. Some parents say that they are unsure of the school's approach to homework. Where homework is used



- regularly the pupils respond well and it makes a valuable contribution to their personal and academic progress.
24. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. There is an appropriate policy. Assemblies and visits make a good contribution to pupils' personal and social education. Apart from under fives, there is no time allocated specifically to the structured teaching of this subject. Aspects of health education are taught through the science curriculum and Years 5 and 6 are taught about sex at an appropriate level for their age and development. The reception children were recently given a presentation about drugs and the life education caravan visits the school. However, there is no drugs education policy although the school has plans to provide teaching for older pupils to understand the hazards of drug abuse before transferring to secondary education.
  25. The school has good, mutually beneficial links with the local community. The recent participation in the Walsall Art event raised the school's profile in the community. There are good business links which, for example, extend the options for role-play in the reception classes. The school has close ties with the church, the local vicar takes assembly regularly and the pupils visit the church in support of their religious and art studies. The school benefits from strong links with other schools in the cluster group, sharing resources and expertise. The pastoral links with the secondary schools to which the pupils transfer are good and ensure a smooth transition. There are some curriculum links for mathematics but other subjects have no formal curriculum planning between the two stages of education. Some staff from the secondary school visit the pupils prior to transfer.
  26. The school makes good efforts to promote moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong, and there is a clear code of behaviour that is implemented consistently by all staff. Adults are good role models. Good behaviour is recognised and recorded in pupils' personal files. Merit certificates reward good behaviour, hard work and positive contributions to school life. Where required clear targets are set for improvement in behaviour. Teachers are very supportive of pupils in helping them to develop self-discipline. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Daily acts of worship and assemblies make a satisfactory contribution to spiritual development and meet statutory requirements. Pupils reflect on Bible stories, considering the qualities of friendship. Junior pupils were encouraged to reflect on the qualities of others despite appearance. In religious education pupils study Christianity and explore other major world faiths. Nursery children watched with wonder as birds build a nest in their play area. Dance and music give pupils opportunities to express spirituality and poetry writing reflects the feelings and sensitivity of older pupils. The school uses an appropriate range of literature to encourage the pupils to explore thoughts and feelings.
  27. There are many good opportunities for pupils to develop social skills and to take responsibility. From an early age pupils are encouraged to help each other and to value the work of others and certificates are given for helpfulness and effort. Older pupils are encouraged to care for younger pupils in the playground and Year 6 pupils help Year 2 pupils with reading and library skills. Visitors to the school including football coaches, visiting artists and the local vicar help pupils to learn about the wider community. A residential visit encourages self-reliance and independence skills. Pupils are encouraged to consider the needs of those less fortunate than themselves, arranging fund-raising events such as the Blue Peter appeal. Pupils have good opportunities to appreciate their own culture through visits within the local area, for example, Walsall Leather Museum and Tamworth Castle. Traditional stories are promoted well and literacy teaching makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural

development. Appreciation of music is fostered through good opportunities to listen to music, to play a range of instruments and to sing in the school choir. Pupils explore the work of famous artists such as Renoir, Monet, Picasso and Paul Klee. The study of world faiths such as Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Judaism and Buddhism give pupils a good understanding of the effect of faith on different cultures. The youngest pupils take "Barnaby Bear" on holidays and record the places they visit for a class book showing different countries as basis for discussion.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS**

28. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are well cared for at school. This effectively ensures that during their time in school the pupils feel confident and happy and are able to concentrate on their learning. The very good relationships between class teachers, support staff and the pupils are an important element in the care provided. In most respects the quality of this care has been maintained since the last inspection.
29. The children who are under five in the nursery and in the reception classes are well cared for in a calm and happy atmosphere. There are good induction procedures for both children and parents and the children settle quickly and happily into the routines of the classroom. Parents have good opportunities in the mornings to speak informally to staff about any small matters of concern. The children quickly learn what is expected of them and staff consistently reinforce good work and behaviour with praise.
30. The welfare of all the pupils is an important priority for the school. Pupils say that they would feel comfortable in talking to their teacher or the headteacher about any worries they may have, either personal or academic. The infant pupils comment that the contact they have with the older pupils gives them a sense of security and confidence. All adults in the school know the pupils very well and this ensures a continuity of care throughout the school day. The quality of supervision during the mid-day break is good. The mid-day supervisors, assisted by the "squaddies", are well organised and the pupils respect and like them. The before and after school clubs are well supervised and organised. Pupils with special educational needs are involved in all aspects of school life and receive an appropriate level of support, with effective links with outside agencies. Those with English as an additional language are similarly involved in school life and the majority are fluent English speakers.
31. Class teachers with the aid of regular computerised statistics effectively monitor pupils' attendance. Any unexplained absence is followed-up and parents are aware of their responsibility to advise the school of reasons for absence. Pupils with 100 per cent attendance for the year receive attendance certificates. Registration procedures are quick and efficient and comply with legal requirements. Staff know the pupils very well and monitoring of their personal development is effective. The school has procedures for recording instances of poor behaviour and the headteacher involves parents of any persistent offender at a very early stage. Pupils are well motivated by rewards and praise for good work and behaviour and try hard to live up to the school's expectations. There are good procedures to deal with bullying and, although pupils express no concern about this, they do understand the need to tell an adult should they be concerned.
32. The procedures the school has to govern health and safety are good overall. Formal risk assessment is carried out regularly and pupils are taught how to use tools and other resources safely. A few health and safety issues were highlighted during the inspection and referred to the headteacher and governors for action. These primarily refer to the unevenness of the nursery play area and a small amount of low level asbestos behind the sinks. Recording of fire drills is unsatisfactory and there is no

secure system to ensure that evacuation takes place regularly. First aid provision is good. There are two members of staff with the responsibility for child protection. Neither has had specific training in this aspect of care and the school did not have a copy of the Area Child Protection Committee guidelines at the start of the inspection. Staff have a satisfactory awareness of this issue and have had the benefit of a talk on the subject.

33. The teachers know their pupils very well. The school has good systems for assessing pupils' attainment in English, mathematics, science and information technology. All statutorily required assessments of its pupils are carried out and, in addition, there are optional assessments in Years 3, 4 and 5. Teachers track the progress of pupils in the core subjects against National Curriculum criteria. Targets are then set as a result of these assessments and parents are informed. However, there are inconsistencies between teachers' assessments and National Curriculum test results. The results of National Curriculum assessments and tests are analysed and as a result the school is, for example, aware of a relative weakness in writing. These procedures represent an improvement on the previous inspection report. However, in other subjects of the National Curriculum pupils' attainment and learning are not recorded systematically and there has been insufficient progress since the previous inspection in using assessment information to guide the teachers' planning of work for the pupils. However, assessment of children under five is good as the staff keep accurate records, monitor progress and use the information to plan work. The marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory. It is inconsistent and brief and very rarely identifies future targets to enable pupils to improve their work. Pupils are insufficiently involved in assessing and evaluating their own work. Although the job descriptions of subject leaders identify the development of assessment procedures and schemes of work as areas of responsibility, these tasks have been carried out inconsistently across the school.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS**

34. The school has maintained a good partnership with parents since the last inspection. The majority of parents express positive views about most aspects of school life. They are confident that their children are well cared and value the educational opportunities provided. Parents confirm that they feel welcome in the school and are confident to approach the staff about any concerns they may have.
35. The information provided for parents about the school is practical and informative. Parents are kept informed by "pupil post" of upcoming visits and events taking place in the school. The consultation evenings are well attended. A small number of parents at the meeting prior to the inspection were concerned about the confidentiality of the discussions and expressed the view that it would be helpful to have the opportunity to speak to the subject teacher actually teaching their child in the sets for English and mathematics. This view is supported by the analysis of the parents' questionnaire in which 18 percent of parents did not feel well informed about their children's progress. Class teachers are well briefed by the subject teachers prior to the consultation and staff are available at other times should parents wish for more information. Pupils' annual reports give parents good information about what their children have done during the year in each subject of the National Curriculum. They include specific targets for future development. They do not, however, always give a clear indication of a level of attainment. The format of the report for reception children is the same as that for the rest of the school and does not, therefore, comment on the specific areas of learning that these children are taught. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the decision making process and are kept informed about the needs of their children. The school

communicates well with all parents, including those with English as an additional language, over pastoral matters.

36. Parental involvement in school life is good. A number of parents regularly help in classrooms and their support has a good impact on pupils' reading and practical skills. Many parents willingly help on visits. Analysis of the parents' questionnaire shows that 22 per cent of parents feel that the school does not work closely with them. Other than consulting parents on the home/school agreement, the school does not formally canvass parents' views on aspects of school life or future development. However, parents do have an opportunity once a year to express their views at the governors' meeting and most parents find the school welcoming and the staff approachable. The school incorporated parents' suggestions into the final home/school agreement and the majority of parents have signed and returned it. The parents' association is very active and provides a good social aspect to school life. All their hard work results in significant funds which are used to supplement resources and enhance the learning environment.
37. Parents are eager to help their children at home with reading, spelling, tables and project work. The school provides them with details of what their children will be learning which enables them to focus their help in a constructive fashion. However, although the new homework policy introduced in September sets out clearly what parents can expect their children to be asked to do at home, teachers are inconsistent in setting homework and many of the tasks are simply finishing off class work. The reading diaries in the infant classes are used well, but the homework diaries in the junior classes are not used to best effect. This supports the view of a significant number of parents expressed through the parents' questionnaire and at the meeting prior to the inspection.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED**

38. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall and have a positive impact on the children's attainment and standards achieved by the school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work together well to ensure that the school's aims and values are promoted effectively. They help to create a secure, safe and caring environment in which the pupils are valued and where achievement is celebrated. The school has remedied some of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report but the rate of improvement has been barely satisfactory. Good standards in English, mathematics and science have been maintained. The provision for information technology has improved and standards are now average. Teaching is better than it was. However, the school has made insufficient improvement in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning which results in some inconsistencies in using and applying skills across the curriculum and in developing the pupils' skills in some subjects, particularly in art and design and technology. The school has set appropriate targets for English and mathematics and is on course to meet them.
39. The governing body is experienced and well informed about the work of the school. Several governors are regular visitors and there has been some monitoring of the school's introduction of the numeracy project. The governor for special educational needs has a good understanding of the work of the school. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and are involved in developing plans for the future. However, they do not evaluate the success of the school in meeting its priorities with sufficient rigour. The school's plans for the future are appropriate, but there is not a sharp enough focus on measuring the impact of these priorities on raising standards. Initiatives include costs and timescales for completion. The governors have a clear understanding of the school's finances and priorities are carefully costed.

40. Subject leaders have appropriate job descriptions. Responsibilities for the curriculum are shared amongst members of staff. However, the subject leaders do not check sufficiently that skills and understanding are developed consistently between year groups. This is particularly the case in literacy where skills are taught well, but not applied to other subjects. The headteacher and subject leaders have insufficient opportunity to monitor teaching and too little time is spent on tracking children's progress through analysing their work. The senior management team meets regularly and each has responsibility for a different unit in the school. Work within the units is effective, but there is insufficient liaison between them.
41. The school's finances are in good order. There are secure financial systems that are effectively controlled by the headteacher and the finance committee. The governors receive regular updates on the school's finances and the finance committee maintains good control, tracking the budget and planning for the future. The governors receive good support from the school clerk who keeps good records of curriculum spending by subject leaders and other funds. General administration is effective and day-to-day routines are securely established. The most recent audit report had few recommendations, and the school was commended on its financial administration. Its recommendations were dealt with efficiently. The budget for special educational needs is limited with the co-ordinator having to negotiate funding with subject leaders in order to fund appropriately. Subject leaders have responsibility for budgets for the subjects and use the money effectively. Funds for specific projects are used well, for example the range and quality of books has been extended through literacy funding. Good use is made of funds raised by parents to provide equipment and the school is involved in several initiatives to supply books and computer equipment to school.
42. The school gives careful and satisfactory consideration to the principles of best value through the work of the headteacher and the finance committee. Comparisons are made effectively whilst due regard is given to competition in order to ensure that the best possible prices are obtained for improvements to curriculum provision and accommodation. The school has built up an adequate surplus to ensure the current staffing levels. Plans for these funds include providing more time for monitoring teaching and learning and increasing the number of staff working with the under-fives.
43. There is a satisfactory number of suitably qualified staff although there is a lack of expertise in art and design and technology. There is no subject leader for design and technology. Teachers, particularly in reception and Years 1 and 2, are supported well by non-teaching assistants who have received appropriate training and who make a positive contribution to the progress of the pupils. There is a suitable staff development policy and the professional development of staff is properly linked to the school's future plans and appraisal. However, this has not had enough impact on the management role of the subject leaders. There are good procedures for the induction and mentoring of newly appointed staff. Job descriptions are in need of review, as subject leaders do not always work to the terms of their job descriptions. The caretaker and his cleaning staff carry out their duties well and this contributes to the safe and clean environment.
44. There is a generous amount of accommodation available to the school and it is well maintained both inside and outside, although there are a few places where the flat roof is in need of repair. Work areas such as the 'Rumpus Room' for nursery and reception children, library, study and food technology areas, information technology and music rooms and a hall that is used for physical education make a positive contribution to the standards attained by the pupils. However, some of these areas are not used to best effect. Some classes are too large for the space available.

There is a large playing field and a playground of barely adequate size. The use of the playing field makes a positive contribution to the success the pupils achieve in a variety of competitive sports. There are some playground markings but a lack of playground furniture. As a result there is little stimulation to promote social and physical interaction.

45. Overall resources for the subjects are satisfactory and there is adequate storage space available. In English there are a good range of books, although some are out-of-date. In information technology resources are satisfactory but there is still a need to expand the range of both hardware and software. Good use is made of both visits in the locality and further afield and of visitors to the school.
46. Taking into account:
- the pupils' above average attainment on admission to the school:
  - the good quality of teaching:
  - good standards in English, mathematics and science:
  - the above average funds available for educating the pupils:
- The school gives satisfactory value for money.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER**

47. In order to accelerate the rate of improvement and raise standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should;

#### **Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:**

- Ensuring that subject leaders play a more rigorous role in developing their subjects;
- Rigorously monitoring learning and teaching;
- Effectively organising the curriculum so that skills, knowledge and understanding are developed consistently between year groups.

(Paragraphs 16,21,33, 38,62,70, 78, 84, 86, 97 111)

(The school has already identified this issue)

#### **Improve the pupils' writing skills and narrow the gap in standards in reading and writing by:**

- Ensuring that worksheets are used more effectively;
- Providing more opportunities for the pupils to apply literacy skills in their history, geography, religious education and science;
- Improving the range of opportunities for infant pupils to write for different reasons:
- Using handwriting skills more consistently in other subjects.

(Paragraphs 2, 5, 14, 16, 21, 40, 58, 65, 75, 85, 87, 94, 108)

#### **Extend the opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in art, design and technology, history and geography.**

(Paragraphs 16, 21, 78 – 86, 87-90)

#### **Improving the use of assessment by:**

- Using marking to pinpoint areas for improvement in the pupils' work so that they are left in no doubt about what is required;
- Working together to agree levels of attainment so that the gap between teachers' assessments and test results at the end of Year 6 is narrowed;
- Involving the pupils more in assessing and evaluating their own work.

(Paragraphs 33, 62, 70, 86, 102, 107)  
(The school has already identified this issue)

#### **OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

- More rigorously evaluate the implementation of the school's plans and include well-focused measures of success. (Paragraph 39)
- Make more use of computers in subjects other than information technology. (Paragraphs 59, 64, 94, 102)
- Ensure that homework is given consistently and that parents are sure what is expected. (Paragraphs 23, 37)
- Provide more extensive drugs education. (Paragraphs 19, 24)
- Ensure regular fire practices. (Paragraph 32)
- Improve the outdoor play surface for nursery children. (Paragraphs 32, 54)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

72

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

43

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	15	53	26	1	1	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	Y – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	324
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	37

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total



Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	23	18	41
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National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	23
	Girls	17	17	16
	Total	38	38	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (98)	93 (93)	95 (93)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	23	23
	Girls	17	16	18
	Total	39	39	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (98)	95 (93)	100 (95)
	National	82 (80)	86 (84)	87 (85)

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	19	23	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	12	16
	Girls	22	21	23
	Total	35	33	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (82)	79 (71)	93 (73)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	17	18
	Girls	23	23	23
	Total	41	40	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	98 (85)	95 (75)	98 (86)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	19
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	320
Any other minority ethnic group	6

*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: Y – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.9
Average class size	27

#### **Education support staff: Y – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	5.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	80

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A

Total number of education support staff	2.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	551,323
Total expenditure	526,521
Expenditure per pupil	1,518
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,655
Balance carried forward to next year	29,457

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	347
Number of questionnaires returned	145

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	38	8	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	46	5	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	56	6	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	51	16	3	6
The teaching is good.	40	48	7	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	47	17	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	43	8	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	45	2	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	30	46	18	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	44	40	10	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	50	8	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	28	23	13	16

### Other issues raised by parents

- Some parents think that there is not enough emphasis on independent learning.
- Discipline is strong and high standards of behaviour are maintained inside and outside the school.
- Parents disagreed about whether children get enough homework. On balance, parents think that infant homework is clear, well organised and based on reading. In the lower juniors homework is not consistently given but it seems to pick up again in Years 5 and 6.
- Computer skills have improved since the previous inspection, partly because more children have computers at home.

## **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**

48. The school has built upon the strengths in the provision for the children under five mentioned in the previous inspection report. Assessment is stronger and liaison between nursery and reception works well to ensure that skills are developed consistently. Children under five are taught in nursery and reception classes. In the nursery, they attend part-time either in the morning or the afternoon each day. At the time of the inspection, all the children in the nursery were under five as were 14 in the reception classes. In language and literacy and mathematics, in reception, the children are grouped according to ability. In the afternoon, all reception children are taught by one teacher with support from classroom assistants, and this arrangement works effectively. On admission to the nursery at age three, children have levels of skill, knowledge and understanding which are above those expected for their age. They make good progress in all of the areas of learning in both nursery and reception classes and, by the time they are five, most of the children attain levels which are above those expected for five-year-olds. Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are supported well; their progress is monitored effectively and most attain standards which are expected for their age by the time they are five.
49. Much emphasis is placed on developing children's personal and social skills. Independence, initiative and perseverance are encouraged through effective teaching. Children are given good opportunities to take part in imaginative and creative play and time to reflect and take in the range of activities on offer. The good teaching of this aspect is underpinned by the staff's thorough knowledge of the children, good use of assessment of their skills and concern for their welfare. There is a good balance between free choice and adult directed tasks. The children are eager to explore new learning and to take part in practical activities in the nursery. In reception, the children work well together in groups, showing considerable maturity. They appreciate the feelings of others and behave very well, having a clear understanding of what is right and wrong. They listen well to their teachers and take delight in completing their work to a good standard.
50. The development of language and literacy is at the heart of the programme for children under five. By the age of five, most children attain levels which are above the levels expected for their age in language and literacy. Progress in reading is very good. The teaching of this aspect is strong and children are keen learners who make good gains in speaking and listening as well as reading and writing. In the nursery, the staff encourage the children to answer questions in phrases and sentences, speaking audibly and clearly. They develop listening skills well by providing good opportunities to respond to stories, songs and rhymes. In reception, the school follows the National Literacy Strategy and children become confident in building words from the sounds that letters make, recognising that print and pictures convey meaning and in recording their work neatly with recognisable letters. Most write their names unaided and use capital letters appropriately. The teaching is effective due to a consistent approach to developing knowledge of both the names and sounds of letters. Teachers focus well on encouraging writing skills so that there is a good balance between experimenting with pencils and crayons to make marks on paper, leading to correct letter formation. The staff make very effective use of resources, particularly those that are made by teachers. These stimulate the children's interest in words. The hairdressing salon in the nursery provides good stimulus for language with children pretending to be receptionists, clients and stylists. They ask pertinent questions and use expressive language well. Computers are used well to encourage

the children to match words and sounds. The children respond excitedly as the computer reacts to their actions.

51. By the age of five, children have above average skills in mathematics. They make good progress because of effective teaching which focuses well on improving the children's use of mathematical language. In both nursery and reception there are many opportunities to learn about mathematical words and to use them in context. As a result, the children understand "in front of", "bigger than" and are able to position objects according to size and colour. By the end of nursery, most children recognise and use numbers to five and, in reception, higher attaining children can add numbers to ten and count beyond 30. The teachers make many of their own resources which are of high quality. The children enjoy using them and this helps them to make good gains in their learning. Teachers make effective use of number rhymes to improve the children's skills in counting forwards and backwards. The children love singing and enjoy the experience of repeating rhymes even though they know the final outcome. They play together well, using apparatus with care and clear away after they have used it. Staff are careful to use correct vocabulary to describe shapes and the children recognise the names of many shapes. They organise shapes by colour and size creating interesting patterns.
52. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good by the age of five. The school provides an effective curriculum for the children which includes many opportunities to experience all aspects of this area of learning. Children in the nursery talk confidently about their families and important events in their lives such as their birthdays. In reception they talk about where they live and the main features of the shops in the area. They talk about outings with their family, describing them in detail. The staff capitalise on the local environment. They make good links with the story of Hansel and Gretel to show the children how living things find food. The children really enjoy this, being very excited about the birds eating their breadcrumbs. The staff in the nursery generate a sense of awe and wonder in the children as they watch the blue tit building its nest in their playground. The children understand that things can change. For example, in food technology the children melt chocolate to make marshmallow sticks, learning that some things are moulded more easily when they are warm. In technology, they enjoy using a wide range of construction toys to make good models of buildings and vehicles. In both nursery and reception, the children make rapid gains in using computers. They have good control of the mouse, understand words like "click" and can drag and move pictures around the screen. Children are also able to print their own work. Teaching in this area of learning is good. Planning is thorough and there is good liaison between the nursery and reception classes to ensure that skills are developed consistently. The staff assess the children's skills and understanding well and records of progress are good.
53. By the age of five the children attain the levels expected in their creative development. They make consistent and good progress. The teaching ranges from satisfactory to good and is good overall. The rich curriculum provides good opportunities for the children to learn about sound, colour, texture and shape. The children respond very well in music, singing in tune and keeping time. They clap to rhythms. Lessons are planned well and include a good balance between the teaching of skills and time for the children to explore and experiment. The children respond with enthusiasm, for example, in the dabble pool they giggle, splash and explore the feel and noise of water. In art, they use a good range of materials and become proficient in using paint, scissors, glue and fabrics. They create imaginative and stunning displays of creatures working in the style of Picasso. They participate in a dance festival with older children and this contributes much to their confidence and social skills. They move imaginatively using their bodies to express their feelings.

54. Children's physical development is good for their age. They move confidently and in an orderly way when moving about the school. Most are able to dress and undress themselves. The well-balanced and effective teaching ensures that there is a broad range of opportunities to handle a variety of objects and work with different media. The children make good improvement in pencil control, cutting and shaping through using malleable materials. In the playground, the children enthusiastically run around being aware of their own and others' space and taking care to avoid collisions. They use large and small equipment safely and enjoy balancing and climbing. The outdoor play areas for nursery and reception include a variety of surfaces and an appropriate range of large toys and wheeled vehicles. However, the hard play surface in the Nursery is uneven and is hazardous.

## **ENGLISH**

55. The previous inspection report showed that standards in English were above average at seven and eleven and they are above average now. However, standards in writing at seven are not high enough, being below the standard achieved by similar schools. Test results and inspection evidence agree. A weakness in the development in handwriting, identified at the last inspection, has not been remedied and remains a contributory factor to the variation in reading and writing standards.
56. Attainment in speaking and listening is above average at the end of Year 2. Pupils listen attentively and concentrate well in lessons. Listening skills benefit from the school's successful management of behaviour that creates a quiet, working classroom atmosphere conducive to listening. There are good opportunities for listening to music before and after assemblies and in the literacy hour when pupils share reading opportunities and listen carefully to letter sounds and to each other reading in groups. The pupils have a good range of vocabulary and talk confidently in complete, grammatically correct sentences. They understand that language is adapted to different situations and pupils greet strangers to the school with a polite, formal language. At the end of Year 6 pupils' listening skills are above average. They listen intently in lessons and in conversation and are not distracted by peripheral noise, concentrating for long periods of time. The pupils engage in serious conversations, expressing ideas clearly, using complex sentences. They speak with clear diction, benefiting from class discussions and opportunities to speak in assemblies.
57. At the end of Year 2, attainment in reading is very good. Pupils are confident readers, reading with fluency, accuracy and good understanding and expression. The successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is having a beneficial effect on reading standards. By working together with the teacher, lower attaining pupils read successfully with the support of others and to make good gains in understanding text. Pupils have good library skills aided by reading lessons with Year 6 pupils. They successfully choose fiction and non-fiction books and find information using a glossary and contents list. Higher attaining pupils discuss characters in a book, recall the plot of a story and predict what might happen next. By the end of Year 6 attainment in reading is good. Pupils read independently for enjoyment and to find information. They choose books from class libraries that have a good range of popular books. The school library is used appropriately for learning library skills, and occasionally for research. Pupils name favourite authors and freely discuss the types of books they enjoy. Higher attainers compare characters in a story, predict endings and extract information quickly.
58. However, for seven-year-olds attainment in writing does not match attainment in reading. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 3 is below the national average. Handwriting is insufficiently developed and lacks fluency and this inhibits pupils when recording their ideas. Pupils have a good vocabulary and understand

the sequencing of sentences in writing. They use full stops and capital letters effectively and higher attainers use question marks and exclamation marks. Pupils' writing is restricted by the frequent use of worksheets that limit opportunities to organise and extend writing and to express their ideas freely. There are too few opportunities to practise writing in literacy lessons or in other subjects such as history, geography and religious education. Pupils write interesting poems, linking knowledge of letter sounds and learned poetry of different styles. At eleven, attainment in writing is average but is not as high as the standards achieved in reading. The development of handwriting in the juniors is inconsistent. Higher attainers' are insufficiently challenged to learn the broad range of skills appropriate to recording work in other subjects, letter writing for a range of purposes and writing for different audiences. Pupils make good use of interesting vocabulary to add interest to writing. The National Literacy Strategy has a good effect on pupils' writing style. A Year 5 class wrote effectively in the style of a known author, adapting the story and suggesting interesting endings. They write thoughtfully and use inference to predict the outcome of their story. The pupils write for a range of purposes, for example records of visits to places of interest. They regularly write book reviews that show an understanding of the needs of the reader and write poetry in differing styles. There is, however, insufficient writing in other subjects. Where pupils have the opportunity to write they use interesting vocabulary, use appropriate vocabulary and paragraphs and spelling is generally correct.

59. Pupils learn effectively and make good progress. The implementation of the literacy scheme, well taught, ensures the systematic development of reading skills. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in Years 1 and 2 where they receive effective classroom support. The additional literacy and "booster" classes have given good help to pupils in the development of basic skills. However, insufficient use is made of computers. Where they were used in support of the reading scheme the pupils made good gains in learning.
60. Pupils' behaviour is good and they have very good attitudes to learning. This has a beneficial effect on standards. They are polite, concentrate on their work and are anxious to succeed. Older pupils have caring attitudes to younger ones and the attention and interest shown in paired reading lessons adds to the enjoyment of early reading.
61. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well organised and planning to literacy hour guidelines is good. Many teachers make good use of individual targets to focus areas of learning and motivate pupils. This is particularly effective where targets are negotiated with pupils. Some teachers share lesson objectives with pupils and they jointly work towards this goal, making good use of lesson time. Good use is made of questioning to include all pupils in discussion and to assess their learning in the lesson. Lessons are carefully planned but often extension work for higher attainers is not included and these pupils are insufficiently challenged. Work is marked regularly. However, marking rarely includes comments to help pupils to improve. This is significant, too, in the reading record where parents would benefit when helping their children. The regularity of hearing pupils read is inconsistent. Where teaching is most successful teachers hear pupils read regularly and plan this with home and supported reading.
62. At the time of the inspection the subject leader was absent. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented and most teachers are confident in their approach to teaching to the guidelines. There is insufficient monitoring of the subject. Procedures for assessment are good but insufficient use is made of the

information. The variation in standards between reading and writing has been recognised and the school has plans to remedy the situation.

## **MATHEMATICS**

63. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for seven and eleven-year-olds standards were well above average, maintaining a consistently high standard since 1996. Compared to similar schools standards are above average at seven and similar at eleven. Inspection findings concur with the latest test results. The previous inspection report showed standards in mathematics were well above average at seven and above average at eleven.
64. Good use is made of setting of pupils by ability. The good quality of teaching contributes much to the standards. Lessons are always well planned and have good pace which contributes positively to the pupils' attitudes to mathematics. The school gives appropriate emphasis to the development of number skills for all its pupils and this aspect of mathematics is a strength with high levels of attainment being achieved in both key stages. However, the use of information technology to support mathematics is underdeveloped.
65. By the end of Year 2, pupils solve problems relating to weight and money using addition, subtraction and multiplication and draw upon increasing mathematical knowledge. They recognise odd and even numbers, count reliably to one hundred and beyond, recognise fractions such as a quarter, half and three-quarters and can continue number sequences. All know the correct names for a range of two and three-dimensional shapes. They measure and weigh accurately using standard and non-standard units. Pupils are developing their understanding of capacity and volume, tell the time and perform simple calculations involving money. They record their work in a variety of ways though the use of graphs and charts is underdeveloped. There is an overuse of worksheets, particularly in Years 1 and 2, and this inhibits the opportunities for pupils to record their work using written accounts and is a contributory factor to the comparatively lower standards the pupils attain in their writing.
66. By the age of eleven, pupils have good skills in solving complex problems although insufficient emphasis is given to investigations. Pupils use high levels of measuring skills involving time, length, area, weight and capacity. Competence in using numbers is very well developed and this is helped by the good use that is made of the mental/oral sessions at the beginning of lessons. Throughout the school the National Numeracy Strategy is working well and is having a beneficial effect on the learning of the pupils. Older pupils describe and identify the properties of a range of solid and flat shapes, name different angles and calculate accurately perimeters and the area of regular and irregular shapes. Pupils use calculators to verify results when required to do so. Skills in data handling are developing soundly but not at such a rapid rate as in the other aspects of mathematics. There is less emphasis on this aspect and its development is also impeded by the infrequent use of information technology to support the teaching of mathematics. Higher attaining pupils create a range of graphs and diagrams and know how to use the terms 'mode', 'median' and 'mean'.
67. Progress throughout the school is good. In Years 1 and 2, gains in understanding the value of numbers and in the use of the correct mathematical language are good for most of the pupils. Progress and learning for higher attaining pupils, especially in numeracy and shape, space and measure are good, helped by the setting of pupils and by the awareness of teachers when a pupil is particularly talented at mathematics. For example, pupils from Years 4 and 5 have been recommended to go to classes run by the local authority on Saturday morning, to further develop their



mathematical skills. Lower attaining pupils and those with a special educational need make good progress as they are given work that is appropriate to their ability.

68. Pupils are interested in and enthusiastic about their work. They enjoy the challenge of mental arithmetic sessions and competition is keen to be the first to answer questions. They co-operate well, sharing ideas and equipment sensibly. Behaviour is good and there is a positive working atmosphere in each class. Most pupils can work for sustained periods of time.
69. Throughout the school the quality of teaching is good and there are examples of very good teaching in both infant and junior classes. In Year 6, the teaching of mathematics is excellent due to rapid pace and high levels of subject knowledge. All teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and most set high expectations for pupils, including those with a special educational need. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and use praise and encouragement well. In the junior classes, due to the setting system, work is matched well to pupils' abilities, although this aspect of teachers planning is not as secure in the infant classes. During the inspection, lessons were thoroughly planned, sometimes with a reference to appropriate homework. A suitable range of methods, including whole class and group work, are used. In the very good lessons seen, teachers had clear lesson objectives that the pupils were aware of time, targets were set and previous knowledge was built on. One excellent lesson was seen in which the planning, organisation and enthusiasm of the teacher resulted in a most stimulating, challenging and interesting lesson for the pupils on the relationship of fractions, decimals and percentages. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent. Marking is often brief, sometimes not done and rarely has extended comments that give advice as to how pupils might improve in the future.
70. Subject management is satisfactory. There is a clear policy and good use is made of the National Numeracy Strategy and commercially produced schemes of work. Procedures for assessment are good, pupils are set targets for future improvement and their progress is tracked against criteria taken from the Numeracy Strategy. However, the teachers' planning is not monitored closely nor are samples of work collected by the subject leader to monitor their quality. There is insufficient monitoring of the quality of teaching. The use of assessment to inform planning of the teachers and the work set for the pupils are unsatisfactory. Resources for the subject are satisfactory.

## **SCIENCE**

71. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, the percentage of pupils who achieved the national expectation for their age by the end of Year 6 was well above the national average. Standards are higher than at the time of the previous inspection. Careful analysis of results has highlighted weaknesses in the curriculum and provided the impetus for the introduction of a good scheme of work. Consequently, the level of knowledge and scientific vocabulary has improved. Attainment is in line with that of similar schools. To improve this, the school has recently adopted targets of achievement for each year group, which identify clearly where teachers need to direct their efforts to raise all pupils to their full potential. By the end of Year 2, teachers' assessments show that all pupils reach the expected level for their age and inspection evidence agrees with the assessments. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress.
72. Attainment and progress in experimental and investigative science is good. Pupils are secure with the idea of what makes a test fair and make predictions before beginning investigations. Juniors use correct vocabulary in their answers and are

beginning to make better use of their mathematical skills to analyse data from graphs. There is little use of information technology to present written work or data. The range of methods for collecting data in Years 1 and 2 is improving, which is having a good impact on pupils' interest in science. Although there has been improvement in the amount of investigative experience since the previous inspection, some pupils are insufficiently secure to design their own investigations.

73. Pupils make good progress in their understanding of life processes and living things. Year 2 pupils know about the habitats of hedgehogs and squirrels. They understand the purposes of our senses and have a secure understanding of the life cycle of a plant. By the age of eleven, pupils know how the body circulates blood and how to classify animals using habitats and keys. Good use is made of the wild garden areas on site to observe and nurture insects and plants.
74. Infants make good progress in using scientific language to identify materials and their properties. Terms such as "hard", "shiny" and "transparent" are used correctly in identifying their importance as a building material. They test materials to see if they will sink or float, but progress in this is slow because the work is the same in successive years. Juniors have a secure knowledge of magnetic materials and draw accurate conclusions from their findings concerning magnetic behaviour. They know how to separate mixtures, understand solubility and use correct terminology in recording their experiments.
75. In learning about physical processes higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are insufficiently challenged. Their experience of simple circuits and push-pull forces is underdeveloped, mainly because of the simple worksheets, which are used as colouring activities rather than containing a more demanding science content. Assessments at seven in 1999 showed this aspect of science provision to be below average. Recent improvement is evident, and pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how sounds are created and vocabulary, such as beating, striking and plucking which create different sounds. This is a more secure aspect in the juniors where pupils understand the principles of balanced and unbalanced forces and investigate how rollers are effective when moving heavy loads. They draw circuit diagrams using the correct symbols and are starting to explain conclusions with reasons based on their scientific knowledge.
76. Overall progress is good. Pupils use appropriate vocabulary and become more accomplished in the skills and process of investigation. Opportunities to write their findings are limited, particularly with younger pupils. Where teaching has high expectations and uses the pupils' previous experience and knowledge in planning lessons, pupils are progressing at a faster rate. This is evident in one Year 2 class and in Years 4 and 6. As a result, pupils are well motivated and have very good attitudes to their work. Although there is work on environmental issues in the river study, the role of science in moral and social issues in an area of experience that is underdeveloped.
77. Overall teaching is good and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Teachers manage their classes very well and use resources effectively. The infant teachers have clear lesson objectives and plan their work based on past assessment or experience. Science teaching benefits from focused lesson planning and the use of targets for improvement. In the junior classes, teaching is well organised and in the most successful lessons staff have the ambition for pupils to succeed, by planning closely to their pupils needs and promoting vocabulary and high standards of presentation. However, the marking lacks focus and insufficient guidance is given to the pupils on how they might improve. The subject leader has not monitored teaching throughout the school to identify strengths and areas where support is needed.

## ART

78. At the time of the last inspection, standards were satisfactory. Artwork covered a range of experiences in which pupils studied artists and used a range of media that ensured that they made satisfactory progress. Three-dimensional work was being produced satisfactorily but sketchbooks were being used inconsistently from Year 4 onwards. There are still satisfactory standards in art, whilst learning is satisfactory, with some good features in some classes. Skills and techniques are not taught sufficiently; much of pupils' work in art involves the production of objects in the context of topics based on other subjects. However, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, participate in the opportunities given to them with enthusiasm.
79. In the infant classes, learning is satisfactory but there is too much emphasis upon the use of paint as the media for pupils to express themselves. There is too little three-dimensional work and some lack of spontaneity in the images that pupils make in art. Where learning is best, in Year 2, pupils make observational drawings of clusters of objects and are beginning to learn about perspective and angles with some degree of accuracy. They have a limited range of pencils, however, and so even here their learning is less effective than it could be if a wider range of media was used. Some three-dimensional work with a visiting artist by reception classes prompted work on a similar theme throughout in Years 1 and 2 and had a beneficial effect upon the creative artwork. It also linked well into work in the juniors where Year 3 carried on the theme in their work on colours. Although the theme was colours there was a specific focus upon the colour blue but it was developed through use of materials, different papers, straws and wire as well as paint. This resulted in good creative work.
80. Pupils in Year 5 develop their observational drawing skills effectively as they consider the style of Egyptian art. They then tackle the difficult concept of translating this understanding to making drawings of similar objects but in a style for today. In Year 6 pupils create their own Egyptian collar with different papers and materials such as beads and string effectively. Careful study of illustrations beforehand leads to accurate reproductions that blend colours effectively. Juniors also appreciate the work of artists such as Paul Klee, Monet and William Morris when they use them as good examples to copy and recreate different forms of art.
81. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress over time but with some good progress being made where pupils are being given the opportunity to express themselves creatively. Attitudes to art are positive. Most pupils work with care and a good deal of enthusiasm and enjoyment. They often work independently but are equally prepared to work successfully in small groups. They share resources collaboratively whether they are working by themselves or in small groups. The good levels of co-operation invariably result in pupils also behaving well.
82. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching of both infants and juniors. Where teaching is best, teachers plan thoroughly, ask open-ended questions of pupils and often draw out examples of what is good by using samples of pupils' work. They also monitor pupils work closely and make sensitive suggestions to them about what they need to do to improve whilst leaving it open for them to make their own decisions. Classroom support is used effectively to increase and extend the pupils' learning. Independence is encouraged with opportunities to select resources and materials as the pupils make choices about their work.
83. The subject leader has no particular expertise in art but draws upon the expertise of others and ensures this is shared appropriately. The policy and guidelines are in keeping with the National Curriculum but have not been reviewed since before the

last inspection. Resources are satisfactory and are readily accessible to staff and pupils. The systematic use of sketchbooks is better in the junior classes than it was at the last inspection but there has been no use made of them with infants. Displays throughout school make a great deal of use of artwork but there are missed opportunities to create three and two-dimensional displays that would generate more interest in the subject.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

84. No design and technology lessons were observed during the inspection. Evidence from a scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils and teachers suggest that pupils have an unsatisfactory range of activities and as a result make insufficient progress. There was no judgement about standards in the previous inspection report. There is a policy but no scheme of work for the subject and since the beginning of the school year there has been no subject leader to give advice and support to other teachers. As a result there is a lack of knowledge and expertise among many of the teaching staff and the skills pupils learn are not built on consistently from one year to the next. There is also confusion between the skills involved in art and design and technology. Whilst there is evidence of some activities taking place the elements of design, making and knowledge and understanding are unsatisfactorily covered in class lessons. Although there are good quality facilities but they are not used to best effect.
85. In Years 1 and 2, pupils use construction sets to make box models of Candy Houses like the one Hansel and Gretel found, castles and of Ronald Robot. Bookmarks, masks, shields and a variety of cards are made and decorated and mug mats sewed for Mother's Day presents. Juniors design and make shadow puppets, percussion instruments and weather vanes thinking carefully about the materials used. There is evidence that pupils have opportunities to learn about food technology, but as in other aspects of the subject the approach does not ensure the consistent development of skills. As in the previous inspection report, no teaching was seen and so no judgement can be made about its quality, or about pupil's attitudes and response to the subject. The use of numeracy and literacy skills in design and technology is underdeveloped.
86. The subject is under-represented in the curriculum. The amount of time allocated for design and technology is insufficient. The school retains little evidence to indicate that pupils experience design and technology regularly. Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to use constructional apparatus, specialist tools and an appropriate wide range of resources. Overall, the level of resources is satisfactory and the accommodation available for the subject, for example the food technology area, is good. The use of these facilities is unsatisfactory. Pupils' progress, including those with a special educational needs, is unsatisfactory and this is directly linked to the absence of a subject leader and the lack of a scheme of work that gives support and guidance to teachers. Teachers have an insecure subject knowledge that confuses the skills of art and design and technology. There has been a lack of clear educational direction in enabling staff to identify what knowledge skills and understanding should be taught and insufficient in-service training to ensure that design and technology contributes effectively to developing a broad and balanced curriculum. There is insufficient planning to ensure that pupils use a range of resources and specialist tools. Skills are not being introduced and taught systematically. The monitoring of teaching and planning is unsatisfactory and there are no assessment procedures for the subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY**

87. Both subjects have a significant place in the curriculum and provide valuable experiences for pupils to observe their surroundings and consider people and events from past times. Standards in history are in line with those expected of seven and eleven-year-olds. Scrutiny of work in geography shows that infant pupils barely reach the expected level for their age because their tasks are too simple and all pupils do the same work. However, the juniors attain good levels for their age. There are strong features in both subjects, such as Year 6 work on weather and work on castles in Year 1. However, there are weak aspects, particularly with younger pupils, where geographical skills are not emphasised sufficiently. As a result, these pupils' rate of progress is slow. Too much time is spent on colouring in activities in history and there are too few opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills.
88. As at the last inspection, the subjects are mostly taught as part of an integrated topic. Lesson planning is satisfactory but more emphasis is given to acquiring knowledge than equipping the pupils with skills to become proficient historians and geographers. This occurs because no regular and consistent mechanism exists for the subject leader to monitor what is being taught or what pupils have achieved. As a result, there are occasions when work is repeated unnecessarily in different year groups, regardless of ability. Inspection evidence shows that where teaching is well planned according to different abilities and has clear objectives, pupils make good progress, with some pupils reaching a level of mapping skill above the expectation for their age. The juniors make good progress in geography; their vocabulary is good and they use their mathematical skills effectively to analyse data and draw conclusions.
89. In history, pupils have a good knowledge of the parts of a castle and knights and their sense of time is sufficiently well developed for them to understand that some things are different from when their parents and grandparents were children, but lack knowledge of some personalities from history. Year 6 use their skills well to research eminent Victorians from reference books and CD-ROM sources and local studies in Years 3,4 and 5 have a good impact on understanding how and why places change.
90. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and enjoy making contributions to lessons from their own experiences and travels. Teachers skilfully use these observations to move lessons along and maintain interest during lessons. Visits to places of interest have a significant impact on motivating pupils to produce good quality work because they have opportunities to write and express themselves through art. Their pride in presenting work well is noticeable in classes where teachers' expectations of good work are high, but different standards between the classes have created inconsistencies in the standards of handwriting and there is little use of word processing to present work. In both subjects, teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching of geography in the juniors. Classes are very well managed. Attainment is highest in the classes where pupils have an introduction which catches their imagination and where challenging activities which are planned taking into account skills and knowledge gained in earlier years.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

91. Standards in information technology were judged not to meet national expectations at the time of the last inspection. National Curriculum requirements were not being fully met. There was insufficient hardware and software for curriculum use and a lack of staff expertise. In consequence the provision and opportunities created for successful work in information technology were judged to be a key issue for the school to address. The school has remedied most of the issues successfully. National Curriculum requirements are now met. A hard working and committed subject leader has been appointed with a good knowledge and ability to address the needs of the school. An appropriate policy and guidelines have been established as

a result of an efficient audit. From this audit a sensible number of improvements to be made over a two-year period was drawn up. This in turn informed accurately a plan specifically to meet information technology needs, within the framework of the overall school development. However, there is still insufficient hardware and software, for example, for those of pupils with special educational needs. The establishment of an information technology suite has had a beneficial effect upon provision and helped to raise standards. There is an agreed plan for needs to be met and adequate funding has been made available over a period of time to enhance work in information technology. There is also a clear vision shared by the headteacher and subject leader to continue improvements already made.

92. Standards of attainment are now in line with expectations. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a basic familiarity with the hardware available. They have satisfactory control of the mouse and good knowledge of the keyboard functions. They learn how to edit texts using appropriate keys. Pupils choose from a range of fonts and can alter sizes of letters and choose to print work in different colours. The pupils in Year 2 use their literacy skills well to edit the text of the story of Jack and the Beanstalk putting in capital letters and adjectives in a short passage that their teacher has prepared for them. In Year 1 they sort out a passage of writing by using some of the computers' tools effectively.
93. By the end of Year 6, pupils are competent in using spreadsheets in order to sort information of texts and numbers in ascending and descending order. They carry out the tasks with good measures of skill and interest. They move on to carry out research on how they can control the information that they have accessed prior to printing out a list to confirm their success in completing the task. They have been well prepared to continue the process of using computers as a helpful tool to learning when, for example, Year 4 use the spell checker program to support development of literacy skills.
94. Learning is good across both key stages. Pupils advance in mouse control because they are given opportunity to begin this process from the earliest stages in school. Their basic word processing skills are then developed in a logical sequence of learning. The control and modelling aspects of the subject are taught well. However, there are still insufficient opportunities to use computers in other subjects as part of the normal classroom activities.
95. Attitudes to work on computers are good and in the best lessons very good. Pupils not only show enthusiasm but enjoyment and a sense of achievement in carrying out the variety of tasks. They co-operate well, take turns and are very keen to help one another to be successful in learning computer skills. Behaviour is good and equipment is treated with care and respect. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the computers that they have at home and the opportunities that they have to use them in school.
96. The quality of teaching is good. The confidence of teachers has been improved by the provision of the clear policy and guidelines. As a result teachers give clear and effective introductions to tasks. They recall previous learning successfully in order to support pupils' understanding of new tasks. Although learning is often taken on step by step it is carried on at a good pace. The planning is thorough and well focused, effectively linked to the school's good procedures and practice in assessing pupils' skills.
97. The subject leader has drawn up an appropriate assessment checklist to ensure that skills are being covered effectively. The subject leader has carried out some monitoring of learning but this is insufficient to ensure consistency in the development of skills across the school. The school has plans to develop the subject and to purchase more resources.

## **MUSIC**

98. The good standards attained at the time of the previous report have been maintained. Learning is good as the result of specialist teacher co-ordination of the subject and the school's commitment to the employment of specialist teaching from the local authority's peripatetic music service. This teaching and additional instrumental tuition has a good effect on standards in music. The subject benefits from the use of a specialist music room and good resources.
99. In the infants, pupils recognise that symbols represent musical notes and respond to the symbols in playing percussion instruments. Pupils listen to and appraise the music of famous composers. For example, they enjoy identifying the animals in some music in assemblies and talk about why different sounds and instruments are useful to represent a variety of animals. The pupils are confident in their approach to music and listen and perform with confidence. Evidence from talking to pupils and from recorded work shows, clearly, that pupils are aware of rhythm and pulse and respond well in performing with tuned and untuned percussion instruments.
100. In Years 3 and 4, pupils' learning is very good because of specialist teaching from the subject leader and a specialist teacher from the local authority's music service. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The pupils gain in confidence, reading notation and playing tuned percussion instruments with good regard for rhythm and pace. At Years 5 and 6 some pupils receive individual instrumental tuition and make good progress in performance skills. Pupils' singing is good. They sing tunefully and with clear diction. Participation with other schools in concerts such as the Christmas concert in Walsall Town Hall and the school "proms" summer concert reflects the good quality of singing of the very well attended extra curricular school choir. The choir is open to all Year 5 and 6 pupils and many enjoy this experience.
101. Pupils enjoy music lessons. They participate enthusiastically, and willingly share and take turns in using instruments. They take good care of equipment, know where it is stored and tidy away at the end of lessons. They listen well to music and make good contributions in appraising what they hear. The choir shows pride in their performance and in their representation of the school. Behaviour in lessons is good.
102. The quality of teaching seen is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and very good in the juniors. There was an unsatisfactory lesson in Year 2 due to lack of subject expertise. Where teaching is best, planning has clear objectives, pupils are actively involved with carefully prepared resources and teachers know the levels of pupils' understanding. The teachers' subject expertise and skills in performing help the pupils to achieve good standards. The subject is well co-ordinated. There is a good music policy and the satisfactory scheme of work is being up-dated. The guidelines are useful for non-specialist staff and teachers use them well to plan their work. There are appropriate assessment procedures that are being improved by the introduction of an assessment that will show pupils' individual progression in music skills. The subject leader is consulted regularly by other teachers but does not have the opportunity to monitor and so does not have a clear overview of pupils' achievements. Resources for the subject are good, overall. There is insufficient variety of resources to explore the music of a range of cultures. The school benefits from a music room where pupils can work comfortably in groups and where noise is not a concern to other classes. Information technology is used insufficiently. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

103. As at the time of the previous inspection, the work seen in physical education is in line with that expected at the end of Year 2 and above average by the time the pupils leave the school. All the lessons seen were in dance and games. Discussions with pupils and staff indicate that whilst gymnastics is taught, there is a lack of emphasis on this aspect of the subject, particularly in the use of large gymnastic apparatus.
104. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a range of experiences in responding to music of different moods, rhythms and tempo. They respond to music showing an understanding of the need to change their speed and direction. Higher attaining pupils express their feelings well through music. They understand that different types of music require different movements and begin to use their imagination to illustrate music such as 'The Flight of the Bumble Bee' and 'Under the Sea' music. All pupils respond imaginatively to the tempo of the music. When, in Year 2, the teacher introduces the stimuli of 'Bubbles' they respond by exploring different levels of movement, body shape and speed. They create their own performance individually and in groups.
105. In the juniors, pupils develop good skills of catching and throwing and in netball understand the importance of finding space to receive a pass and of skills involved in attacking and defending. They learn to develop skills of hitting the ball and hand-eye co-ordination when playing rounders and become aware of the rules of 'Danish Rounders'. Pupils benefit from extra-curricular activities at lunchtime or after school such as, soccer, dance, netball and karate and links with Walsall FC. The school achieves good success in competitive games against other schools, for example in soccer and netball and in the invitation it receives to take part in the Walsall Dance Festival. All of the juniors have swimming lessons every year and as a result almost all can swim at least 25 metres by the time they leave the school. Athletics are taught during the summer term and older pupils in Years 5 and 6 experience a range of outdoor adventurous activities such as orienteering, canoeing, cycling and abseiling. Appropriate warm up and cool down activities at the beginning and end of lessons are used and both pupils and teachers are always appropriately clothed for physical education lessons. Both pupils and teachers also have a good awareness of safety requirements in the lessons and pupils are aware of the effects of physical exercise on their bodies.
106. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in the junior classes. Lessons are usually well planned and younger pupils in are being encouraged to develop good routines. They come into and leave the hall in an orderly way, are usually well behaved, put effort into activities and listen to the instructions being given by the teacher. The pace of lessons is appropriate. Teachers take part in lessons and provide good role models keeping everyone on task and encouraging vigorous and activity. However in Year 1 a poor lesson was seen; the planning did not adequately focus on the skills to be taught and the pupils were unsure what to do. They became restless, the pace of lesson drifted and behaviour deteriorated resulting in insufficient progress.
107. The management of the subject has weaknesses. There is a subject leader but she has little opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. There has been little recent in-service training and the lack of emphasis on the subject has meant that leadership has had little impact. There is a policy for the subject but no suitable scheme of work that provides help and support for teachers. A published scheme is being considered but none has yet been introduced and therefore teachers are lacking in guidance particularly in areas in which they are lacking in confidence, for example gymnastics, and in a knowledge of how to develop skills in all aspects of the subject. Assessment procedures for the subject have not yet been developed. The school has a satisfactory range of resources and playing field of good size.



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

108. The last inspection reported that by the end of Year 6 the pupils attained appropriate standards. Inspection evidence shows that standards by seven and eleven are in line with the expectations set out in the syllabus followed by schools in Walsall. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are adequately supported in their learning and make satisfactory progress. Pupils are taught appropriately about a suitable range of world religions and they have appropriate skills and knowledge but have insufficient opportunities to explore their feelings and beliefs in extended writing.
109. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a suitable knowledge of the Sikh religion, showing an understanding of the five important aspects of that faith. They use their reading skills to find information from books. They are keen to make contributions to discussions as they identify accurately the differences between practices in the Sikh and Christian religions.
110. By the time they leave the school, pupils have a secure knowledge of a wide range of religions. They understand that some principles are common to several religions. In Year 3 the pupils listen with good measures of concentration as their teacher tells them the story of Saul. They show their understanding of the moral in the story and then contribute to discussions about changes in people's lives. They use their literacy skills to sequence events. Older pupils develop an appropriate understanding of the meaning of prayer and understand that religion is important in some people's lives. There is some thoughtful work on the Lord's Prayer as part of the study of patterns of worship. All pupils have benefited from the increased provision made for religious education since the previous inspection report. This is reflected in their good attitudes and behaviour. Pupils respond well and often want to find out more about the religions that are the focus of their studies. They develop appreciation of others' views and in some lessons in Years 1 and 2 benefit from opportunities to share their ideas and thoughts to the class.
111. The quality of teaching is good in the infants and satisfactory in the juniors. Where teaching is best in Years 1 and 2 the teachers introduce tasks with clarity. The school has a satisfactory range and number of resources for the subject. The teachers make good use of them so that pupils' learning is enhanced through handling artefacts. This approach to the teaching is effective as a way of explaining to pupils some of the similarities and differences between religions. The pupils show maturity in their discussions in both large and small groups. They carefully handle and talk about precious objects using descriptive words to effectively. In other lessons, teachers concentrate on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding but spend too long on class discussions and there is insufficient opportunity to write in sufficient length and depth. Although the teachers correct the pupils' work, insufficient emphasis is giving to guide the pupils on how they might improve. The subject leader has begun successfully to link the school's way of working with the guidelines provided in the local agreed syllabus and this has had a positive impact on standards. However, more remains to be done in monitoring planning, teaching and learning to raise standards further.