

INSPECTION REPORT

DOVECOTES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Pendeford, Wolverhampton

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104350

Headteacher: Miss G Beddow

Reporting inspector: Mr Jeffery Lemon
21116

Dates of inspection: 14th – 17th February 2000

Inspection number: 192367
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community Primary
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ryefield Dovecotes Estate Pendeford Wolverhampton West Midlands
Postcode:	WV8 1TX
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K Clifford
Date of previous inspection:	8 th October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Jeffrey Lemon	Registered inspector	English Art Design technology	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils or students taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Lesley Keyworth	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils or students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Brian Fletcher	Team inspector	Mathematics Information communications technology Music Physical education Equal Opportunities Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
Enid Korn	Team inspector	Science Geography History Religious education Under-fives English as an additional language	

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This average-sized primary school serves an area of mixed private and council owned properties situated to the north-west of Wolverhampton. There are 48 pupils who attend the nursery as part-time pupils and 27 pupils who are in the reception class. The rest of the school comprises 163 pupils organised into six single year group classes. The background of the pupils is relatively disadvantaged, there are high levels of unemployment and a higher than average number of children are eligible for free school meals. Children entering the school at the age of three have poorly developed language and personal and social skills. There are an above average number of pupils from ethnic minorities but only a small number have English as an additional language. The number of pupils with special educational needs is well above average although no pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Dovecotes is a vibrant, friendly community in which pupils achieve as well and often better than similar schools. The teaching is good and this contributes to the good behaviour and very positive attitudes of the pupils. The headteacher, governors, staff and parents are committed to working in real partnership to raise standards even farther. The income for the school is average and when set against the good quality of education provided the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher leads the school very strongly with an emphasis on teamwork and a focus on raising standards.
- The quality of teaching at the school is good, leading to good learning, the promotion of very good behaviour and attitudes and very effective moral and social development for pupils.
- Parents have a high regard for the school and there are strong links with the community.
- Literacy and numeracy form a key part of a broad curriculum in which extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.
- There is high quality care of pupils and very effective fostering of good relationships.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The quality of education for the children in the nursery.
- The provision for information communication technology.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in October 1996 and since this inspection there has been very good improvement. The teamwork at the school has flourished and the behaviour and attitudes of pupils have improved. Standards have risen in English when compared to similar schools and in design technology and geography standards are now in-line with expectations. Standards are still not high enough in information communication technology and progress in this area has been less marked. The quality of teaching of the oldest pupils at the school has improved greatly and the attainment levels for these pupils have risen although they are still below national averages. Lesson objectives are now much clearer and most lessons move at an appropriate pace. Schemes of work and subject policies are now in place to help teachers and they are having an impact on raising standards. The caring ethos and good quality of care for pupils has been maintained.

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	E	E*	E	C
Mathematics	E*	E	E	D
Science	E*	E*	C	B

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

The table shows that standards were well below the national average in English and mathematics in 1999 although standards in science match the national average. When compared to similar schools it can be seen that the school performs better, as standards in science are above average, in English they are average and in mathematics they are below average. The seven year olds reached levels that are in-line with those expected for mathematics but standards of reading are below average and those for writing are well below average. The evidence of the inspection broadly confirms this picture with below average standards in English by the end of both key stages. In mathematics and science seven year olds reach the expected standards but 11 year olds do not and standards are below average. However, the school has worked hard to raise standards, which were also below average at the time of the last inspection and the trend in all subjects is one of improvement. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is mostly good but there is a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and the starting point for the current Year 5 and 6 pupils was too low for the good teaching to compensate fully for this low start. The school has set challenging targets for 11 year olds in 2000. The targets are carefully set and reflect the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and also the below average standards reached by the cohort when they were seven. Standards in singing are particularly high because of the very good use made of teachers' expertise. Standards are below average in information communication technology mainly because it is not yet planned into lessons or schemes of work for other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils of all ages show very good attitudes to the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	In most lessons behaviour is good, at breaks, lunch-times and when moving around the school pupils are orderly and considerate.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships with all the adults in the school are good as are relationships between pupils. In the main pupils co-operate, share resources and are helpful to each other in lessons. They listen to each other considerately and respect one another's views.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. Attendance figures are slightly below national averages but are improving. The school has used many ways of increasing this figure and the school secretary is committed to ensuring that pupils attend regularly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is a strength of the school. The effects of the overall good teaching are that learning is effective in almost all lessons and the pupils are increasing their knowledge and developing their ideas. The quality of English and mathematics teaching is good with teachers making good use of the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers are very good at planning and the learning objectives are stated in all lessons and shared with the pupils so that they know what to do. The work set for pupils with special educational needs takes account of their needs and support staff are used well to help them to reach their targets and they make good progress towards their targets. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language are suitably supported; for example, when extra clarification of language is given by the teacher or other adults in the classroom. Marking does not give sufficient guidance and even where it does, there is no check by the teacher that the advice has been carried out. The setting of targets linked to levels in the National Curriculum is not sufficiently shared with the pupils so that they know how well they have done and how they can improve.

The quality of teaching in 51% of lessons was good or better, in 16% of lessons it was very good or better and only 6% of lessons seen were unsatisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school offers a curriculum which is broad and balanced but has a weakness in the provision of information communication technology which is not systematically planned or taught. The delivery of the curriculum is coherent and co-ordinated and provides for the sustained progress of the pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is good. Pupils have full access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils receive good quality support both in the classroom and in small specialist withdrawal groups. In this way pupils build up confidence and self-esteem and make good progress towards their targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	These pupils make satisfactory progress. They do not receive specialist support, but have individual targets that are language based and the class teachers work to these appropriately.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. A caring ethos is a prominent feature of school life, which is valued by all those who teach and learn there.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's provision for pupils' general well-being is very good. Pupils feel safe and secure as the school provides very good levels of pastoral care. The school has effective measures to promote good behaviour and succeeds. All staff, including lunch-time assistants, are suitably involved in monitoring behaviour.

The school has very good links with parents and carers. Arrangements for sharing information are good. The school's open door approach welcomes parents into the school and is effective in exchanging important information to ensure pupils care, happiness and effective learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good, strong leadership. She is well supported by her deputy head and all the staff and there is a collective vision for the future of the school. This vision has a commitment to raising standards as its foundation.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors mostly meet the statutory requirements although there are some omissions in the information provided to parents. They have a sound working knowledge of how well the school is doing. The governors are less involved in formal monitoring and evaluating what the school does well and how it could improve.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Sound monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum has been established through a clear cycle of self-review. These procedures have impacted positively on the quality of education at Key Stages 1 and 2 but they have not been sufficiently rigorous to identify that the needs of the youngest pupils in the school are not fully met.
The strategic use of resources	The resources available to the school are soundly managed. The governors have recently approved a 'best value' policy and the principles are becoming established. The school is aware of the different grants available and is efficient at bidding for and using such funds.

The teachers are suitably qualified and there are enough teachers and non-teaching staff to meet the needs of the curriculum although there is a lack of sufficient teacher input for the youngest pupils. The accommodation is very good and is used well. The high quality displays in most of the school help to celebrate the achievements of the pupils. There is sufficient play space but the Key Stage 2 playground is in need of resurfacing and presents a hazard. Resources are mostly good, well stored and labelled to help pupils to access what they need and begin to take responsibility.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents and carers most	What parents and carers would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That teaching is effective and that standards are rising. • That there is a stimulating, warm and caring environment. • That the school is well managed and led. • That teachers have high expectations, children make good progress and are helped to mature and become responsible as they progress through the school. • That they are kept well informed about pupils' individual progress and the school works closely with them. • That behaviour is good and there is a good range of quality extra-curricular activities. • That they feel welcome in the school and questions and problems are handled with care and consideration. • That their children like school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no areas that parents identified as in need of improvement.

In the main, parents' and carers views are supported. However, parents and carers are unable to make accurate evaluations of pupils' attainment at Key Stage 1 and 2 because of insufficient statutory information about the national key stage results.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The results of the 1999 national tests in English and mathematics taken by 11 year olds showed that standards were well below the national average although standards in science match the national average. The seven year olds reached levels which are in-line with those expected for mathematics but standards of reading are below average and those for writing are well below average. The evidence of the inspection broadly confirms this picture with below average standards in English by the end of both key stages. In mathematics and science seven year olds reach the expected standards but 11 year olds do not and standards are below average. However, the school has worked hard to raise standards which were also below average at the time of the last inspection and the trend in all subjects is one of improvement. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is mostly good but there is a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and the starting point for the current Year 5 and 6 pupils was too low for the teaching to compensate fully for this low start.
2. Pupils have positive attitudes and the commitment of teachers is high as a result and most pupils work at or near their capacity and achieve well in relation to their previous attainment. The school adds value; for example, when compared to similar schools there is evidence that by the age of seven the pupils achieve much better in their reading and mathematics than pupils in similar schools. The 11 year old pupils achieve better in science and as well in English as pupils in similar schools. However, in mathematics 11 year olds are not yet achieving as well as pupils in similar schools.
3. The school has set challenging targets for 11 year olds in 2000. The targets are carefully set and reflect the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and also the below average standards reached by the cohort when they were seven. Results of tests are carefully analysed and this has highlighted areas of weakness in handwriting and in writing in general. The generally good teaching seen in the school, particularly in the delivery of the National Literacy Strategy, helps the school to address these weaknesses. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is effective and pupils make use of the skills they learn to help them in their work in other subjects. Targets for pupils with special educational needs are well structured and show small steps for improvement. These pupils often make good progress. Targets for other pupils including higher attainers are less specific and teachers do not always give sufficiently clear guidance to help these pupils make the expected progress.
4. There are a small number of pupils who have English as an additional language. Where necessary the support given to these pupils; for example, clarification of language by the teacher or support assistant, is satisfactory and they make the expected progress. There is no significant difference between the results achieved by boys or girls. The school is committed to support for all pupils and work is set to challenge the higher attainers. The main focus has been on raising standards to Level 2 for Year 2 and level 4 for Year 6 and no specific numeric targets have been set for numbers of pupils to reach the higher levels.

5. Attainment on entry to the nursery is low. Pupils enter with poor language and number skills and their personal and social skills are limited. These pupils mostly make unsatisfactory progress in the nursery but steady progress in the reception class and by the age of five are ready to begin the National Curriculum. With the exception of information communication technology the standards reached by the age of seven and 11 are in line with expectations and pupils acquire suitable knowledge and skills. Standards in singing are particularly high. Standards are below average in information communication technology because it is not planned into lessons or schemes of work. There is no consistently applied list of computer skills that pupils are expected to achieve by a certain age. Consequently most teaching of information technology is incidental and not part of a whole-school plan that would ensure progression through the curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils of all ages show very good attitudes to the school. The vast majority of pupils from the nursery upwards are keen to come to school. This is helped by the breakfast club which provides a warm and relaxing atmosphere and a good start to the day. The inspection agreed with the parents' view that the school is very caring and promotes positive attitudes. Parents praise the staff of the school for their concern for the happiness of their children.
7. The attitudes of children under five in teacher led tasks are generally good although they have difficulty working in a focused manner at a task of their own choosing. They are rarely inquisitive and they do not investigate or use many of the facilities provided. When participating in communal activities such as assembly, their attitude is very good. Attitudes in classrooms for Key Stages 1 and 2 are very good. Pupils participate in all school activities, such as singing in the hall, with well mannered enthusiasm. Many pupils attend the wide range of after school clubs which they find interesting and enjoyable. Pupils of all ages respond positively to tasks and try hard to give of their best. Most older pupils have a serious and purposeful attitude to their work; for example, when testing paper aeroplanes no pupil was distracted.
8. Some younger children in the reception and nursery lack sustained concentration and they rarely talk and work together as part of a group and in some situations they are rather boisterous. Behaviour by the majority of Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils in lessons is good. They try to concentrate and sit still even when the pace of the lesson is slow. Any incidents of unacceptable behaviour are swiftly dealt with. There has been one exclusion in the last year. When moving around the school pupils walk purposefully and are courteous to staff and also generally considerate to other pupils. Pupils are trustworthy and take their responsibilities seriously. Older pupils help the younger ones when going out of assembly and there are class duties such as giving out biscuits and tidying away lunch boxes, which are performed speedily and efficiently. Reception pupils, when returning the class register, take their duty seriously. Pupils take good care of school property and in practical lessons materials are returned in perfect order.

9. Relationships with all the adults in the school are good, as are relationships between pupils. Some nursery children tend to play on their own, rarely talking to each other as they work and many find talking to adults difficult. In most classes pupils co-operate, share resources and are helpful to each other in lessons. They listen to each other and respect each other's views. Friendships between individuals and within groups cross all cultural backgrounds. Pupils respect their teachers, who are courteous role models. Relationships are good between pupils and teachers, partially due to the lowering of barriers in the after school clubs. Pupils are generally confident enough to speak to teachers individually and in all classrooms pupils answer questions. The atmosphere in the classrooms is calm and courteous and no incidents of intimidation or bullying were seen during the inspection. There is individual counselling available from the NSPCC and some pupils take advantage of this.
10. From the youngest children in the nursery, pupils take turns and do not take other people's things. In the school pupils have a growing understanding of right and wrong and are polite and thoughtful towards others. They look after each other, either by providing rulers and pencils or by showing concern. Pupils in Key Stage 1 consider the views of others when discussing celebratory meals in religious education and in Year 5 pupils are beginning to respect the needs of others when discussing slavery in Ancient Greece.
11. Attendance figures are slightly below national guidelines, but are higher than they were. The school has used many ways of increasing this figure and now the rate of unauthorised absences is primarily due to a few families.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. Overall, teaching is good or better in over half of the lessons seen. The teaching of the under-fives has some significant strengths; the teacher has good knowledge and enthusiasm and pupils, particularly in the reception class, improve their skills and are well prepared for the start of the National Curriculum. The needs of younger pupils are well planned for and the nursery nurses work hard. However the methods and organisation of the early years unit means that children do not achieve as well as they could if there was a greater direct input from the teacher.
13. At Key Stage 1 over three quarters of the lessons seen were good and at Key Stage 2 there are particular strengths in Years 4, 5 and 6 where teaching in a fifth of lessons was very good and sometimes excellent. This shows a marked improvement since the time of the last inspection when there was unsatisfactory teaching for the oldest pupils at the school.
14. The effects of the overall good teaching are that learning is effective in almost all lessons and the pupils are increasing their knowledge and developing their ideas. All teachers have a good knowledge of all subjects except information communication technology. They also have good knowledge of the requirements of the literacy and numeracy strategies. They teach these lessons well and this has helped to raise standards in these areas. The short-term planning by teachers is very good. Teachers set out the learning objectives very clearly and also evaluate how well a lesson or series of lessons has gone which helps pupils to move on. The learning objectives are usually shared with the pupils and good practice is seen when the aim of the lesson is displayed. This practice helps the pupils to

understand what they have to do and how well they have done. In the best lessons teachers show enthusiasm and are able to challenge the pupils to do their best; for example, in a Year 6 English lesson when pupils are asked to express their feeling about a passage from 'The Railway Children' the teacher uses skilful questions, listens to the answers and then draws out more from the pupils through further questions.

15. There is a good mix of whole-class, group and individual work and the tasks set are usually matched to the pupils' prior attainment. The work set for pupils with special educational needs take account of their needs and support is used well to help them to reach their targets and they make good progress towards these. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language are suitably supported; for example, when extra clarification of language is given by the teacher or other adults in the classroom. Information communication technology is not yet used effectively by teachers.
16. Teachers use the agreed behaviour policy consistently in their lessons and as a result behaviour is good, the pupils work hard in lessons and keep up their concentration. The teachers often help to keep pupils focused by setting clear deadlines of time and by reminding the pupils about how much longer they have got and what they need to finish. Homework is used appropriately to support learning.
17. Teachers are good at noticing how well pupils are working and giving them help; for example, in reminders about correct punctuation. Marking is not yet consistent and the clear policy is not yet fully established in practice. Although there are some good examples, too much marking does not give sufficient guidance and even where it does, there is no check by the teacher that the advice has been carried out. The setting of targets linked to levels in the National Curriculum is not sufficiently shared with the pupils so that they know how well they have done and how they can improve.

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

18. The school offers a curriculum which is broad and balanced but has a weakness in information communication technology which is not systematically planned or taught. In other respects the curriculum has improved since the last inspection. All subjects now have detailed schemes of work, which are rigorously implemented by all teachers. The delivery of the curriculum is coherent and co-ordinated and provides for the sustained progress of the pupils. At the last inspection, the curriculum for Years 5 and 6 was said to lack rigour. This difficulty has been overcome as the improved attainment in the core subjects demonstrates. Pupils are now placed in sets based on prior attainment in English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6 and additional support is provided for pupils with special educational needs. This curriculum innovation is constantly evaluated, as are all others, to ensure that it meets the needs of all the pupils.
19. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught including religious education. Sex education and drugs awareness are also taught as part of the school's science curriculum. To support drugs awareness, the school is also involved in a local community project. There is an active programme of personal, social, and health education, often provided by the use of 'circle time' in which pupils may discuss with their teachers anything that concerns them.

20. Provision in English and mathematics has been supported well by the successful introduction of the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy. Each subject is given a prominent place in the curriculum and the time allocated is very well used. Teachers plan lessons carefully and give appropriate weight to each element. Teachers plan well for all subjects except in information communication technology, where the lack of a subject co-ordinator and subject expertise detracts considerably from pupils' achievement.
21. The school operates a highly inclusive curriculum. The needs of all pupils are taken into account. The school evaluates its own performance and frequently asks what more can be done. Provision for special educational needs is good. Pupils have full access to a broad and balanced curriculum. They receive support both in the classroom and in small withdrawal groups. In this way these pupils build up confidence and self-esteem. Planning for these groups is good. The quality of individual education plans is very good and a considerable strength of the school. The plans contain targets which are specific, measurable and easily understood by the pupils. The pupils make good progress. The school has maintained this standard since the last inspection because of the good leadership and management of the special educational needs co-ordinator and the unfailing, wholehearted support of her colleagues. The provision for the small number of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory.
22. The range and quality of extra-curricular activities is excellent. It is particularly commendable that the school maintained all activities during the inspection week. A daily breakfast club, to which the Chair of Governors is a frequent and welcome visitor, provides an excellent start to the school day. The sense of community and the involvement of many parents shows clearly that the school is a very accessible place. Parents and pupils are well supported in this activity by the headteacher. In addition, there are four groups of pupils who are learning to play the recorder. There are clubs for dance and drama, art, soccer and netball, the environment, chess, fun games, homework, library and rounders. Parents express their appreciation of the provision and are especially grateful that there are extra-curricular activities for the younger pupils. Overall, the school's provision is much better than that which is normally found.
23. Local groups use the school for their activities on a regular basis, which strengthens the links with the local community. There is a parents and toddlers club, a regular disco for young people and also a bingo session for senior citizens. The school takes part in the town sports and makes use of the excellent provision at the RAF athletics stadium at Cosford. The school links well with the local secondary school. Teachers attend joint courses and Year 6 pupils visit the school for a science and a computer day. Overall, the school serves its community very well and pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
24. At the last inspection it was said that the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well and that there was a caring ethos in which pupils and adults are valued. These considerable strengths of the school have been very well maintained and, indeed, extended. The caring ethos remains a prominent feature of school life which is valued by all those who teach and learn there. Parents are very appreciative of the present high standards of behaviour, which has shown a marked improvement since the last inspection, and of the care and affection which are offered to their children. In turn, the parents respond by offering their full support to the school and its teachers.

25. Spirituality is developed well throughout the school. It is apparent in all that the school does, that pupils are encouraged to appreciate the needs of others and to understand that they live in a relatively prosperous part of the world. The pupils make donations to charities such as the NSPCC and Children in Bosnia. Gifts from the Harvest Festival are taken to local senior citizens. Assembly-time allows pupils to reflect upon the lives of others. In Key Stage 1, pupils think about kindness and compassion in everyday life. In Key Stage 2, pupils learn of Amnesty International and reflect upon the symbolism of a lighted candle and a roll of barbed wire. From time to time the school uses 'circle time' to address ways of sharing and caring and providing support to pupils who need it. Religious education provides insight into the world religions and helps pupils' understanding and tolerance. Pupils visit places of worship. Art provides an opportunity for pupils to paint and draw in the manner of famous artists. The Chair of Governors writes poetry for the pupils and provides his own perspective on school life. In each assembly there is a strong sense of community, particularly marked when the pupils are singing together. As they leave 'preparation for assembly' they movingly sing a Swahili praise chant. 'Making better use of assembly times' was a target at the last inspection. That target has been met.
26. The provision for moral development is very good. The school is unequivocal in what it expects of its pupils. They are clear about right and wrong. Their good behaviour is evidence that they recognise the difference. The school has a home-school agreement which reinforces shared standards and expectations. Sensible rules are displayed in all classrooms. A system of rewards, highlighted in the achievement assembly, reinforces the school's central aims. At the same time the school deals promptly and fairly with pupils who break the rules, although this occurs infrequently. Pupils are proud of their school and want it to be proud of them. They recognise that the school is an honest and fair place where justice is seen to be done.
27. Social development continues to be a strength of the school. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Teachers act as good role models to the pupils who, in turn, look after each other. This is particularly noticeable at lunch-time when Year 6 pupils escort infants back to their classrooms. In the summer term pupils in Year 6 swap their playground for that of Year 2, which encourages both friendship and responsibility. Residential trips for all years in the school provide excellent social experiences for pupils where they can learn independence and interdependence. The breakfast club provides not only a good, healthy breakfast, but also a friendly social venue where parents, pupils and teachers meet.
28. The provision for cultural development is good. Pupils visit many interesting places and photographs of their journeys are proudly displayed. They visit Coventry cathedral, a Roman fort and the Black Country museum for enjoyment and as extensions to the work in the classroom. The pupils are concerned about the local environment and visit the nearby nature reserve. 'Theatre in Education' visits the school to provide insights into modern drama. In religious education, history and art pupils have the opportunity to study other cultures and to place themselves in the context of the wider world. In assembly pupils celebrate, amongst others, the festivals of Hannukah, Chinese New Year, Diwali and St Patrick's night.
29. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school that lies at the heart of all that the school does well.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. The school's provision for pupils' general well-being is very good. Pupils feel safe and secure as the school provides very good levels of pastoral care. The school's health and safety policy is successful. Appropriate measures are in place for the administration of first aid and medication. The health and safety policy, although successful, provides insufficient detail of procedures to ensure consistency in practice.
31. The school effectively promotes good behaviour. All staff, including lunch-time assistants, are suitably involved in monitoring behaviour. Bullying is positively discouraged through the school's comprehensive behaviour policy: staff, pupils and parents know what to do should it occur.
32. The recording and monitoring of attendance is very good. Registers are marked in accordance with the school's attendance guidelines and the school meets its statutory requirements. There is a clear and thorough procedure for monitoring absence enabling patterns of absenteeism to be identified easily. Regular attendance and punctuality are positively encouraged and the headteacher is very aware of patterns of attendance by individual pupils. The school secretary diligently follow-up individual absences. The provision of certificates for good attendance is a successful part of the school's strategy to improve attendance.
33. The arrangement for child protection is excellent. The designated teacher has relevant training and all staff are aware of the need for vigilance. There are close links with social services.
34. Statutory assessments are carried out and there is a regular programme for testing reading. The analysis of data is suitably carried out and is used to target areas for improvement; for example, in writing. Assessment arrangements for information communication technology are not satisfactory. In other subjects on-going assessment is well used to help planning but is not yet used to set specific individual targets to help pupils to improve even more.
35. The school is satisfactory in monitoring educational development overall. Clear improvement has been made. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress is satisfactory. The identification and provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and the provision for the small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

36. Parents and carers are extremely satisfied with what the school provides and achieves. The majority of parents and carers report that the school is active in providing effective teaching to improve pupils' learning, in a stimulating, warm and caring environment. They feel the school is well managed and led, that teachers have high expectations, children make good progress and are helped to mature and become responsible. They are well informed about pupils' individual progress and the school works closely with them. Homework, in the main, is considered sufficient. Parents feel welcome in the school and questions and problems are handled with care and consideration. The vast majority of pupils like their school.

37. The inspection confirms the views of parents although parents and carers are unable to make an accurate evaluation of pupils' attainment at Key Stages 1 and 2 due to insufficient statutory information about national key stage results.
38. The school has very good links with parents and carers. Arrangements for sharing information are given high priority; the school's open door approach welcomes parents into the school and is effective in exchanging important information to ensure pupils care, happiness and effective learning.
39. The school provides good quality information to parents and carers, in particular adapting information of an educational nature to the needs of parents and carers to help them to understand and support their children's learning and personal development. Information through written reports is satisfactory, giving broad targets for improvement and how parents and carers can help. General information is written in a warm and friendly manner. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents and carers are informative but omit statutory information.
40. The combination of welcoming parents and carers into the school, providing quality information and the recently introduced home-school agreement has succeeded in forming a meaningful partnership with the parents and carers. Parents listen to their children read, help with homework, help in the school, fundraise and collect tokens for books. The parents' contribution to children's learning is good. However, some parents need to be reminded to attend open evenings and asked to take an active interest in their children's welfare and education. In the main they respond well.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The headteacher provides very strong leadership. She is well supported by her deputy head and all the staff, co-ordinators work well and there is a collective vision for the future of the school. This vision has, as its foundation, a commitment to raise standards. This commitment also extends to the governing body, who are very involved and give good support. The Chair of Governors gives a great deal of time to the school and has a passion to see the school do well. The school has a very clear set of aims in its development plan. A strong sense of teamwork is very evident at this school, and this has been a priority for the headteacher since her appointment almost three year ago. This has enabled the school to improve as standards have risen, the development of policies and schemes of work has been rapid and the parents show support and admiration for the school.
42. The governors mostly meet the statutory requirements although there are some minor omissions in the information provided to parents. They have a sound working knowledge of how well the school is doing. This is based on reports from the headteacher and their active presence in the school. A good feature is the way in which each class has an assigned governor who keeps up with what the classes are doing through visits and letters. The governors are less involved in formal monitoring and evaluating what the school does well and how it could improve. They have recently undertaken training to improve this aspect of their work. This will guide them towards greater involvement with the setting of the school development plan.

43. Sound monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum has been established through a clear cycle of self-review. This has focused on literacy and numeracy but each co-ordinator has carried out an evaluation of their subject. Planning is scrutinised by the headteacher and co-ordinators and some lesson observations have taken place, which focus suitably on teaching and learning and on areas for improvement. Whilst these procedures have impacted positively on the quality of education at Key Stages 1 and 2 they have not been sufficiently rigorous to identify that the needs of the youngest pupils in the school are not satisfactorily met and to effect the necessary changes.
44. The teachers are suitably qualified and mostly sufficient to meet the needs of the curriculum although the deployment of teachers to the youngest pupils is inadequate. Appraisal procedures are in place and teachers are given sufficient opportunities for training to enhance their skills and also to meet the targets identified in the school development plan. Teachers with specialist knowledge; for example, in music are well deployed and this has helped to raise standards in singing. The accommodation is very good and the high quality displays in most of the school help to celebrate the achievements of the pupils. The accommodation is put to good use, the classroom areas are open and occasionally there is some noise from the next door class but this has little effect on concentration. There is sufficient play space but the Key Stage 2 playground is in need of resurfacing and presents a hazard. Resources are mostly good and are well stored and labelled to help pupils access what they need and begin to take responsibility. The site manager is well involved with the school, carries out a good deal of maintenance and improvements and with his conscientious cleaning staff ensures that a high standard of cleanliness is reached.
45. The finances of the school are soundly managed. The support of the local authority is suitably used for monitoring and to help with budget planning. The governors have recently approved a 'best value' policy and the principles are becoming established. The school is aware of different grants available and is efficient at bidding for and using such funds; for example, the use of the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant (EMAG) which is effectively used in the reception class to promote an awareness and understanding of cultural differences. The most recent auditors' report raised a considerable number of issues and the school has plans to address these. Information and communication technology is effectively used to support financial procedures but is less well employed to analyse the assessment data kept on pupils or in the planned curriculum. The administrative staff are very caring and hardworking and enable the day-to-day procedures of the school to operate smoothly and efficiently allowing the headteacher and staff to focus on the curriculum and learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46. The school should now:
- *(1) Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by:
- continuing to work towards the priorities of the school development plan;
 - improving the scheme of work for science to help teachers' planning;
 - improving marking in order to give guidance to pupils on how to improve and in checking that this guidance is followed;
 - setting more specific targets for individual pupils linked to the National Curriculum Levels and in sharing these with pupils and parents.

(Paragraphs 3,4,17,34,35,73,74,89,90.)

- (2) Improve the quality of education for children in the nursery by:
- increasing the amount of direct teaching input for these children;
 - ensuring that activities challenge and stimulate language and personal development more.

(Paragraphs 7,12,43,44,48,51-55,58,59,61,62,63,65,67.)

- * (3) Raise standards in information communications technology (ICT) by:

- ensuring that there is more direct teaching of ICT;
- improving the confidence and skills of all teachers;
- taking all opportunities to plan ICT into other subjects.

(Paragraphs 5,18,79,111,113)

- * Indicates that the school has already identified these issues within its school development plan.

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

47. (1) Meet the statutory requirements missing from the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents viz. information about the success of the special needs policy, and the national test results for 7 and 11 year olds.
(Paragraphs 37,39,42)
- (2) Provide more detail about procedures in the health and safety policy in order to make sure that practice is consistent.
(Paragraph 30)
- (3) Take action to improve the surface of the playground to reduce the risk of accidents.
(Paragraph 44)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	64
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	11	35	43	6	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25	197
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	77

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9	73

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	15	12	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	8	14
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	22	20	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (65)	74 (70)	96 (80)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	14	10
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	20	26	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (69)	96 (79)	81 (69)
	National	82 (81)	86 (84)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	16	21	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	15
	Girls	14	8	17
	Total	23	18	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	62 (32)	49 (23)	86 (23)
	National	70 (65)	69 (58)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	11	15
	Girls	11	12	16
	Total	20	23	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (55)	64 (64)	86 (50)
	National	68 (64)	69 (64)	75 (69)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	20
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	12
Indian	3
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	4
White	129
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	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	31.6
Average class size	27.1

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	364527
Total expenditure	362432
Expenditure per pupil	1686
Balance brought forward from previous year	32970
Balance carried forward to next year	35065

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	197
Number of questionnaires returned	72

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	35	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	45	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	41	10	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	31	17	6	8
The teaching is good.	66	31	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	29	10	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	14	1	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	27	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	69	25	4	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	72	22	0	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	30	4	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	64	24	6	0	6

Other issues raised by parents

No other issues were raised by parents.

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. At the time of the inspection there were 27 children in the reception year and 48 children who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. All the children in the reception class have previously attended the nursery.
49. Children join the nursery for afternoon sessions after their third birthday and at the age of four they move to the morning nursery. Children could have been attending the nursery for up to six terms before entering the reception year. Children join the reception class before their fifth birthday. There are two intakes; in September for older children and in January for younger children. In the year of the inspection, ten children had entered the reception year in September and 17 had joined in January.
50. Accommodation for all the children is in one continuous area subdivided into the reception classroom and the nursery areas. There is a pleasant, secure play area for the nursery children with direct access from the classroom. Reception children normally play in the infant playground.
51. Provision for pupils under five has some shortcomings. One teacher, supported by two nursery nurses, has responsibility for all the children under five. The children are organised into two separate classes, reception and nursery, and the teacher plans for both classes. The teacher is mainly with the reception children and only has direct teaching contact with the nursery children for one physical education lesson a week. For the remaining time the children in the nursery are taught by the nursery nurses. This method of organisation places too great a responsibility on the nursery nurses and children in the nursery have insufficient direct teaching by the under-fives teacher.
52. Assessments made through the nursery profiles show underachievement in all the areas of learning. Children make unsatisfactory progress in the nursery and almost all children enter the reception class below the expected level for children aged five. The use of information gained from the profiles to plan the curriculum is at a very early stage and these are not yet used to set individual targets.
53. Children make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in the reception class, particularly the smaller group in the autumn term. Many of the children aged five in the reception year, who entered the class in September achieve the desirable learning outcomes in reading, number, physical development and music. In some of the areas of learning there are significant aspects where children are not achieving the desirable outcomes.

Personal and Social

54. Children are achieving some aspects of the desirable learning outcomes for personal and social development by the age of five. Many five year olds are confident enough to tell adults what they are doing and to undertake tasks such as returning registers and reading words in front of the class. Younger reception children lack this confidence and a significant number do not join in with class discussions and activities. In the nursery, three and four year olds show some confidence when choosing an activity. Four year olds sometimes reply to the adults with them, but many aged three find this difficult and do not for example, say their name at registration.
55. Opportunities to work independently in the reception year are mainly in structured situations with a strong teacher presence such as in literacy and numeracy lessons where children concentrate and finish their work, typically completing a worksheet. At other times concentration and co-operation between these children is less well developed and at these times they are not attaining the desirable learning outcomes.
56. Children aged three and four explore sand and water and the 'food' in the home corner, silently, sometimes alone with little interaction between each other. They concentrate for short lengths of time and there is little development in their play. Taught activities in the nursery are mainly for individual work rather than a combined group enterprise and consequently opportunities for children to learn how to work and play together as part of a group and to develop social relationships are lost. Reception children have few opportunities for extended role play or to develop relationships by working co-operatively as part of a group, to initiate new ideas and to solve simple practical problems. Younger children are not inquisitive and do not investigate many of the good play areas in their room.
57. Children come into the nursery independently and happily. Three year olds are very dependent upon staff to help them with their coats and during the observations seen they were not shown or helped to manage for themselves. Older nursery children are more independent and are learning to change for physical education. By the age of five children can put their coats on without help but do not have sufficient opportunity to independently select and tidy away their equipment.
58. Reception children are enthusiastic where teaching is very good; for example, in music, and are eager to learn more when being told about the Chinese New Year and the associated customs. They are developing a respect for the culture and belief of others and show wonder and excitement when making a Chinese dragon and eating with chopsticks. This opportunity is provided by the visiting ethnic minorities support teacher but this enrichment is not extended to the nursery children.
59. Children from the age of three start to take turns, and do so when with adults; for example, when selecting objects to place into groups. Staff work hard to develop a sense of right and wrong and children mainly treat school property with respect. However, five year olds from the reception when in a less structured environment play boisterously at times rather than respecting the needs of others.

Language and literacy

60. Children are achieving some of the language and literacy desirable outcomes by the age of five. Some five year olds listen attentively and talk about what they have done but they have a limited vocabulary and understanding; for example, although they were learning to read using the nursery rhyme, Jack and Jill they did not understand the use or workings of a well. There are good facilities, such as a 'fire station' and a 'post office' in the nursery area for role play and language development but these are under used.
61. The majority of children aged three and four say little about their experiences and rarely express their thoughts. When working in the home corner they play with little communication through language. Children are reluctant to talk and need skilful questioning such as that demonstrated by the class teacher to elicit speech. Staff do not involve themselves with children's play; for example, by taking a part in role or imaginative play, in order to extend children's language and their learning. There are many props in the nursery such as saucepans and crockery but a lack of dolls to encourage imagination and language. In the set activities in which nursery nurses are involved they continuously ask questions but their questioning skills are not always effective enough to bring out the appropriate language from the children.
62. Four year olds know where the books are kept but do not choose to sit and browse. They know which way to hold a book and turn the pages starting from the front, identifying some aspects of the illustrations but they are unable to use the picture cues to tell a familiar story. There is an emphasis on reading in the reception class curriculum and pupils have made good progress. In the reception year, four year olds know that print carries meaning and which direction print is read. The most able can recognise many letters and some have a sight vocabulary of frequently occurring words such as 'and, is, dad,' and can retell a story using picture cues. At the age of five many children have attained the desirable learning outcomes. Able children have a reading book which they read confidently and fluently but they lack the confidence to attempt to read unfamiliar books. This attainment is achieved through generally good teaching, where the teacher uses many varied methods for teaching a sight vocabulary. Particularly for the younger children, newly arrived into the reception class, activities are frequently too lengthy and difficult and in 'free choice' situations many children are reluctant to read or look at books.
63. Many children aged five can write their name and four year olds in the nursery practice writing patterns. There is a post office and writing area in the nursery room but children do not choose to use these facilities or to write from their own choice. Children in the reception year are encouraged to record their observations; for example, when moving boats across the water, but writing activities are not given a high profile in the nursery.

Mathematics

64. Reception children have made good progress with counting and number recognition and most children aged five have met the desirable learning outcomes of counting and recognising numbers to ten. Some are exceeding these. Mathematics is mainly taught in formal situations and children do not use counting skills in real contexts and practical situations to extend their understanding and develop the ability to solve simple practical problems They are able to recognise pattern and know some counting rhymes. Some recognise shapes such as the triangle when making boats

but their use of mathematical language to describe and compare size, position and quantity is below expectations. Class plenary sessions are well used to extend the more able five year olds into the idea of addition but this is inappropriate for the less able and younger newer arrivals in the class who are counting to five or less. Support staff are well used in the reception class to give children with special needs additional experience of counting real objects. In the nursery, children aged four can count to five with support and are starting to sort objects; these activities would be more meaningful to the children if they were set into real situations and context; for example, in preparation for a tea party.

Knowledge and understanding

65. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is variable. Reception children can identify the weather and can match the day of the week to the calendar. They have investigated circles and bicycle wheels and at the time of the inspection were investigating the shape of fans and their effectiveness for making boats move across the water. Children have limited opportunity to develop their understanding of how things happen and why things work by repeating and extending their investigation. Younger children have limited ability to discuss their family and activities in their own lives and little opportunity to do so unless this is part of the planned curriculum. They rarely enquire, investigate or observe the displays of natural objects in their room and their investigation of water and sand is not developed. Opportunities to extend children's understanding through talk, observation and exploration such as when making and testing boats are underused and do not develop children's understanding of balance or floating and sinking.
66. Children use cutting, sticking and folding activities in structured situations and have some opportunity to explore and select materials. Children have good opportunities to use the computer and by five many can use the mouse with sufficient control to operate the programs, but they do not have access to other technology such as tape recorders.

Physical

67. Children are attaining the appropriate co-ordination control and balance of their bodies by the age of five. Children in the nursery and in the reception class have access to the school's physical education equipment and have a planned lesson each week taken by the class teacher. Children handle pencils and crayons with increasing control and some use scissors appropriately. Access to an outdoor play area for running, climbing, riding on toys and the associated social interaction is restricted.

Creative

68. Children's creative development in the context of music is good. Five year olds can differentiate between sounds when identifying percussion instruments, sing well and have a good sense of rhythm. This good attainment is directly related to very good teaching and high expectations. Their ability to explore texture, form and space particularly in three dimensions is not as well developed. Children do not make satisfactory use of their senses and imagination to express their ideas through imaginative play.
69. The curriculum for children in the reception year is focused towards numeracy and

reading skills with lessons often too long and structured for the children's level of maturity. This, together with an over emphasis towards the National Curriculum, creates too narrow a range of experiences for children of this age. Children lack sufficient opportunity to consolidate and extend their learning through using it in realistic situations and to develop concentration and social skills by investigating and solving problems as a group. In the nursery there is insufficient emphasis placed on social and language development and assessment information is not yet sufficiently well used.

70. The current method of organisation deprives the nursery children of a teacher's input for too long a proportion of the week and the reception children do not have the benefit of a classroom assistant for much of the day. The school needs to seriously reconsider the structure of its early years provision in order to rectify this situation.

ENGLISH

71. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests showed that reading standards were below average and that writing standards were well below average at the end of Key Stage 1. In the tests for Key Stage 2 pupils, the results indicate that standards in English were well below the average. When compared with similar schools however, Key Stage 1 pupils achieve standards which are well above the average in reading and are in-line with the national average for writing. End of Key Stage 2 tests show that standards in English in 1999 were broadly in-line with the national average for similar schools.
72. The pattern of results over the last three years shows that standards are improving at Key Stage 1, except in writing. Standards are improving in all aspects of English by the end of Key Stage 2. The school has not completed an analysis of how standards reached at Key Stage 2 compare to schools that achieved similar average points scores at Key Stage 1. This may be helpful in giving further evidence for improvement, although large numbers of the 1995 Year 2 pupils had left the school prior to the 1999 Key Stage 2 tests.
73. The evidence from the inspection shows that by the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, standards are below average. Although still below average, standards have risen since the time of the last inspection. This is due to improvements in the quality of teaching at the top end of Key Stage 2, the introduction of a clear policy and scheme of work and the good management of the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. The school has set suitably challenging targets for Year 6 pupils in 2000 and is focusing correctly on writing. The targets reflect the high percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and also the low achievement of this cohort of pupils in 1996. The improvements in the teaching and leadership at the school have raised standards for this group but previous inadequacies cannot be overcome in the time available. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Support staff are given good guidance by teachers and are aware of the targets set out on pupils' individual education plans. Good use is made of specific grants; for example, extra support for reading at Key Stage 1 and the additional literacy support for pupils in Years 3 and 4.

74. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen attentively in lessons, they speak clearly and are developing an increased vocabulary. This is helped by the good quality of teaching and teachers plan in good detail and challenge children to use the correct vocabulary in literacy hours and also during lessons in other subjects. Reading is taught well as teachers have very good knowledge of phonics; for example in one Year 2 lesson pupils have to identify the sounds in the beginning, middle and end of words. Standards in reading are broadly average and pupils are becoming more fluent and accurate. They have positive attitudes to reading and the higher attainers are able to explain clearly what a story is about and discuss other books they have read. During Key Stage 1, pupils make steady progress with writing, they begin to use full stops and capital letters correctly and they write in longer sentences. Handwriting standards are well below average with few pupils forming letters correctly and developing the elements of joined-up writing from the start of the key stage. Although teachers help pupils in lessons and challenge them to improve, marking is not sufficiently focussed on the learning objectives and does not give pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve. Spelling rules and keywords are taught suitably in literacy lessons but pupils make many errors in their work and sometimes these are not rigorously corrected by the teacher or even when they are, there is no follow up to see if the word has been corrected.
75. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils talk confidently and are happy to share their ideas. The quality of vocabulary and the range of ideas and opinions is good in the Year 4 class; for example, when giving good ideas for adjectives in a literacy session which explored different types of poetry. However, explanations by Years 5 and 6 pupils are sometimes unclear and use limited vocabulary; for example, when asked to articulate their feelings about text taken from *The Railway Children*. These below average standards are evident despite the high quality teaching and this anomaly reflects the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and how the improvements in teaching, the curriculum and leadership have not yet fully impacted on pupils in Years 5 and 6. Standards in reading are below average. Higher attaining pupils read fluently and accurately and can recall the main points of a story, but too many pupils are not as fluent as expected. Pupils struggle to use their knowledge of alphabetical order to quickly find words in a dictionary or an index. Writing is well taught through the very effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, good use is made of writing frames to help pupils to structure stories which have beginnings middles and endings and there is a strong emphasis on the correct and interesting use of adjectives and adverbs. Although presentation in books is mostly satisfactory with titling and underlining suitably used, handwriting is a weakness. Many pupils, including the higher attainers, do not use a fluent joined style.
76. The quality of teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6 is very good with some examples of excellent teaching. Teachers plan very carefully and the learning objectives are very clear and often shared with the pupils and then revisited in the plenary session to reinforce and consolidate learning. Teachers manage classes well and throughout the school the National Literacy Strategy is well established. Marking is variable in Key Stage 2 with some good examples of clear guidance being given to pupils so that they know how to improve their work. In the best practice, time is allowed for pupils to look at their work and carry out corrections.
77. The school, is beginning to set targets for pupils and does this well for pupils with special educational needs, helping them to make good progress. Reports to parents specify broad areas for improvement. However, targets are not yet detailed

enough nor shared often enough with pupils to help them to focus on small achievable steps to help them improve. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and hard-working and has managed the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy well with good support from the headteacher and other staff. Resources are adequate and there is a focus on making good use of funding to improve the book stocks. The library is a useful resource and is currently being catalogued through the hard work of the Chair of Governors and parents. Information communication technology is used in some lessons to help develop literacy skills but is not yet fully established in planning. There is a lack of evidence in pupils' work of word-processed pieces of work showing redrafting and improvements to writing.

MATHEMATICS

78. Since the last inspection, the results of the national tests have shown a steady improvement in pupils' attainment in mathematics in both Key Stages. The 1999 test results for seven year olds showed the proportion of pupils who attained Level 2 was well above the national average and the proportion of pupils who attained Level 3 was above the average. When compared with the results of schools with similar intakes, pupils' attainment is well above average. The trend of test results over the last five years has been steadily upward. The inspection findings confirm the upward trend. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is in-line with the national average. A significant number of pupils are likely to obtain the higher grade.
79. The 1999 national test results for eleven year olds show that the proportion of pupils who attained the national target of Level 4 and the higher Level 5 standard was well below the national average. When compared with similar schools, pupils' attainment was below average. However, over the past five years there has been a very significant improvement in standards. The inspection findings broadly reflect the performance of last year. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is below the national average but greatly above the attainment noted at the last inspection. The school has set realistic targets for further improvement.
80. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are alert to number. The quick-fire mental arithmetic at the start of each lesson excites interest and there is fierce competition to be first with the multiples of 2,3, 5 and 10. Pupils know addition and subtraction facts to 20 and use them to solve simple problems in number and in money; for example, they count the change from 20 pence or make up 20 pence using different sets of coins. Pupils confidently use mathematical terms, like less and more, odd and even. Pupils count forwards and backwards, and make up number sentences to reinforce their learning. They are beginning to recognise patterns in number and they are able to find the next number in a sequence. Pupils estimate and measure the dimensions of classroom objects using non-standard measures such as the finger-width or the handspan. They record their results and compare them with measurements in centimetres. Pupils use simple coordinates to fix a position on a map. They understand half and quarter turns and use road signs to confirm their learning. Pupils demonstrate their newly acquired skills by instructing others to move around the room giving both direction and distance.
81. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have a secure grasp of place value and the four operations of number and they are beginning to understand factors and multiples. Some younger pupils do not know their multiplication tables well enough and consequently they have difficulty in solving problems. Pupils in Year 3 count forwards and back in multiples of 2,5,10 and 50. They find the pattern in a

sequence of numbers and find the next term. They use what they know to arrange the multiples of five and ten in a Venn diagram. Pupils in Year 4 are familiar with the language of shape, such as horizontal and vertical. They plot points on a grid and join them to form a shape which they correctly name. They find its area and perimeter. Many older pupils are more secure in their knowledge of number bonds and use them well in finding equivalent fractions, decimals and percentages. They understand ratio and proportion and solve simple problems. Pupils use mirrors to find the lines of symmetry of regular shapes. Higher attaining pupils are able to plot points in all four quadrants of a graph and join them to produce similar shapes. Pupils know about probability and chance and understand how to place events on a probability line. They collect data about pupils' favourite cartoons and illustrate it on a bar chart or pictogram.

82. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and at least sound progress in Key Stage 2, where teachers and pupils are working hard to eliminate the gaps in background knowledge. Pupils' progress is enhanced at both key stages through daily practice in mental calculation and the revision and application of number facts. Pupils are encouraged to explain their thinking and in so doing, confirm their learning. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support and work to agreed targets. The grouping of pupils in Years 5 and 6 into sets, based on prior attainment, is promoting their learning and ensures a good match of tasks to pupil needs. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Classroom computers are not used consistently to support learning.
83. Numeracy skills are used satisfactorily in other areas of the curriculum. In geography, pupils read maps using four figure grid references. In history, pupils use a timeline to chronicle events and in science pupils use bar charts to illustrate the results of an experiment.
84. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and it is never less than satisfactory. It is good in the majority of lessons in both key stages and many lessons have very good features. Teachers are knowledgeable and understand well how pupils learn. The skilful use of humour and the patience shown by all teachers has a positive impact upon learning. Pupils have the confidence to ask questions when they do not understand. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are generally well supported. Teachers plan the lessons well and pupils are clear about what they have to do. Occasionally, the teacher attempts to cover too much ground in the course of a single lesson and pupils become unsure of the task. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils and this allows them to check progress in their learning. Classes are skilfully managed. Teachers create a positive and secure environment in which pupils want to know and want to succeed. The best teaching is clear and sequential. The lessons move at a good pace and the teaching is brisk. Teachers have a clear understanding of what their pupils know, understand and can do and use this information to plan lessons. Pupils are tested regularly and attainment levels are assessed and recorded. Teachers make very good use of resources to support learning, except information communication technology which is not used often enough to make an impact.

85. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the statutory requirement. The subject is very well managed by a knowledgeable and very committed co-ordinator. Objectives for improvement are clearly defined in the subject development plan. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented very well and is making a positive impact upon learning. The school has set suitable targets for next year based on pupils' present performance. In the near future pupils are to have individual targets to help increase motivation and improve standards. There are good displays of pupils' work which enhance the quality of learning and allow pupils to measure their own progress.

SCIENCE

86. In 1999 the number of pupils achieving the average standard for 7 year olds was well below the national average. There has been progress since these results and pupils in the current Year 2 are attaining broadly average standards in the work they have completed so far, which matches the findings of the last inspection.
87. Attainment at Key Stage 2 in the 1999 national tests was in-line with the national average but above the average for similar schools. Attainment in the national tests in 1999 showed a considerable improvement compared to the scores of the previous three years. Pupils in the current Year 6 are achieving below the national expectations for pupils of their age as they were at the time of the previous inspection. This is partially because nearly half the class are on the special needs register and also because too large a proportion of the science National Curriculum is taught in this year. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls throughout the school.
88. Progress is satisfactory throughout the course of the key stages and pupils make good progress in Year Four. In all year groups pupils are gaining practical experience and building up their knowledge in most of the required areas. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can recognise that some materials change their shape by processes such as bending, pushing and pulling. Previously, pupils have differentiated between natural and man-made materials and investigated properties of materials such as transparency. This work is built on that in Year 1 where pupils begin to develop an understanding of materials and their properties when testing a range of rubbers.
89. In Year 6 pupils, were working well below expected levels. Pupils identified two distinct habitats in the school grounds and the type of wildlife to be found there. Work in pupils' books shows that they have made considerable progress over the year and have reached the expected standards in their study of materials.
90. Pupils are suitably involved in investigations; for example, in Year 3, when identifying suitable materials for a damp course, pupils observe solubility when they put liquid onto sugar cubes.
91. The majority of pupils are well motivated to learn and they enjoy practical work in science. In Year 4 an investigation into flight using paper planes was most impressive; pupils were serious and careful with their observations, concentrating continuously throughout the two hour lesson. Younger pupils, particularly in Year 1, work sensibly and with enthusiasm. In all classes pupils try to remain focused but where there is a need to work at the pace of the whole class, some become restless. In Year 5, some pupils find it difficult to work together and share their

materials.

92. Teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons and some was excellent. Teachers are all well prepared with appropriate materials and give guidance on the potential dangers of using chemicals and of touching or tasting them. Teachers use well structured questions at the start of lessons. Where teaching is excellent, pupils revise their previous work recalling their scientific learning. They have clear targets for the lesson, which are achieved and expectations of attainment and behaviour are high. No time is lost and complex concepts are illustrated through investigations and clear explanations. Teachers' marking is varied. Sometimes pupils receive supportive comments to increase their scientific understanding but in other years marking is superficial ticks and no correcting of work by pupils is required. Teachers' subject knowledge is variable and some rely too heavily on the school scheme. Plenary sessions are generally well used to consolidate learning; for example, in Year 5 pupils consolidated their understanding of insulation and started to suggest other materials which could be tested.
93. Science has been well monitored and the co-ordinator works hard. Teachers are confident and have a consistent approach to practical investigations. However, the planning for science throughout the school is unsatisfactory. The school's scheme of work is unbalanced and leaves too many areas to be taught in Year 6. Progress is hampered by the inclusion of unnecessary activities such as chromatography in Year 1 and design and technology investigations in Year 5. Consequently there is limited time for example, to study the five senses in Key Stage 1 and this is taught in Year 3.

ART

94. Standards achieved at the end of both key stages are in-line with the national expectations and overall, pupils make steady progress. Improvements have been made since the last inspection due to the introduction of a clear scheme of work and marked improvements to the quality of teaching at the end of Key Stage 2. As in the last inspection there are examples of high quality artwork; for example, the aqua crayon work by Year 6 pupils based on *The Scream* by Edvard Munch and the good painting by Year 2 pupils in the style of Cezanne. Artwork is often the stimulus for expressive writing. Although this writing is generally well formed and makes use of some expressive vocabulary and practises the use of simile, for example, too often it is characterised by basic spelling and punctuation errors. Information communication technology is used for labelling but the use of artwork generated by computer software programs is limited.
95. Only two lessons were seen and these were both at Key Stage 2. The evidence from teachers' planning and the work on display indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory. Teachers showed sound knowledge and provide good guidance to pupils; for example, when challenging them to think about the mood created by colours or when showing them how to use soluble colouring pencils. Pupils are well managed in practical art lessons and show keenness and a positive attitude to their work. These effective elements of teaching help pupils to acquire new skills and to apply and sustain creative effort.
96. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The scheme of work sets out the skills and suggested activities to teach these skills for each year group. Art is appropriately taught through other topics and also as a specific subject in its own

right. Resources for art are good and a designated room for art is well used to help to raise standards. Annual reports to parents contain information about pupils' progress in art but there is little formal assessment and as a result it is not clear how well pupils have done and what they need to do to improve further.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97. Standards reached by the pupils have improved since the last inspection. Pupils achieve standards which are in-line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and progress is satisfactory. Evidence from lessons seen, work on display and a scrutiny of the pupils' books shows that by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils recognise the features of familiar products; for example, when looking closely at play equipment. They confidently use words and pictures to show what is needed in designing and making. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils think carefully about what materials to use, offer reasons for their choices and are able to evaluate and suggest improvements. Pupils use their literacy skills suitably by talking about what they have done; for example, when thinking of adjectives to describe the appearance and taste of cheese, and in writing explanatory texts for design and make tasks. Pupils satisfactorily draw on numeracy skills; for example, when looking at the use of geometric shapes in structures. Limited use is made of information communications technology in designing or in recording the outcomes of design and make tasks. Pupils have good attitudes and are creative and enthusiastic about the tasks they are set.
98. The improvements since the last inspection are due to the introduction of a clear policy and a comprehensive scheme of work which are well used by teachers. Teaching has also improved and there is evidence that pupils are well taught. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection but a scrutiny of teachers' planning shows that lessons are carefully planned with clear learning objectives. As a result good learning takes place; for example, when a Year 1 class made models of playground slides using different construction kits and improved their techniques of joining and assembling materials for a purpose.
99. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and sets a good example in her teaching and also in providing guidance and support for colleagues. Parents are kept suitably informed of progress but assessment is not yet focused sufficiently on a clear analysis of the skills that pupils have developed from year to year. Resources are adequate, they are well organised and easily accessible to pupils. Food technology involving cooking, has to take place in the staffroom which is removed from classrooms and this practice is an area that the school has identified as in need of improvement.

GEOGRAPHY

100. Attainment at Key Stages 1 and 2 is comparable to national expectations. This judgement is based upon the evidence from pupils' books, lessons observed and the intended activities planned for the forthcoming residential experience for Year 6.
101. Key Stage 1 pupils have been on a residential visit where they have had many opportunities to develop mapping skills by making routes of walks and to study the use of the land. This experience is built upon the work in Year 1 where pupils consider the school and its locality, and are developing early mapping skills such as aerial views and plans. In the lesson seen, which was concluding their study of the

school locality, pupils in Year 1 made a block graph of their transport to school, and also recorded this on the computer. Individually they made a pictogram identifying who lives near, and who lives far from the school, based upon whether they live on the local estate. Pupils were confident and clear about their tasks.

102. At Key Stage 2, no teaching in geography occurs in the term of the inspection in Year 6. In their previous work this class has studied regions in the United Kingdom and journeys linked to industry and pollution. In the summer term pupils are due to visit Fairbourne, where they study a beach locality and are involved in many practical map reading related experiences.
103. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the key stage. In Year 5, pupils have studied latitude and longitude, world climates and compared desert and polar climates, and will be studying rivers next term. During the inspection pupils were studying Corfu, which links with their history study of the Ancient Greeks. In this lesson pupils successfully learned many Ordnance Survey symbols. They could locate many of the main towns in Corfu and transferred their newly acquired understanding of a symbol to design their own symbols to suit the description of the location given to them. Many found this difficult, not because they did not understand symbols but because they lacked the imagination to design one. From previous lessons pupils were aware of the main industry in Corfu and could locate the island on a map of Europe.
104. Geographical skills are developed consistently throughout the key stages. In Year 3, pupils study the locality of the school and its surroundings using maps and keys and evaluate a local site. They have made comparisons between man-made and local features and recorded this on a map. In Year 4, pupils have recorded rainfall and wind speed to a good standard in their study of weather.
105. One lesson in each key stage was seen and the teaching was of a good standard in both. In Key Stage 2 the teacher made clear to pupils the objectives of the lesson and the task they were to undertake. Through discussion and good questioning pupils were helped to recall previous learning and at a brisk pace were taught the main geographical skills of the lesson. Good use was made of the overhead projector so that all pupils could participate together and pupils made significant progress in their knowledge of Ordnance Survey symbols. This was swiftly assessed and then the concept was well used for the pupils' own tasks. In both lessons seen rewards and praise were well used and the teachers achieved their planned objectives. Both lessons were characterised by teachers being well organised and using appropriate practical activities to teach and reinforce geographical skills and understanding. In both lessons seen the pace was appropriate, the objectives of the lesson were met and the pupils made significant gains in their knowledge.
106. Pupils' attitudes are good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2, where work is of a slower pace. Pupils enjoy the subject and take satisfaction from completing their task. In both classes pupils work with enthusiasm and are keen to answer questions. They work co-operatively and help each other where necessary.
107. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and thorough and supports staff suitably. Since the previous inspection the school has introduced a scheme of work and teachers plan carefully to this. The scheme is now due for review to take into account the requirements of Curriculum 2000. There is a considerable emphasis on skills within the teaching and this needs to be formalised with skills based targets for each year group. Some resources have been acquired since the last inspection but more maps, posters and CD-ROMs are still needed.

HISTORY

108. No teaching was seen at Key Stage 1 or at the end of Key Stage 2. Attainment is judged to be of a satisfactory standard in both key stages based upon planned work, and the work in pupils' books.
109. In Year 2 pupils have made comparisons between then and now and have undertaken some work to develop an understanding of chronology. In their areas of study they have produced some good work, writing about Mary Seacole, Florence Nightingale, Queen Elizabeth 1, the Gunpowder Plot and the Great Fire of London. They are currently learning about medieval England, linking this to their work from the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils in Year 1 have been learning about schools in the past comparing them to their own experiences and have a 'Victorian schoolroom' outside their classroom where they write on slates and practice writing patterns in the sand.
110. In Key Stage 2, Year 6 pupils have learned about life in Victorian times, comparing life for the rich and the poor, the impact of the industrial revolution and social issues such as child labour. They will be studying the Aztecs later in the year.
111. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the key stage and good progress in Year 4. They are developing historical enquiry skills and a good understanding of life in the periods that they study. Pupils in Year 5 have studied Britain since the 1930s and as part of this, have visited Coventry. They are currently studying the Ancient Greeks. In the lesson seen, pupils were grappling with the idea of slavery and how this affected the slave and his master. They had previously studied the Spartans and are developing an understanding of how different civilisations viewed the world. In Year 4, pupils in the lesson seen were researching life in Ancient Egypt, primarily looking at the pyramids. In their previous work, which was immaculately presented, they had studied life in Tudor times comparing life for the rich and the poor in the town and the country and had developed a good understanding of this period. In Year 3, pupils had been studying the Romans and the Anglo-Saxons.
112. Teaching is well organised and at least satisfactory. The pace of lessons is good and pupils are given targets for their learning. Good teaching was characterised by setting open-ended tasks to make pupils think and by considerable discussion which helped pupils to understand about the period of history they were studying. Particularly in Year 5 this extends pupils' awareness of the structure of society and their sense of morality, justice and knowledge of right and wrong.
113. Pupils' attitudes in the lessons seen are generally good. Younger pupils in Year 4 work particularly hard and are very involved with their tasks. Older pupils become quite animated when discussing the issue of slavery and are starting to compare the value systems of the Ancient Greeks to their own.
114. Since the previous inspection, the school has implemented a scheme of work which is well supported by a class visit linked to every topic. The school realises that there is a need to replan the curriculum and that the introduction of yearly skill based targets should be incorporated. There are sufficient books and good use is made of artefacts but posters with visual impact and CD-ROMs would help pupils' understanding.

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

115. Attainment in information communication technology at both key stages is below national standards. Pupils make slow progress. This finding is the same as that of the last inspection. The school has a priority plan for the development of information communication technology that includes the provision of additional software and hardware, a maintenance contract which will ensure that all equipment functions reliably and a programme of training for the staff. The recent appointment of a teacher to co-ordinate the subject will add fresh impetus to the plan.
116. Standards in information communication technology are unsatisfactory because provision is not consistently written into lesson plans. There is no consistently applied list of computer skills that pupils are expected to achieve by a certain age. Consequently most teaching of information communication technology is incidental and not part of a whole-school plan that would ensure progression through the curriculum.
117. Pupils have a positive attitude towards information communication technology and a significant number have satisfactory word-processing skills. Pupils are excited by what it is possible to achieve with information communication technology. This was demonstrated at the after school ICT club when pupils were discussing how to set up a web site on the Internet for the school. Pupils enjoy information communication technology.
118. In Key Stage 1, pupils are familiar with pictogram programme that they use to produce charts in geography, but they need a lot of help to use the mouse and to correctly place the cursor. Pupils also read a story set on the computer and know how to highlight the text. Some pupils know how to programme the roamer, a mechanical robot, for distance and direction.
119. In the one lesson observed in Year 3 the teacher ably demonstrates the use of the colour magic programme and the music programme. A few pupils show satisfactory ability with the mouse and most understand that data can be saved and retrieved. However, the majority have no opportunity to practise basic skills and to confirm learning. Pupils in year 4 use a CD-ROM to find information about Ancient Egypt. They learn how to print the information they need. Year 5 pupils support their learning about time by using a clock programme. In Year 6, with considerable help from the teacher, pupils plot a simple straight line graph and understand how to mark out the axes.
120. Teachers work hard to improve their knowledge of information communication technology. The planning for information communication technology is not yet effective and skills are not systematically taught across the curriculum. There is no formal system of assessment and therefore teachers are not clear about what pupils know, understand and can do. This means that pupils' skills develop at an uneven rate and there are wide gaps in pupils' understanding and in their ability to apply information communication technology.

MUSIC

121. Pupils make satisfactory progress in music in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2. Progress in singing is very good throughout the school and is achieved by very good teaching and frequent opportunities for the pupils to sing a wide range of music. Older pupils are learning how to write music on a simple score. Pupils evaluate their own work and that of others. They identify ways in which it can be improved. Listening to music is less well developed although pupils have the opportunity to reflect upon music as they enter and leave the daily assembly.
122. In Key Stage 1, pupils enjoy singing and performing action songs. Even though the correct pitch is not always sustained, pupils give a lively interpretation of well known songs. They respond well to rhythm and pulse and keep time with the music. Pupils in Year 1 sing the Ginger Bread Man with great enthusiasm and some style. They know the difference between loud and soft but prefer the more dynamic sounds. They sing well together. In Year 2, pupils learn songs from the score of Joseph and cope well with the complex intervals of the music. There is an increased awareness of the need for different emphases depending upon the meaning of the words. The pupils sing Any Dream Will Do expressively and give a lively performance of Jacob and Son. Pupils, when asked for the first important rule of singing said, 'Use the diaphragm!' When asked how the music made them feel responses ranged from "sad" to "excited" to "amazing".
123. Pupils continue to build upon their performance skills in Key Stage 2. One class skilfully links the study of Ancient Egypt to the Song of the Pyramid Builders, a challenging piece of music that they sing with good intonation, capturing the mood of the song very well. Pupils sing a simple round and good progress is made in maintaining an independent line and in becoming aware of the performance of others. The pupils also use seascape paintings as a stimulus for composing their own music for percussion instruments. They divide into 5 groups to prepare various aspects of the scene, such as rain and thunder and then combine their efforts in a single orchestral piece, producing a vivid and tempestuous seascape! Another class learns the songs from Cinderella and skilfully accompanies itself on a range of percussion instruments. They sing Daydream very expressively and with an excellent awareness of phrasing. Pupils have crystal clear diction and a very good sense of rhythm. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils use the language of music such as 'ostinato' and 'crescendo' and this helps their understanding and enhances progress.
124. The teaching of music is sound in Key Stage 1, good in Key Stage 2 and excellent in the Year 5 singing class. Teaching is significantly better than at the last inspection because there is a far higher degree of consistency in practice. Music teaching is supported most ably and enthusiastically by a visiting pianist who inspires both teachers and pupils to greater achievements. Together they create a positive atmosphere in which pupils become confident performers. Pupils are managed very well; resources are well organised and used. Teachers enjoy what they do and pupils respond positively. Although some teachers are less confident than others, all go out of their way to make music a creative experience. Relationships are invariably good and laced with good humour. Occasionally, the creative spirit is dampened by an over emphasis upon control, but good music-making usually emerges. Teachers do not formally assess pupils' work but are aware of what pupils know, understand and can do.

125. The subject is very well managed by the subject co-ordinator, who has a very good knowledge and understanding of music. She provides good support for her colleagues. The scheme of work is well written and ensures good continuity and progression through the curriculum. Music provision is supplemented by the opportunity for pupils to learn to play the recorder and by the end of term concerts, where musical prowess is on display to a wider audience of parents and friends. Resources are plentiful and the percussion section represents music from around the world. There are excellent displays of pupils' work in the corridors and classrooms. In exemplary style, one class used Ravel's Bolero to stimulate poetry and art work. Another class found inspiration in Paul Simon's Homeless, and composed rhythmic ostinatos on a variety of instruments to accompany the tune. The time allocated to the provision of music is relatively short but very good use is made of the time available. The school has maintained a good standard in music provision and progress since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

126. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in the physical education programme, which includes all the main elements. This is a similar finding to the last inspection. A particular strength is the provision for outdoor pursuits and adventurous activity. All pupils, including those in Key Stage 1, have the opportunity to spend time away from home where they can learn to be independent and enjoy a wide range of exciting experiences. Years 5 and 6, for example, spend a week on the Welsh coast, involved in water sports, map reading and orienteering. There are many photographs on display which emphasise the importance that the school attaches to the experience. All pupils have the opportunity to learn to swim. All Year 6 leavers in 1999 were able to swim the national standard of 25 metres, which is a higher proportion than that usually found. The headteacher attaches particular importance to this activity. Progress in swimming and in adventurous pursuits is good. The school has recently returned to representative sport and last year won the junior schools' soccer cup.
127. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn how to plan and perform activities safely. They learn how to link activities together in a simple sequence. They practise curled and stretching shapes and move their bodies in such a way that they maintain contact with floor and bench. Pupils learn how to make better shapes through practice on their own and by working with a partner. They demonstrate what they can do to the class and offer critical comment to others. They develop an awareness of the positive effects of physical exercise.
128. In Key Stage 2, pupils learn how to throw, catch and field the ball and use their skills to good effect in a practice game. Even though the weather is inclement the pupils maintain good physical discipline, stay on task and work hard. Year 4 practise a clock dance and demonstrate an impressive array of music and movement skills. They perform at a standard which exceeds the expectation for their age group. Pupils have good control of their body movements and interpret the music well. They make sensible and helpful judgements of each other's performance. Similarly, Year 5 interpret Chariots of Fire and develop strategies for coping with slow motion movement, although the music was not quite loud enough to convey the full dramatic effect. Pupils from Year 6 visit the secondary school swimming pool where their behaviour is exemplary. They are safe and secure in the water. The most accomplished pupils swim through hoops underwater. All are confident of taking the next step. All pupils improve their stroke technique and build stamina. In all lessons

in physical education, pupils respond eagerly to fresh challenges and tackle them with energy and commitment.

129. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and it is good in more than half the lessons observed. This is a similar finding to the last inspection. Teachers devise appropriate warm up activities and encourage the pupils to talk about the effect of physical exercise on their bodies. Lessons are well organised and safely conducted. Teachers intervene appropriately during the lesson and sometimes demonstrate what they want the pupils to do. Teachers are skilled in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language take a full and productive part in the lessons. Relationships are good and this helps to ensure a positive environment in which pupils enjoy physical activity and progress their skills. The school caretaker makes a very valuable contribution to soccer, teaching the importance of fair play and regular training.
130. The subject is well led and managed. The scheme of work is excellent and provides sample plans for all lessons. The headteacher, who co-ordinates the subject, gives strong and effective support to her colleagues. The development plan for the subject has well defined targets and includes monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Resources are satisfactory, although equipment is needed for an outdoor adventure playground for Key Stage 1. The playgrounds are extensive and the grassed area is an excellent facility. This has a positive effect on the standards attained. As at the last inspection, extra-curricular sports activities in soccer, netball and dance enhance the provision and contribute significantly to attainment in physical education.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

131. Attainment at Key Stage 1 and 2 is in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils make satisfactory and steady progress throughout Key Stage 1 and in the younger classes of Key Stage 2 building on the work studied in each year to a greater depth.
132. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of celebrations and special meals such as birthdays and weddings and of those linked to religious practice; for example, at Christmas and Passover. Through this they are starting to understand that different faith groups have special beliefs and ways of looking at the world and to respect these views. They recognise some of the symbols associated with the Passover 'Seder' meal and the historical background to the festival. They are starting to reflect on the feelings of others based upon their own experiences. Knowledge of Christian belief and practice is developed in Year 1. Reception pupils gain from the ethnic minorities' support teacher who starts the process of developing an understanding that faith groups have different beliefs and customs by introducing the Chinese New Year and later in the term, Easter celebrations and customs.
133. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are reflecting upon the moral messages to be found in Bible stories and how these can influence their lives. In the Year 6 lesson seen pupils were discussing the story of David and Goliath, considering the moral message and analysing such terms as 'God be with you'. Pupils in younger classes develop considerable understanding of Christianity and Islam. In Year 4 they make good progress when learning about the life of and call of Muhammed, and the symbolic meaning of Christian artefacts. They learn about places of worship for both

these religions. In Year 3, pupils have considered the concept of pilgrimage and the Biblical stories of the Creation. In the lesson seen they compared Biblical creation to an Australian legend, noting that they both conclude with the phrase 'and it was good'. Pupils then looked at a Peruvian wall hanging depicting the Creation through Christian eyes, showing aspects of good and evil in everyday life. Through this artefact and teacher's questions pupils identified good characteristics of society such as peace, harmony and sharing and decided that fighting and argument are undesirable. In this way they successfully identified some basic Christian teachings.

134. All the teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory. Teachers are all well prepared with a clear focus and objectives, which they sometimes share with the pupils. In all the lessons seen, teachers made the topic relevant to the pupils by starting from the pupils' own experiences. Through a range of approaches teachers help pupils to reflect and learn from religion as well as learning about religion.
135. Pupils' attitudes to religious education are generally good. They find the subject interesting, but their attention drifts if questioning lacks challenge. Pupils are confident in their ideas about right and wrong.
136. The co-ordinator is committed and supportive. There is a well planned policy document which includes skills, knowledge, commitment and an emphasis on values which pupils can incorporate within their own lives. These characteristics are reflected in the teaching. The Wolverhampton Agreed Syllabus requires pupils in Key Stage 2 to study Christianity and two religions but the third religion is not given sufficient prominence. Teachers evaluate their work and indicate that visits, particularly to places of worship, are very valuable and should become a more regular feature within the curriculum. In the last inspection there was a recommendation to purchase a set of Bibles and artefacts and the school still needs to do this.