

# INSPECTION REPORT

**LITTLE BLOXWICH CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Walsall

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104222

Headteacher: Mrs. L. B. Carter

Reporting inspector: Mr J. Sorsby  
14042

Dates of inspection: 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> March 2001

Inspection number: 192599

Full 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:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Grenfell Road Walsall
Postcode:	WS3 3DL
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor K. Phillips
Date of previous inspection:	10 <sup>th</sup> March 1997

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<b>Team members</b>			<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
14042	Julian Sorsby	Registered inspector		Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught How well the school is led and managed What the school should do to improve further
19567	Mary Malin	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents How well does the school care for its pupils
25778	Andrew Hicks	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Information and communication technology Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
22685	Natalie Moss	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education Equality of opportunity	
19386	Trevor Watts	Team inspector	Science Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage Art and design Physical education Provision for pupils with special educational needs	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Little Bloxwich School is a primary school of average size. It caters for boys and girls in the 4-11 age range. It is situated in the north of Walsall in the West Midlands in an area of mixed housing, ranging from council flats to owner-occupied houses. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is 18.4 per cent, and 0.9 per cent have statements of their needs. Both these proportions are below the national average. Fourteen per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. There are 223 pupils on roll, compared to the national average of 243. Four pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and all pupils speak English fluently, none as a second language. Pupils enter the school in the reception class, but most have had pre-school education, usually at the neighbouring Local Education Authority nursery school. There is a wide range of attainment on entry. Overall it is below that expected for pupils of this age and is lower than at the time of the last inspection.

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

Satisfactory. Children progress very well in the Foundation Stage, and good learning takes place in Key Stage 1. Standards in Key Stage 1 are improving consistently, while those in Key Stage 2, having fluctuated slightly for several years, fell significantly in English and science in 2000 as a consequence of a weak cohort of pupils and serious staffing and leadership problems. Standards are again rising. Overall, teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage, good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. There are specific areas of weakness in teaching in each key stage, those in Key Stage 2 particularly affecting standards. Since the appointment of a new headteacher two years ago, leadership and management have been satisfactory and the school has improved. However, some weaknesses that have impacted on standards, particularly the co-ordination of English, remain to be dealt with effectively. Overall, the effectiveness of the school and the value for money it provides are judged to be satisfactory.

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

- Teaching is good and pupils learn well, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school.
- The school cares well for its pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good and relationships are very good.

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

- Standards in English, and in particular writing at Key Stage 2
- Standards in science at Key Stage 2
- Aspects of the leadership and management of the school, in particular the co-ordination of English, the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching throughout the school and the management role of the deputy headteacher.
- The quality of teaching in some year groups

*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 1997. All key issues then identified have been dealt with in the past two years. Improvements include the overall quality of teaching; teaching and learning of English in Key Stage 1 and in design and technology and physical education throughout the school; the curriculum in design and technology, geography and in the foundation stage; standards achieved by pupils in science at Key Stage 1 and design and technology at Key Stage 2; procedures for the care of pupils; the assessment of special educational needs and the quality of information provided to parents. The new information and communications technology suite is a major improvement as are numerous improvements to accommodation.

Standards in information and communications technology could not keep pace with the requirements of a developing curriculum because of the poor quality of resources available until the recent development of the new computer suite. Standards are rising but remain below those at the time of the last inspection. The quality of teaching, learning and standards in English at Key Stage 2 have deteriorated because of the decline in the quality of co-ordination of the subject. Standards in science at Key Stage 2 have also fallen. The school is committed to and has the capacity to improve further.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A	B	E	E	well above A average above B average average C below average D well below E average
mathematics	C	B	C	C	
science	D	C	E	E	

In tests for 11-year-olds standards in English and science deteriorated significantly in the year 2000 to a level well below average while in mathematics they fell to become average. Inspection evidence indicates that in English and mathematics, standards are now below rather than well below average. Tests for 7-year-olds in 2000 indicate standards in reading and writing have risen since the last inspection and are above average, while those in mathematics have risen and are now average. For seven year olds, since the last inspection, standards have risen consistently. For eleven-year-olds, in mathematics and science they had risen prior to last year's deterioration, while in English there has been continual decline from 1998 to 2000.

In 2000 the school exceeded its target for the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 at age 11 in mathematics but did not reach its targets in English. This is likely to be repeated in 2001, because a further relatively weak cohort with significant behaviour problems has particular problems with writing.

Four and five-year-old children achieve well while the achievement of six and seven-year-olds is satisfactory. During these three years their standards in reading and writing improve and become

above average, while in mathematics they remain satisfactory. Achievement by eight to eleven-year-olds is satisfactory in mathematics and science but unsatisfactory in English.

Standards at the end of both key stages in design and technology, geography, physical education and religious education are in line with those expected for pupils of that age. Standards in history are above expectations, and those in information and communication technology are below expectations at the end of both key stages. There was too little evidence seen to judge standards in art and design and music.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are good. They enjoy coming to school and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. There is a small number of pupils who have challenging behaviour, but this seldom becomes disruptive other than in Year 6 where it is impacting on standards.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good. Pupils' personal development is good. They become responsible members of the school society.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged up to 5 years</b>	<b>aged 5-7 years</b>	<b>aged 7-11 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Good	Satisfactory

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

Ninety-four per cent of teaching observed was satisfactory or better, thirty-one per cent was very good or better and six per cent was unsatisfactory. The teaching of literacy in Key Stage 1 is very good. In Key Stage 2 it is satisfactory overall. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Pupils' learning is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2.

Foundation Stage teaching is very good, and children learn well. In Key Stage 1, teachers' knowledge of the subjects they are teaching and their ability to teach basic skills such as phonics are good.

In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching varies considerably, preventing pupils from always learning effectively and their standards deteriorate. Pupils' work over the longer term demonstrates that teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have not all developed their skills to be able to use the National Literacy Strategy to best effect, as a result of unsatisfactory co-ordination of English.

The school meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs well, and pupils make good progress. More able pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory progress in Key

Stage 2. Good planning takes place in both key stages but it is seldom implemented effectively in Key Stage 2.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in the remainder of the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Teachers' planning meets the needs of pupils and together with good support from support staff results in pupils making good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good while that for their personal and spiritual development is good. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. There are very good procedures to ensure the protection and welfare of pupils and good procedures for promoting good behaviour and for assessing pupils' attainment and progress.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school works well with parents. The quality of written information provided to parents is very good, as is the range of opportunities to meet staff.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and management. However, the role of the deputy headteacher is insufficiently supportive to the headteacher and the co-ordination of English is unsatisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and play a satisfactory role in shaping its future.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school closely and effectively evaluates its performance but is only now able to take effective action in all areas of weakness.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory use is made of resources to improve pupils' standards.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and resources	The school's accommodation is good. There is an appropriate match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum and pupils. Learning resources are satisfactory.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children like coming to school</li><li>• The school's high expectations of pupils</li><li>• The help the school gives pupils to become mature and responsible</li><li>• Behaviour is good</li><li>• Pupils make good progress</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The range of activities outside lessons</li><li>• The amount of homework set</li><li>• The closeness with which the school works with parents</li><li>• The information they receive on their children's progress</li><li>• The leadership and management of the school</li></ul>

Inspectors agree that children like coming to school, that they grow into mature and responsible pupils and that behaviour is good. Particularly in the case of talented and more able pupils and also in some year groups and some subjects, inspectors do not agree that expectations are sufficiently high or that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Inspectors are satisfied with the range of activities outside lessons, the amount of homework set and the leadership and management of the school. Inspectors judge the closeness of the work with parents as good and the information parents receive on their children's progress as very good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

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

1. Children in the foundation stage are attaining in line with national expectations by the time they leave the class, especially in their social, language and mathematics skills, and in their general awareness of the world around them. Some children achieve well above standards expected for their age, reflecting their greater attainment when they join the school. Children are friendly among themselves and to adults, share paints and equipment, and are polite. They listen attentively and are keen to give their own answers and contributions in discussions. They learn to count and to recognise numerals, and are starting to write. Children sing and play musical instruments, and they use paints, crayons, fabrics, and a computer as part of their creative learning. Given their attainment when they join the school, children under five are achieving well as a result of very good teaching.

2. In English, at the time of the previous inspection, standards were broadly average at the end of both key stages and pupils made good progress. Since then, the National Literacy Strategy has been implemented, resulting in a more focused approach to the teaching of English by many teachers, especially in Key Stage 1. Pupils start Year 1 with average levels of attainment. This is maintained in Key Stage 1 but falls in Key Stage 2. This is largely as a result of weaknesses in writing and teachers' implementation of their planning.

3. Inspection evidence demonstrates that speaking and listening skills are satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils' reading at Key Stage 1 is good, but is satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Writing, which is also good at Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. The results of the 2000 national tests at the age of eleven indicate that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 in English was well below the national average for eleven-year-olds and that the percentage of pupils reaching the higher than expected Level 5 was also well below the national average. Results were well below average when compared with similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils in this year's Year 6 are on target to do better than last year's, but that their levels of attainment remain below the national expectations for their age.

4. Pupils' standards in mathematics are in line with national averages at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. National standards in the end of key stage tests taken in Year 2 and Year 6 have risen since the last inspection and the school's results have improved in line with these national improvements. By the end of Key Stage 1, nearly all pupils add and subtract numbers to 100 correctly. In Key Stage 2, test results have improved steadily in recent years. In 2000 they were in line with all schools nationally and when compared to similar schools. A higher proportion of more able pupils achieved the higher than expected Level 5 than the national average. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils calculate confidently and accurately with whole numbers and decimals with numbers to 1000 or more. They have secure mental mathematics skills, and many have good recall of basic number facts such as multiplication tables. The standard of work seen throughout the school confirm that pupils are on track to achieve standards in line with national averages.

5. In science, the standards of work seen indicate that pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1, and are attaining in line with national expectations by the age of seven years. Their progress slows in Key Stage 2, and standards are just below expectations by the age of eleven. While this is unsatisfactory it is an improvement since the 2000 end of Key Stage 2 tests in which pupils' standards were well below national averages. Pupils have a sound understanding of scientific enquiry as they develop through the school, and understand different forces and energies around us, such as gravity,

electricity and light. They understand that plants grow by photosynthesis, and that micro-organisms can have beneficial effects, as well as spread diseases.

6. In art and design, pupils in Key Stage 1 attain well. They make good progress in using many different materials such as paint, chalk, charcoal, pencils and ink, as well as different fabrics, papers and cards in making collages and patterns. They are careful as well as imaginative in their work, whether printing repeated blocks with paint or ink, sketching a nearby building, or using the computer to make patterns. There was too little evidence of art and design in key stage 1 to judge pupils' standards.

7. It was possible to see only one lesson in design and technology during the inspection. Displays and photographs of pupils' work show that in the aspects of the subject seen, they reach the standards expected for pupils of their age. Standards in Key Stage 2 have improved since the last inspection, when they were reported as below the expected standard. In Key Stage 1, pupils use materials such as paper and card to make simple toys and model houses. In Key Stage 2, pupils design and make a range of products in wood, card and fabrics.

8. Throughout the school, standards in geography have been maintained since the last inspection and are satisfactory, largely because of an emphasis on practical study.

9. As at the time of the last inspection, standards in history are good throughout the school. Teacher's planning is good and uses a wide variety of methods and strategies to encourage the skills of thought and deduction through direct learning and practical activities.

10. Pupils' standards in information and communications technology are below national expectations at the end of both key stages. Standards were in line with national expectations at the time of the last report. However, since then, standards declined because old equipment became increasingly unreliable and pupils consequently had insufficient opportunities to learn information and communications technology. The school set up a new computer room in September 2000, and pupils have made good progress since then. However, this has been insufficient time to recover the lost ground, although standards are rising quickly and are approaching those expected in all years. Key Stage 1 pupils use a word processor to write pen portraits of themselves. Pupils make satisfactory use of different letter styles and simple layout features to enhance the quality of their work. This work is up to the standard expected for pupils of this age. In Key Stage 2, pupils use word processors to write on a range of topics, often linked to work in English.

11. In music, the standard of pupils' singing is in line with national expectations. No inspection evidence was available to assess other aspects of the subject, and it is not therefore possible to judge standards overall, or to assess pupils' progress.

12. Pupils are attaining in line with expectations in physical education at the end of both key stages, and their progress is satisfactory in all of the aspects of the subject. Some pupils are very good swimmers, whilst others are developing team games, such as football and hockey, well. Pupils become confident and agile, with sound levels of stamina and fitness, encouraged by participation in gymnastics lessons, as well as dances of several different kinds. There is a good sports day each year, and pupils also have the opportunity to take part in outdoor pursuits.

13. Whilst it was only possible to observe a limited number of religious education lessons, these observations show that pupils make good progress in the subject. Pupils at the ages of seven and eleven reach standards in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in the subject have been maintained since the previous inspection.

14. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and they achieve well because their needs are identified at an early stage, and they then receive the necessary support to meet their needs. This may be in classes or in separate lessons with a support assistant or a teacher. They make good progress in reading and writing and mathematics, and, in some cases, in their attitude and behaviour. Improvements in these areas help them to make better progress in the other subjects of the curriculum.

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

15. As at the time of the last inspection pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good and contribute well to their learning.

16. Pupils are well motivated towards school and their work. Parents state that their children like school. Pupils arrive on time and are ready to start the day with enthusiasm. They are happy to talk about what they are doing and take great pride in showing their work. These positive attitudes encourage pupils' learning.

17. While a small minority of pupils display challenging behaviour, the majority of pupils' behaviour is good in class and around the school. Pupils move calmly and quietly through rooms, they are friendly and polite to visitors and to each other. They work well together in pairs or small groups and share equipment well. A significant minority of pupils in Year 6 display challenging behaviour, and while this is usually well managed by teachers and support staff, it does on occasions prove disruptive as, for example, in an observed science lesson where learning by the whole class was affected.

18. Pupils' personal development is good. They are given a range of responsibilities in school, for example as assembly helpers. Year 5 pupils run a tuck shop and Year 6 pupils help younger pupils in Year 1. All pupils clear up in the dining room. However, most pupils show less responsibility and initiative within their own learning, for example in the organisation of their work or in the selection of resources. Pupils display pride in having their good work or achievements recognised through the school's Gold Book Assembly. Pupils understand school and class rules and most have a clear sense of right and wrong. Pupils' good personal development assists them to focus on their learning and to make progress.

19. Relationships throughout the school between pupils and with staff are good. Staff are good role models and this encourages pupils' good behaviour and their learning.

20. As at the time of the last inspection pupils' rate of attendance is satisfactory at 94 per cent. All absences are appropriately investigated by staff and authorised. Their satisfactory attendance supports pupils' learning.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

21. The quality of teaching is very good in the reception class, the only class in the Foundation Stage, good for pupils in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2. Despite two lessons in Key Stage 1 being unsatisfactory, teaching in the key stage is good overall because more than two thirds of lessons were good or better, and a quarter were very good or better. In Key Stage 2, one unsatisfactory lesson was observed and there were particular weaknesses in the teaching of literacy. Teaching in this key stage is satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching has remained a strength of the school in the Foundation Stage. Although no unsatisfactory lessons were observed at the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching in both key stages has improved with considerably more good, very good and excellent teaching taking place. Where teaching is good or better, pupils learn

well and this is having a positive effect on their standards. Unsatisfactory and satisfactory teaching is localised to a few classes in the school, and is having a negative effect on pupil's achievements, particularly in Key Stage 2 and in English.

22. The teaching of children in the reception class is very good and children learn well. Lessons are planned very well for each of the areas of learning that the children are taught. They are very well organised, with good resources being used very effectively to encourage children's learning. Relationships between staff and children are very positive, and lessons are run at a challenging pace that the children enjoy and respond to very well. The teacher creates many opportunities in all lessons to reinforce basic skills in speaking, listening and counting.

23. In English, at the time of previous inspection, teaching was good at both key stages. Teaching is now good in Key Stage 1, but overall satisfactory in Key Stage 2. There are variations in teachers' skills and teaching for some of the older pupils is unsatisfactory. Not all teachers have a secure understanding of the National Literacy Strategy, nor do they all use the time appropriately to ensure that the different elements defined in the strategy are well covered, especially writing. In the best lessons, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and teaching methods inspire pupils to learn successfully. Pupils are well motivated by interesting tasks and lessons proceed at a brisk pace. When teaching is weaker, the work set is not always matched well to the full range of pupils' abilities and this leads to some pupils finding lessons either too easy or too difficult and not progressing successfully. Planning lacks clear objectives, activities are not linked well to use all the opportunities offered by a topic within the literacy hour and the pace of lessons is slow. These factors also detract from pupils' learning.

24. In mathematics, the quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. Nearly all lessons seen were satisfactory or better. Some were good or very good, but one unsatisfactory lesson was seen. Inspection of pupils' work from earlier in the year indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress overall, and in the long-term teaching is satisfactory, as at the time of the last inspection. All teachers have good relationships with their classes, and they manage pupils well. Lessons follow the structure set out in the National Numeracy Strategy, but not all teachers plan sufficiently to meet the needs of different ability groups within the class. Teaching is most effective where this does happen and learning is best. In some classes, teachers frequently set the same work for all pupils. Whilst this is appropriate for most pupils, it does not always provide sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils, and is too hard for some lower attaining pupils.

25. The teaching of science is good in Key Stage 1, and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. This shows deterioration in the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 since the last inspection and maintenance of standards at Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 1 teachers plan their lessons well, and prepare a good selection of resources to use in the lessons. Teaching is enthusiastic, this motivates pupils well, and they learn well. In Key Stage 2, the teaching is equally well planned, but lessons are taught at a slower, less challenging pace. Although the use of scientific investigation as the basis of teaching is good, teachers do not always clearly set out the experiments, and pupils do not always fully understand what they have to do. Overall, learning of science at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory and is resulting in pupils learning being satisfactory in Year 6 and their standards of work being just below the national average, significantly better than in 2000 when pupils' standards were well below the national average.

26. Although no art and design lessons were observed in Key Stage 1, evidence from pupils' earlier work indicates that the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good. A great variety of techniques, media and tools are used well by pupils, lesson planning is detailed, and teachers' expectations are high. All these factors promote good learning. Although one satisfactory lesson was observed in Key Stage 2, there was insufficient additional evidence to make a judgement on the

quality of teaching. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is as reported at the time of the last inspection.

27. In design and technology, although only one lesson was seen, a considerable array of work produced by pupils of all ages was available for scrutiny. This demonstrates that the quality of teaching of design and technology is satisfactory in both key stages. The lesson seen was good. It was well prepared and proceeded at a brisk pace. The quality of teaching of design and technology has improved since the last inspection.

28. Due to timetable restrictions, no judgement can be made of the quality of teaching of geography or history.

29. Two information and communications technology lessons were observed during the inspection. Both were satisfactory. Whilst this is insufficient to judge the quality of teaching across the school, pupils are seen to have made good progress this year. Both observed lessons took place in the new computer room. The lessons were well organised and tasks were appropriate for the pupils' abilities and prior experience. The teachers demonstrated techniques effectively, so that pupils were clear what they were trying to achieve although some found it hard to follow precisely the instructions they were given. However, the teachers resolved the difficulties effectively in further discussions and individual demonstrations, and pupils made satisfactory progress in the lessons overall.

30. During the inspection members of the local peripatetic brass teaching team visited the school to lead a Key Stage 2 workshop session in music. Pupils were treated to an excellent musical experience that embraced a wide range of music. However, no other music lessons were seen and it is not possible to assess the quality of teaching overall.

31. Teaching of physical education is satisfactory in Key Stage 1, and good in Key Stage 2. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Lessons are well planned, and a good range of resources is used well in promoting pupils' learning, from the large apparatus in the hall to the numerous small items such as bats, balls, quoits and hoops. Teachers carry out their lessons with a good structure that includes a warm-up and main activity, as well as a good cool-down and review at the end. Pupils are generally well motivated by the teaching, they are mostly cooperative, and listen to instructions attentively. Good learning takes place, particularly in Key Stage 2.

32. The quality of teaching in religious education throughout the school is good. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and convey it to pupils in a meaningful manner. They create and promote a reflective atmosphere where good learning takes place. At the time of the last inspection no judgement was made on the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1. The quality has been maintained in Key Stage 2.

33. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, as is pupils' learning. Teachers focus on specific areas of difficulty, as identified by testing and observing pupils. Teachers organise the specific needs into a realistic individual education plan for each pupil. Some targets are the same for a small group of pupils who work together. Staff have very good relationships with pupils, especially when pupils are taught separate to the main class. Staff set challenging work, have appropriate expectations of pupils and work in a very supportive manner, focusing well on each pupil's objectives. Pupils respond well, concentrate well, and do their best. Some teachers do not always use different resources to aid the learning by the least able children in whole-class lessons, although they have often planned to do so. Similarly in Key Stage 2, teachers planning demonstrates thought having been given to the needs of talented and more able pupils, but the plans are often not implemented.

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

34. The school's curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is broad and balanced, and meets the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs. The curriculum is good for pupils in the foundation stage of education. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 the curriculum is satisfactory and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Weaknesses in curriculum provision for design and technology and geography that were identified in the last inspection report have been remedied.

35. In the foundation stage all areas of learning are very well planned for, enabling children to make progress that is at least good in each aspect, with some children achieving levels within the National Curriculum, for example in language and mathematics. This demonstrates that the curriculum is providing opportunities for children that result in good learning taking place.

36. The time allocated for each subject in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is in line with national recommendations. However, there is some variation in lesson timings week by week, which results in lessons occasionally being excessively long. This affects pupils' progress. As they become tired. The last twenty minutes of a seventy-five minute mathematics lesson, for instance, were not effective because many pupils had lost concentration by then.

37. The school has adopted the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy in recent years. The National Numeracy Strategy has contributed well to raising standards in mathematics throughout the school. However, Key Stage 2 standards in English have fallen in recent years. This is partly because some teachers do not follow closely enough the lesson structure and methods outlined in the National Literacy Strategy. For instance, in one lesson seen, the teacher ignored the section on reading.

38. The requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs are fully met, and the support by outside agencies, such as the provision of different kinds of therapy, is good. The overall provision and support for pupils with special education needs is a strength of the school.

39. The school makes good provision for higher attaining pupils in mathematics in Key Stage 2. A new "More Able Mathematics" project to provide challenging experiences for gifted and talented pupils in mathematics in Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 is currently underway. Early indications are that this venture is successful in meeting its aims. For part of the year, the Year 6 class is split into three groups for English and mathematics. This enables teachers to focus teaching more closely on specific levels of ability within the year group. In 2000 this arrangement helped one third of the year group to reach level 5 in the Key Stage 2 mathematics tests, a result that was above national averages. However, in other lessons observed in Key Stage 2, while detailed planning was present for higher attaining pupils, it was not implemented.

40. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. All pupils follow a regular programme of lessons planned in accordance with a well-defined scheme of work. It addresses a wide range of issues related to pupils' personal and social development. For example, a very good Key Stage 1 lesson seen gave pupils opportunities to discuss important matters such as bullying, stealing and the need for school rules to govern playground behaviour. The scheme makes satisfactory provision for sex education and drug awareness, which are also addressed in subjects such as science. Older pupils visit outdoor pursuits centres to take part in team building exercises and other activities. These make a good contribution to their personal development through active participation in adventurous activities and in working with others to achieve common goals.

41. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities supports the curriculum. Pupils take part in seasonal games such as football and netball. An aerobics fitness club and a computer club run after school. Pupils in the choir take part in local celebrations such as the Christmas Gala Concert in Walsall, and all pupils take part in school productions such as "The Lost Toys". A weekly French club gives pupils the chance to begin to study a foreign language.

42. The school has good links with other local schools and with the nursery nearby. Regular visits towards the end of the year facilitate smooth transfer between the different stages of education and all partners transfer the necessary information to support the transition. The new "Able Mathematics Project" is further developing links with other schools. Pupils from Little Bloxwich send email messages to pupils in other schools, who later come to Little Bloxwich to share in the special lessons planned for this group. Pupil members of the computer club also exchange e-mails with pupils attending schools overseas. These activities enhance pupils' learning in information and communications technology and are contributing well to raising standards in the subject.

43. The school makes good use of the local community to support its curriculum. Links with the Church are particularly strong. The local vicar, who is also a member of the Governing Body, regularly leads school assemblies and works in the school as a classroom assistant. Professional theatre groups, artists, musicians and the local policeman all visit the school to work with pupils. These visits enhance pupils' learning opportunities well. Pupils visit local sites of interest such as Cannock Chase Museum, Blythfield Reservoir and Cadbury World to enhance their studies in subjects such as geography and history.

44. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. It is very good for pupils' social and moral education, and satisfactory for their cultural development. The school motto, the "4C's" - Caring, Courtesy, Conscientiousness and Courage, is clearly in evidence throughout the school. There is a positive and supportive school ethos and the commitment to moral and social values is at the heart of school practices. School assemblies reflect the Church ethos and provide good opportunities for spiritual development and reflection. Although assemblies are good, pupils have limited opportunities to explore other aspects of their spirituality through the general curriculum.

45. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good, especially through the programme of personal, social and health education. This is supplemented well by other general school practices. Class rules are based on principles of honesty, fairness and consideration for others and pupils are clear about what is right and what is wrong. All adults provide very good role models for pupils to follow. Teachers set a very good example by valuing the opinions of pupils in their care, and responding sensitively to all pupils' needs, especially those with behavioural and learning difficulties.

46. The use of the "Gold Book" to celebrate pupils' achievements promotes good attitudes to all aspects of school life. Praise for excellent art, improvements in writing, effort in mathematics, swimming and other achievements were all celebrated in one assembly seen. Pupils willingly carry out day-to-day tasks to help in the general smooth running of the school, such as organising equipment for use in assembly, and in helping teachers to prepare for afternoon lessons. The very good provision for social and moral development is reflected in the high standards of pupil behaviour and very good relationships that are seen throughout the school.

47. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Religious education develops pupils' understanding of major world faiths. Geography and history satisfactorily explore life in other places around the world and at other times. Subjects such as art, English and music provide

opportunities for pupils to learn about their own heritage. This aspect of pupils' education is well supported by visits to places such as Birmingham Art Gallery and Shugborough Hall.

48. Overall, the quality of curricular provision has been maintained since the last inspection, with the exception of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage, which has improved.

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

49. The school's arrangements and procedures for child protection are very good. The school makes good use of the local education authority's guidelines, and all staff are aware of procedures to follow in the event of any concerns.

50. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Prompt and efficient registration at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions complies with statutory requirements. The school is quick to follow up unexplained absences and there are very good links with the educational welfare officer which ensures that pupils attend school regularly.

51. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. An individual behaviour record and plan for all pupils with behaviour problems is particularly good and is of benefit when talking to parents and to enable staff and pupils to monitor improvements. All staff, ensuring that pupils receive a consistent message about behaviour expectations, consistently apply the school's behaviour policy. This emphasises positive reinforcement as the preferred means of improving behaviour. The good implementation of the school's procedures is, for example, minimising the effect of the challenging behaviour of a significant minority of pupils in Year 6. The school has effective procedures in place to deal with rare incidents of harassment and bullying.

52. Procedures to promote the health, welfare and safety of pupils are good. Pupils are helped to develop a good understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle through science, physical education and personal and social education with talks on healthy eating. Any health and safety hazards observed are noted and dealt with quickly and efficiently. The school has a particularly good system of passes for pupils who have to be out of school during school hours, for example for a dental or medical appointment, ensuring that the school is constantly aware of pupils' whereabouts.

53. The school has established good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils' academic and personal development is closely tracked throughout their time in school. This information is used well for the purpose of forecasting school results and setting termly improvement targets for pupils. It is also used effectively to give pupils relevant help and guidance to enable them to make progress. Classroom teachers keep assessment records for each pupil, which help them to plan future lessons. In English, mathematics and science, schemes of work have clear curricular objectives linked to targets for each pupil. Assessment in other subjects is less well advanced, but is now generally structured so as to make planning for future work more effective, as well as to ensure that teachers meet the needs of all pupils. Assessment procedures are most effective for pupils with special educational needs and least effective for higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 other than in mathematics.

54. The assessment of achievement and progress by pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers and support staff conduct a clear and detailed assessment of progress as they carry out lessons, and they review the targets regularly, taking into account the notes made by staff working with the pupils, the results of tests, and the marking of pupils' work in general. The special needs coordinator works closely with other staff in setting the targets, monitoring progress, and carrying out the reviews. New targets are set whenever necessary, often before the set date for review if pupils are making particularly good progress.

55. Lesson plans contain opportunities for assessment and teachers use questions well to gain understanding of what the pupils know and can do. The regular use of assessment to inform planning is satisfactory. Its practice is becoming integrated into the work of the school, so that pupils' knowledge and skills are built on systematically. There is much evidence of teachers using what they know about pupils to set them individual targets for improving their work. Pupils receive considerable encouragement to give of their best and the school rewards good work through 'achievement' assemblies each week.

56. In all its aspects the care of pupils has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection.

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

57. Overall parents' views of the school are satisfactory. Of particular concern to a minority of the 30 per cent of parents who responded to the questionnaire was the range of activities available to pupils outside of lessons; the amount of homework set; the closeness with which the school works with parents; the information parents receive particularly on their children's progress and the leadership and management of the school. Inspectors found all of these aspects of the school to be at least satisfactory.

58. The quality of information provided for parents, especially about their child's progress has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. The school communicates well about the work pupils are doing. All class teachers send a half term report on what is being covered in the curriculum in their class and there are three parents' evenings per year. Additional meetings are held whenever the need arises, for example, to explain to parents the curricular changes associated with the introduction of the Foundation Stage. Reports to parents are very detailed and clearly state what pupils know understand and can do. There is a detailed prospectus, a detailed governors' annual report to parents and many informative letters to parents.

59. Parents are encouraged to communicate with the school, and the school is committed to partnership with them. The school operates an open door policy but does ask that parents talk to class teachers at the end of the school day so as not to delay the start of the day and to allow teachers to greet pupils as they arrive. The headteacher is available in the playground every morning and to talk with parents. In the past there was an active parent teacher association and efforts are being made to revive it. A small number of parents currently help in school and many help with educational visits and trips. Overall, as at the time of the last inspection, the effectiveness of the school's links with parents and carers is good and parents have a satisfactory impact on the work of the school.

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

60. The leadership and management of the school is characterised by a range of significant strengths and weaknesses. Overall it is satisfactory.

61. The headteacher is skilled and experienced and provides strong and effective leadership and management. She provides drive and initiative, and works hard to steer the school towards its goal of higher attainment by all pupils. Since her appointment two years ago, she has successfully dealt with the key issues identified by the last inspection. Working with the governing body she has also implemented a wide range of other improvements that have had a beneficial effect on the quality of education provided by the school and on the environment in which pupils learn. She and the Chairman of the governing body are acutely aware that significant problems remain, and are trying to deal with them effectively with the help of the local education authority.

62. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is at an early stage of implementation. This process, while recognised by the headteacher as essential, has been delayed by serious personnel problems. The headship of the school has gone through a turbulent time since the last inspection. This period came to an end two years ago when the current headteacher was appointed and took over the leadership of the school from the current deputy headteacher who was, for most of the intervening period, acting headteacher. Soon after the appointment of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher was forced by illness to have a protracted period of leave. This left the newly appointed headteacher with little practical support from her management team, and with no English co-ordinator, a post also held by the deputy headteacher. The deputy headteacher's Year 5 class, who are now Year 6, had three temporary teachers in a single term, and their standards suffered accordingly. The role of the deputy headteacher now involves little senior management responsibility, and the headteacher still receives limited support. Too much of the school's management is handled by the headteacher single-handedly.

63. Of particular significance are pupils' standards in English at Key Stage 2. Many teachers in the school, particularly in Key Stage 2 and including the English co-ordinator, are not using the National Literacy Strategy to best effect. Teaching and planning is not monitored effectively and staff do not receive the appropriate guidance and support to raise standards in literacy. Staff do not feel that they have a reference point in the school where they can seek expert advice and improve their practice. The co-ordination of English is unsatisfactory.

64. The school is successful in using all available data in evaluating its own performance and is clear about its educational priorities and what needs to be done to build on recently improving standards. The good use of data collected and analysed has contributed to recent improvements in standards in, for example, science and information and communications technology, but not in literacy.

65. The chairman and her colleagues on the governing body are hardworking and dedicated, and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have sought to monitor the school's progress and to initiate or support appropriate action. Governors are effective partners in decision-making.

66. The school's educational priorities are supported through careful financial planning. The headteacher and administrative staff have a good understanding of school finance, and work well together bringing their complementary skills to bear on the financial planning and management aspects of the school's work. The school makes satisfactory use of computers in financial planning and management, and in its general administration. The management plan contains criteria by which to judge the success of spending decisions. All budget decisions are analysed to ensure that they are designed to improve pupils' attainment, and the budget is driven by the plan.

67. All funds received for specific purposes, such as funds to support pupils with special educational needs, are efficiently and appropriately managed and used. There are satisfactory internal systems for the safety of funds, and the checking and balancing of day-to-day transactions, competently managed by the school's administrative officers. Ongoing expenditure is carefully monitored, and spending patterns are suitably explored. The school also seeks to obtain best value when making purchases of supplies and equipment or employing services.

68. There are enough teachers to teach the curriculum effectively and nearly all have had appropriate training for this phase of education. Good use is made of teaching and support staff to

help targeted pupils make appropriate progress and support staff are also well used to meet the needs of individual children with special educational needs. The school's accommodation is good. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall and are good in English, mathematics, science and information and communications technology. All these factors ensure that pupils are working in an environment that motivates them and contributes to their achievements.

69. The leadership and management of special educational needs provision is good and results in pupils making good progress. The special educational needs coordinator organises the provision very well, overseeing several support staff, ensuring their training needs are met, and herself teaching several pupils and groups of pupils in separate and in class lessons. Good efforts are made to ensure that pupils who are taught separate to the full class have the opportunity to cover all the same work at another time. The coordinator organises the budget, and is building up a good resource base, including many books and tabletop activities for lower attaining pupils. The accommodation, with a separate room for teaching, and the use of many open areas throughout the school, is good. The governing body is well informed about special educational needs by a non-teaching staff governor who is a member of the support staff. The requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs are fully met, and support by outside agencies, such as the provision of different kinds of therapy, is good.

70. Overall, the quality of leadership and management of the school is similar to that reported at the time of the last inspection.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

71. In order to further improve the quality of education, build on the strengths of the school and rectify the weaknesses identified in the inspection the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) Raise pupils' attainment in English at Key Stage 2 and particularly in writing by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what higher attaining pupils can achieve in their writing through sharing the best practice seen in the school;
  - ensuring that a greater quantity of written work is accomplished in the allocated time in lessons;
  - increasing the amount of writing of longer pieces of work in subjects throughout the curriculum;
  - improving pupils' spelling skills;
  - planning the literacy hour more coherently, using all the opportunities it offers;
  - monitoring both teaching and pupils' written work to ensure good practice and an awareness of the levels pupils are reaching.  
(see paragraphs 23, 37, 63, 87, 90, 91, 94, 96)
  
- (2) Raise pupils' attainment in science at Key Stage 2 by:
  - ensuring that teachers have appropriate expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly more able pupils;
  - ensure that teaching and learning takes place at a faster pace.  
(see paragraph 116)
  
- (3) Improve aspects of the leadership and management of the school by:
  - improving the co-ordination of English
  - continuing and accelerating the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching
  - ensure that the role of deputy headteacher is fully and effectively carried out and appropriately complements the role of the headteacher  
(see paragraphs 62, 63, 87, 157)
  
- (4) Improve the quality of teaching in some year groups in Key Stage 2 by:
  - ensuring that work is well matched to the needs of all pupils, in particular more talented pupils;
  - increasing teachers expectations of the amount of work pupils can achieve in a lesson  
(see paragraphs 23, 24, 39, 53, 87, 89, 90, 91,93, 98,103)

Further weaknesses identified in this report which should be considered by the school are as follows:

1. There is insufficient emphasis on the development of pupils' library skills (see paragraph 89)
2. There are insufficient artefacts to support the teaching of geography (see paragraph 136)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	27	36	27	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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	223
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	31

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	41

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.2

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1*

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	19	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	16
	Girls	16	16	14
	Total	32	32	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (94)	91 (94)	86 (91)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	16
	Girls	15	14	16
	Total	31	30	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (94)	89 (94)	91 (91)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

*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
		2000	15	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	11	11
	Girls	10	10	12
	Total	20	21	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (79)	70 (73)	77 (82)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	11	10
	Girls	10	11	11
	Total	17	22	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57 (79)	73 (72)	70 (79)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	193
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.1
Average class size	31.9

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

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	118

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	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.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	368 707
Total expenditure	383 272
Expenditure per pupil	1 712
Balance brought forward from previous year	27 944
Balance carried forward to next year	13 379

## *Results of the survey of parents and carers*

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	223
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.	57	39	1	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	40	47	8	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	53	10	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	35	25	8	3
The teaching is good.	43	42	10	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	47	21	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	46	40	13	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	35	7	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	28	40	21	8	1
The school is well led and managed.	35	40	15	6	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	51	4	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	17	24	28	6

## **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**

72. When joining the school, children have widely varying levels of attainment. Some children have levels of attainment in all aspects of their studies that are as expected for their age. The majority, however, have levels of attainment below those expected for their age. As a consequence of very good teaching, children make good progress. By the time they begin their national curriculum studies in Year 1, all children's standards have improved. Those who started from the lower starting point achieve standards expected for their age. Those who joined the school with higher levels of attainment achieve well and many reach standards expected for pupils a year older than themselves. Overall, children achieve well in the reception class.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

73. In their personal and social development, children make good progress from when they enter the class. By the time they start Year 1, their standards are as expected for their age. They are friendly and co-operative; share things in class and in the playground; they work, play and eat together; and they listen to each other, paying attention, and understanding that everyone is entitled to have their say. They learn well because the teaching is consistently very good. The teacher and support assistant have very positive and warm relationships with the children, but they do not allow any naughtiness or inattention. The children respond very positively to this organised approach, following instructions and eager to answer questions or to have their say. They have their playtimes and lunch breaks with other pupils in school, and they are well-mannered and well-behaved when not in the classroom, as well as during lessons.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

74. Children's communication skills develop well. They listen carefully to what is said to them, and they are keen to answer questions and join in discussions. They are sufficiently confident to come to the front of the class and speak aloud to their friends and the teacher. The teacher takes every opportunity to encourage the children to listen, understand and speak. She speaks clearly, often repeating or re-phrasing what she is saying so that all children understand, and so that their vocabulary improves. The encouragement of speaking and listening skills goes on all the time, in all lessons and children build up their skills very well in a range of situations. Teaching of communications, language and literacy is consistently very good.

75. By the time they leave the class, most children's standards are as expected for their age. They speak in sentences, confidently talking about things of immediate importance, such as the weather or dinner. They remember what they have been told in previous lessons, and retell parts of a story or what they learned about, for example, sheep and wool from the teacher and from a video programme. The most able children write a few words on their own, with large letters that are easily readable. They copy some words, such as their own names or short sentences about the work they have been doing, and have correct spaces between words. Other children are learning to make marks on the paper, becoming increasingly like letters. The teacher spends much time encouraging this aspect of learning through all other areas of study. More able children are reading at a level a year ahead of that expected for their age. They read simple story books such as "Ben and the Duck" or "Hide and Seek" making few mistakes, often following the words with a finger and trying to build up words that they are not sure of. Children's reading is very well supported by individual reading sessions, and by whole class learning in literacy lessons that focus on a "Big Book" or on particular letter

combinations. Some children are beginning to put some expression into their reading, and to enjoy the stories that they read.

### **Mathematical development**

76. Children's mathematics skills develop well. Most children learn to count to twenty, to recognise numerals and to match the number of dots on a die or toy animal, with the appropriate numeral. They are able to add or subtract one or two to other numbers. Most children learn that there are many different shapes, and that circles, squares and triangles are different from each other in several ways. They understand the difference between thick and thin, tall and short, big and little, heavy and light, and most children identify the thickest or longest, for example, in a series of three or more items.

77. Teaching of maths and numeracy is very good. Lessons are structured well, with good mental maths activities, good counting activities that involve all children and the use of resources such as number cards and items to count. Teachers encourage children to sing songs and rhymes that involve counting, such as "Seven little Stars". Numerous opportunities are created during each day to count things, such as the number of children in each group, or how many pieces of apparatus are out, or how many balls they are using in physical education lessons. Number learning is further reinforced in other subjects. For example, in art and craft lessons children learn more about different shapes, such as when they are making pictures of houses or flowers, for instance, using only certain shapes. They make models using a range of three-dimensional shapes such as cubes, pyramids and cylinders, learning the names of these shapes as their work progresses. By the time they start Year 1, their standards are as expected for their age.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

78. Pupils develop good levels of knowledge and understanding of the world through many lessons. For example, they learn about the properties of wool, where it comes from and what can be done with it. Specific lessons are very well supported by other sessions, such as designing woollen carpets or jumpers in art and design. The teacher uses very good resources very well. For example in relation to wool, a sheep's fleece, a video programme, and samples of different kinds of wool were utilised. Children have an early understanding of different places – that they may be a long way away, and that you need to travel a long way to get there; they understand that a globe represents the Earth, and that different countries have different names, and that wool comes from some of those countries. The most able children point to some different countries on the globe. Children begin to use a computer, and select different screen items correctly, using the mouse. They also understand that other equipment such as televisions, washing machines and cameras use electricity, and can be controlled. They understand that time passes and that things may change with time – that people and things get older, including themselves, and some things are different, such as when they were babies, or when other members of their families were young. The teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world is very good, and children learn well.

### **Physical development**

79. Children make good progress in their physical development, with good lessons on big apparatus such as climbing frames and benches in the hall, and with the small equipment such as bats, balls, quoits and hoops in the playground. Many opportunities are created to help children's physical development, in play activities such as running, jumping, hopping and skipping, and working together to make a wooden "train" move across the playground. In the classroom, children have good opportunities to develop their fine motor skills, for example by threading beads, cutting paper or cloth and gluing things together. They become active, agile and confident when climbing and balancing, or

playing games. Lessons are well planned and managed with good use of many different resources in the classroom, the hall and the playground. Teaching in support of children's physical development is very good. By the time they start Year 1, children's standards are as expected for their age.

### **Creative development**

80. Provision for children's creative development is good. By the time they start Year 1, their standards are as expected for their age. Children learn well, taking part in well-planned and well organised lessons in, for example, music. They use a good range of instruments some of which they have made themselves. They tap, bang or shake the instruments in time with the music, singing songs and rhymes that they enjoy. These are sometimes counting songs to help to reinforce their learning in mathematics, or are associated with actions, such as "Jibuli, Jibuli", helping their physical development. Children enjoy role-play, acting out what the people and animals in stories did, or might do. This helps their imagination, as well as their language development. Children learn to mix paints, and to use crayons, card and wool in making models and pictures. They take a pride in their work, and try hard to make it neat and presentable. The teaching of creative activities is very good.

81. Overall, teaching in the reception class is very good. Lessons are very well planned individually and over the longer term as part of a theme, with clear learning objectives skilfully translated into individual activities. Teacher's expectations are very high, especially for social, behaviour and language development. The teacher uses good resources imaginatively. The support assistant in the class is very capable, and helps children requiring additional support, such as with their reading or concentration. The class is very well managed and the children are highly motivated by the interesting lessons and challenging work. A thorough assessment of children's skills and knowledge when they first join the class is built upon well through good assessment and recording of children's progress in each lesson. The progress recorded is appropriately reported to parents and celebrated in class. Subsequent lessons are tailored to meet the needs of all the children in the class through individual attention and support. This efficient procedure ensures good support to all children including those with special educational needs.

82. All areas of the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage are very well planned, enabling children to make good progress in each aspect. The teacher is very well organised in all aspects of her work including planning, teaching, development of the very good range of resources and maintaining good records of children's progress. Accommodation is, however, a weakness. Although the classroom itself is of a reasonable size, it is not sufficiently spacious to allow for a home corner and does not have an appropriate floor covering for sand or water play.

83. Teaching and learning in the reception class continues to be a strength of the school, maintaining the standards described in the last inspection report.

## ENGLISH

84. Most pupils join the school with below average levels of attainment in all areas of language and literacy and make good progress during their time in the reception class. Test results in 2000 for seven year olds showed the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 to be above the national average in reading and in writing. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher than expected Level 3 was below the national average in reading but average in writing. When compared with similar schools, results were above average in both reading and writing.

85. The results of the 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds indicate that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 was well below the national average as was the proportion achieving the higher than expected Level 5. Standards were also well below average when compared with similar schools. The fall in standards can be largely attributed to weaknesses in writing.

86. Since 1998 seven-year-old pupils have achieved steady improvement in their results in both reading and writing. At the age of eleven, however, standards in English have fallen significantly since 1998. By the age of seven, boys outperform girls, though by the age of eleven, girls do better than boys. Inspection findings indicate that standards vary in different year groups and classes, but currently, those pupils who will complete Key Stage 1 in the summer of 2001 are on course to attain above average national standards in reading and in writing. Pupils in the current Year 6 are on course to achieve average reading results at the end of Key Stage 2 but below average results in writing. Overall standards in English are likely to be below the national average for their age group. These findings indicate that some progress is being made in raising standards in Key Stage 2, but that weaknesses continue.

87. The National Literacy Strategy now constitutes the school's long-term planning in English. It is used well in Key Stage 1. There is, however, little continuity of work between the two key stages and throughout Key Stage 2 there is a lack of clarity and direction in the planning of literacy lessons. Although monitoring of teaching and learning has begun, this is only a recent development and has had very little impact on the quality of teaching or on teachers' planning. Teachers keep clear assessment records of pupils' work, but these are insufficiently used to identify areas of weakness. Progress across the year groups varies in writing, but the steady progress in Key Stage 1 is not sustained in Key Stage 2, because of the lack of clarity and continuity in teachers' planning. Standards and progress in Key Stage 2 are further affected by a more general problem that affects the teaching of a number of subjects and classes in the school; the expectations of some teachers are too low and work set is often undemanding, particularly for higher attaining pupils.

88. The standards of speaking and listening are average at the end of both key stages. Pupils demonstrate satisfactory listening skills. They listen carefully to their teachers and each other, follow instructions without fuss and contribute positively in discussions. Speaking skills are generally well promoted, although there are missed opportunities by some teachers, to engage pupils in extended conversations and to extend pupils' clarity and use of English when speaking. Most teachers and other support staff encourage pupils to ask and answer questions in order to develop their ideas. As a result, pupils develop confidence in speaking aloud and in explaining their work. Good examples of speaking skills being well promoted were seen in a Year 1 class where the teacher encouraged pupils to share their ideas and feelings on a story, 'The Blue Jackal', used as a text for shared reading. In a Year 5 class, focusing on explanatory texts, the teacher made good use of opportunities to extend speaking skills, encouraging pupils, through role-play, to discuss their ideas productively and giving them the opportunity to explain their findings to the rest of the class.

89. Standards in reading are above average at the end of Key Stage 1. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils have satisfactory phonic skills and a sound understanding of what they read. Many

higher attaining pupils read accurately and with good expression. Teachers work hard to develop oral skills in guided reading but do not always extend this use of language across other subjects of the curriculum. Most pupils understand terms such as ‘author’, ‘illustrator’, ‘contents’ page’ and ‘index’ and enjoy sharing texts during literacy hour. They have a satisfactory range of strategies to enable them to decipher words that they have difficulty in reading. Higher attaining pupils confidently discuss their reading and predict what might happen. Lower attaining pupils build common high frequency words but reading is mechanical and lacks fluency. Reading diaries are maintained which contain informative comment by teachers and involve parents in responding to pupils’ reading. In Key Stage 2 standards of reading are also average, but with few higher attaining pupils being extended through the reading of challenging texts that extend their reading ability. There is insufficient emphasis on the systematic development of library skills. This limited range of reading tasks, particularly to extend higher attaining pupils, adversely affects the development of research skills in other subjects for older pupils in Key Stage 2.

90. Standards in writing are above average at the end of Key Stage 1. Stories written by Year 1 pupils to retell fairy stories they had been studying were lengthy, imaginative and used good descriptive vocabulary. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes as a result of the National Literacy Strategy. Tasks set for average and higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently demanding and they are frequently not expected to work at a brisk, productive pace. Handwriting and presentation of work is unsatisfactory for the majority of pupils because expectations are too low and marking does not place sufficient emphasis on the importance of these skills. Teaching of handwriting is being systematically developed and most pupils in Key Stage 1 now join their writing. Most average and higher attaining pupils use basic punctuation accurately. There is emphasis on early drafting skills and teachers concentrate on improving the quality of writing by helping pupils to choose more imaginative vocabulary or extend their ideas.

91. Pupils’ writing by the end of Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory, although better writing is evident at the beginning of the key stage than at the end. By the age of 11, the majority of pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of basic punctuation and grammar, but few pupils write at length and too little work is achieved in the time allocated. Pupils often work with little sense of urgency or desire to finish a piece of writing in the allocated time. Among higher ability pupils, spelling is often inaccurate. By the end of the key stage pupils have not acquired the ability to express their ideas with precision and speed and are ill equipped for the national tests. Teaching is often less effective than it should be because of a lack of expectation of the amount and quality of written work average and higher attaining pupils are capable of producing during a lesson. Some teachers fail to provide work graded in difficulty to suit the needs of pupils of different levels of attainment. There is evidence of the use of different forms of writing, such as letters, instructions, story and play scripts, but there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to express opinions through persuasive writing and to extend their ideas through purposeful tasks such as newspaper reports and extended writing in other areas of the curriculum, such as religious education and history. Skills such as note taking are not well developed and this is reflected in other subjects of the curriculum.

92. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and generally make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans by the age of seven and sound progress by the age of eleven. Working with small groups of pupils who have special needs is successfully helping these pupils to extend their literacy skills.

93. Most pupils enjoy their work in literacy sessions. They respond positively, are eager to answer questions and keen to learn. Where this is not the case it is directly linked to weaker teaching and work not matched to ability, particularly for the higher attaining pupils.

94. At the time of previous inspection, teaching was good at both key stages. Teaching is now good in Key Stage 1, but ranges from good to unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2, being satisfactory overall. There are variations in teachers' skills and teaching for some of the older pupils is unsatisfactory. Not all teachers have a secure understanding of the National Literacy Strategy, nor do they all use the time appropriately to ensure that the different elements are well covered, especially writing. In the best lessons, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and teaching methods inspire pupils to learn successfully. Pupils are well motivated by interesting tasks and lessons proceed at a brisk pace. For example, in a Year 2 class, activities were carefully matched to the different needs of pupils. The exciting text 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt', held pupils' interest and captured their imagination, the teacher's reading of the text adding to the excitement. As a result pupils worked hard and completed a good amount of work. Management strategies are generally good, so that pupils work with concentration. When teaching is weaker, the work set is not well matched to the full range of pupils' ability and this leads to underachievement. In weaker lessons, lessons lack clear objectives, activities are not appropriately planned to use all the opportunities offered by a topic within the literacy hour and the pace of lessons is slow. Pupils frequently fail to complete enough writing in lessons and are not encouraged to produce longer pieces of written work, despite the extra time allocated to the subject for creative writing. The teaching of spelling is insufficiently well developed. Marking is inconsistent, often failing to identify how pupils can improve their work.

95. Management of English is unsatisfactory, and is a significant contributory factor to the recent fall in standards in Key Stage 2. The co-ordinator for English does not co-ordinate planning throughout the school in order to ensure that pupils progress steadily. Development from year to year is not coherently planned in the school's adapted schemes of work. The monitoring aspect of the role is underdeveloped and does not support teachers well, since there is no opportunity to learn from good practice or for teachers to receive constructive criticism of their own lessons. Assessment information is being used to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment and to identify those who would benefit from additional lessons, but is not being used as well as it should be to plan work to match the needs of the majority of pupils.

96. The extent of reinforcement of literacy skills within other subjects varies and is unsatisfactory overall. There is a satisfactory focus on language in Key Stage 1 lessons, but in Key Stage 2 not enough attention is given to using opportunities for pupils to produce pieces of extended writing, for example in history and geography. Good resources enhance learning but use by pupils of reference books in the library is unsatisfactory.

## **MATHEMATICS**

97. The majority of pupils enter the reception class with standards of mathematical attainment below those expected for their age. As a consequence of very good teaching they make good progress, and by the time they enter Year 1, their attainment is in line with that expected for their age.

98. Pupils' standards in mathematics are in line with national averages at the end of both key stages. National standards in the end of key stage tests taken in Year 2 and Year 6 have risen since

the last inspection. The school's results have improved in line with these national improvements. In Key Stage 1, results dipped in 1997 and 1998, but they recovered in 1999 and 2000, when they were in line with all schools nationally and in comparison with similar schools. Nearly all current Year 2 pupils are expected to reach Level 2, the standard expected for seven-year-olds. However, greater demands could be placed on higher attaining pupils. At present, fewer are likely to reach the higher than expected Level 3 than would be expected in schools nationally. In Key Stage 2, test results have improved steadily in recent years. In 2000 they were in line with all schools nationally and when compared to similar schools. One third of pupils reached Level 5, above the level expected for eleven-year-olds, which is more than in other schools nationally, and well above the figure for similar schools. Current Year 6 pupils are on target to meet national average levels overall this year, although fewer pupils are expected to reach Level 5 than in previous years.

99. By the end of Key Stage 1, nearly all pupils add and subtract numbers to 100 correctly. Lower attaining pupils generally work with numbers to 20 or so, and their work is inconsistent. It is correct some times, but not at others. Pupils have begun to explore multiplication and its connection with addition. For instance, in a lesson seen, pupils arranged groups of 15 pegs, or other numbers, in a rectangular array. From this they derived the facts that 15 is 5 lots of 3 or 3 lots of 5, which they wrote as  $3 \times 5$ . Pupils have a good understanding of money. They apply their number skills well to make amounts such as 46p from combinations of all the common smaller coins. Pupils measure familiar objects such as pencils in centimetres, and they have begun to explore other measures such those for weight and volume using units such as kilograms and "potfuls" to compare different amounts. They name common two and three-dimensional shapes such as hexagons and pyramids and describe their features using vocabulary such as "edge" and "corner".

100. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils calculate confidently and accurately with whole numbers and decimals with numbers to 1000 or more. They have secure mental mathematics skills, and many have good recall of basic number facts such as multiplication tables. Pupils use standard written processes for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They apply their number skills well to problem solving tasks involving money, measures and time. Most pupils calculate accurately. However, lower attaining pupils make mistakes, especially with multiplication and decimal addition and subtraction. They also find it very difficult to decide exactly what calculations they need to do in problem solving tasks. Most pupils use their knowledge of decimals well in work on measures. They know, for example, that 2200 ml is the same as 2.2 litres, and they work accurately with lengths expressed in a mixture of metres and centimetres. Pupils find the area and perimeter of shapes based on rectangles. Higher attaining pupils also know how to find the area of a triangle.

101. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. Nearly all lessons seen were satisfactory or better. Some were good or very good, but one unsatisfactory lesson was seen during the inspection. Inspection of pupils' work from earlier in the year indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress overall, and in the long-term teaching is satisfactory.

102. All teachers have good relationships with their classes, and they manage pupils well. They are sensitive to the needs of pupils with special educational needs, especially those with behavioural difficulties. Consequently, pupils behave well, and lessons proceed in a calm atmosphere where pupils learn satisfactorily.

103. Lessons follow the structure set out in the National Numeracy Strategy, but not all teachers plan sufficiently to meet the needs of different ability groups within the class. Teaching is most effective where this does happen. In a Key Stage 2 lesson on multiplication and division, for instance, the teacher set work at four different levels of ability, and included special arrangements for a small group of very high attaining pupils. Work was challenging and appropriate. Consequently pupils

worked hard and made good progress. However, not all teachers plan with this degree of detail. This is noticeable particularly in pupils' exercise books of work already completed this year. In some classes, teachers frequently set the same work for all pupils. Whilst this is appropriate for most pupils, it does not always provide sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils, and is too hard for some lower attaining pupils.

104. At some times in the week, pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn from lessons for additional teaching, and the Year 6 class is split into three smaller groups, each with its own teacher. These are effective arrangements to support pupils at all levels of ability. Last year this was a significant factor in enabling a high proportion of pupils to reach level 5 in the annual tests. Two good lessons with lower attaining pupils were observed during the inspection. Both lessons were well organised, and focused well on the specific needs of the pupils, identified through earlier assessment. In one lesson the teacher made good use of the computer room, where each pupil worked individually, but received support where necessary to enable them to complete the work. Pupils made good progress in both lessons.

105. Teachers question pupils well. For instance, in a Year 4 lesson, the teacher systematically developed strategies for division by careful questioning, well targeted at individual pupils' levels of understanding. As a result, all pupils were able to participate in the lesson. They responded well, and were able to explain how they calculated their answers. All pupils made very good progress over the lesson.

106. Lessons usually proceed briskly, which adds to the sense of purpose most pupils show as they go about their work. However, slow lesson pace was a significant factor in the unsatisfactory lesson seen. Early oral work on addition and subtraction was good. Pupils were attentive and keen to join in the activities, but the session was too long. Pupils began to fidget increasingly towards the end. The rest of the lesson was conducted at a very slow pace. The teacher took too long to explain the main activity, and pupils increasingly lost interest and concentration. Once started on the main task, the teacher did not set sufficient work to enable pupils to consolidate what they had been taught, and pupils worked very slowly. They achieved little over the course of the lesson as a whole.

107. The school has satisfactorily introduced the National Numeracy Strategy, under the effective leadership of the mathematics coordinator. The framework helps to ensure that teachers set appropriate work, so that pupils systematically develop their knowledge and skills as they progress through the school. The "More Able Mathematics" project, a school development within a new local education authority initiative, has just begun. It makes good provision for higher attaining pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 to supplement their normal school lessons. The overall theme of the work is to develop and produce a board game, at the same time using and developing a wide range of mathematics skills in number, measures and problem solving. However, this is a new project, and it is too early to assess its longer term impact on standards.

108. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' long-term attainment and progress are satisfactory. Some use is made of assessment data, for instance in creating additional teaching groups in Year 6 and in planning appropriately for pupils with special educational needs but overall, the school could make more use of assessment information to set targets for improvement for individual pupils.

109. The school has good learning resources to support all aspects of the subject, including new purchases for the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers are beginning to make good use of information and communication technology to support learning, especially for lower attaining pupils when they are withdrawn for special lessons.

## SCIENCE

110. Pupils' standards of attainment are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, but below expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. In the year 2000 Standard Assessment tests pupils' standards were well below national expectations, but a close scrutiny of the work that pupils are doing now indicates that the situation is improving. It is predicted that this year's results will show an improvement, but will still be below expectations. The current work by pupils in Key Stage 1 is generally in line with expectations.

111. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress and achieve well. Because the teaching is good, and the pupils are interested, more able pupils develop a very good depth of knowledge in a range of projects; other pupils learn about the same range of topics, but tend to remember less of what they learned. Pupils learn how to conduct simple investigations, and how to measure and record their results, including, for example, the distances that models travel or the volume of ice that melts in half an hour in rooms at different temperatures. Teachers encourage the most able pupils to suggest ways of setting up tests. Many pupils are able to write about their results with neat diagrams to explain their findings and graphs to illustrate them. Other pupils follow the test routines set for them, and write up their findings with the help of worksheets that start the sentences for them. Overall, pupils gain a good grounding in scientific method during the key stage, and learn well.

112. In Key Stage 2 most pupils make unsatisfactory progress. Pupils study a wide range of topics in depth, such as the Earth, sun and moon, air and gases, seeds and the growth of plants and forces such as gravity and magnetism. By the time they complete the key stage, many pupils gain satisfactory knowledge about micro-organisms and disease, photosynthesis and the ways that plants process light, air and water and electrical circuits, batteries, motors and the uses and dangers of electricity. Pupils develop an appropriate approach to science through experimentation and testing, but most are not sure how to set up a fair test, how to measure what is happening or how to record their findings well. They do not have sufficient understanding of what they have done and learned to be able to consider the wider implications of experimental findings.

113. Pupils' work is almost always very neat and well presented, and most pupils have a positive attitude to the subject. A minority of pupils in Year 6 do not pay full attention and make little effort in their work. This affects the overall standard because their own work is below expectations, and it has a negative effect on other pupils in the class.

114. The teaching of science is good, enthusiastic and positive in Key Stage 1. It is satisfactory in Key Stage 2, where the approach tends to be rather more measured and slow, with lower expectation for pupils, resulting in pupils not always becoming involved and enthusiastic in lessons. Teachers throughout the school plan their lessons well, basing them on a good long-term plan of what is to be taught. They include good ideas for how the work will differ for the least and most able pupils, but frequently do not put their plans into practice. Pupils are managed well in most classes, where they are keen and well motivated by the teachers. Pupils learn well through well-structured investigations, although sometimes teachers do not explain experiments very clearly, and pupils do not always know exactly what to do.

115. In a very good Year 1 lesson, the teacher had very high expectations that all pupils would be attentive and behave well. This they did even though the activity gave good opportunity to pupils to misbehave, testing a range of musical instruments to see how they could play them loudly or quietly. The lesson was challenging with the pupils trying very hard to understand what they were observing and hearing and to write and draw their results. Pupils made good progress in their understanding of sound and their use of appropriate scientific terminology.

116. In a Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils were expected to test the effect on a shadow of changing the distance between a light source, the object, and the back sheet on which the shadow fell. Many pupils were changing too many things at once and were not measuring anything until after a protracted period the teacher called them back together for further explanation. In a second Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils were expected to test several different rocks for hardness and porosity. Pupils were unable to decide what to do, how to test them, and what their results meant. In both classes, there were lost opportunities to predict what might happen. Although the resourcing of both lessons had been very good, the teaching was not sufficiently well planned for pupils to learn as much as they might have. The pace of the lessons was very slow and too little demand was placed on pupils to work hard. Problems with the pace of lessons and teachers' expectations of the amount of work pupils would complete was a common feature in science lessons observed in Key Stage 2. The satisfactory teaching in Key Stage 2 is resulting in satisfactory learning taking place. This in turn has resulted in current Year 6 pupils being on target to achieve levels of attainment just below national averages at the end of the key stage, which is an improvement on the standards achieved by pupils in 2000.

117. Since the last inspection, standards have improved in Key Stage 1 and declined in Key Stage 2 although the trend is once again upwards. The quality of teaching has remained good in Key Stage 1, but has declined from good to satisfactory in Key Stage 2.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

118. Pupils' standards are above those expected at the end of Key Stage 1. Too little evidence was available during the inspection for a judgement to be made of standards in Key Stage 2 or teaching in either key stage.

119. Pupils' achievements and progress are good throughout Key Stage 1, with good coverage of many different techniques, media and tools. Pupils paint and draw well using pencils, crayons, chalk and charcoal. They very effectively cut, fold and arrange paper of many different kinds, such as tissue paper, reflective paper and coloured paper to make patterns and three-dimensional pictures. Pupils are able to make tartan-style patterns with fishnet fabrics, paper and other fabrics. Pupils use a range of fabrics such as ribbon, lace and wool in making pictures, collages and patterns. They paint well in the style of other artists, and have begun to use sketchbooks to test ideas for patterns and textures, as well as for sketching people and buildings out of doors. Pupils use computer programs well to make patterns similar to those created by the artist Piet Mondrian and good repeating patterns. In one particularly impressive project pupils have sketched a nearby building, made paintings of it, and then sculpted simple versions of their paintings into polystyrene blocks. Using the blocks they have made very good prints of repeating patterns, with both paint and inks.

120. Pupils have visited art galleries locally and in the nearby city. Artists have also come into school to run successful workshops in the past. The work that produced a large series of displays on the theme of a fairground is particularly good. These factors contribute to pupils learning and the standards they achieve. There has been little change in this subject since the last inspection.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

121. It was possible to see only one lesson in design and technology during the inspection. Displays and photographs of pupils' work show that pupils reach standards appropriate for their ages in all aspects of the subject. Standards in Key Stage 2 have improved since the last inspection, when they were reported as below the expected standard. Insufficient lessons were observed for a judgement to be made on the quality of teaching overall in each key stages.

122. In Key Stage 1, pupils use materials such as paper and card to make simple toys and model houses. Paper Teddy Bears with jointed limbs and sliding toys such as a rabbit popping up out of a hat are well made. Pupils make card houses as part of their study of the local area. They look carefully to see where to position doors and windows, and how doors are hinged before making their models. Year 2 pupils make wheeled vehicles from card and wooden components. These are robustly constructed and decorated well. Pupils are familiar with methods of joining such as paper fasteners, glue and simple hinges, which they use these appropriately in their work

123. In Key Stage 2, pupils design and make a range of products in wood, card and fabrics. Year 6 pupils investigate how to make structures rigid in work on making shelters. They experiment with paper and sticky tape to see how to make a structure that will support a kilogram weight, and they record how to stiffen frames, for instance by using string to hold joints together. Pupils include appropriate construction details in their designs and write lists of instructions to show the order of assembly. However, other design work, for instance in preparation for making fabric purses, lacks detail. Work consists of little more than a rough sketch to show what the pupil intends to make.

124. Although the quality of design work is variable, finished products are well made and decorated appropriately. Year 3 moving monsters use simple pneumatic devices to open and close the monster's jaws. Photographs of purses made by Year 4 pupils show that they are cut out and assembled well. Pupils use a range of suitable stitches, such as backstitch, running stitch and cross-stitch, and fasten flaps with materials such as loop and hook fabric. Year 6 pupils assemble shelters such as wigwams and flat roofed houses from wood, card and fabrics. They construct wooden frames accurately. They assemble their work well, and decorate it effectively in the style appropriate for the dwelling.

125. The one design and technology lesson observed during the inspection was good. The lesson was well prepared and taken at a brisk pace. Good explanations and questions developed pupils' understanding of linkages and levers. Pupils then used what they had learned to design moving toys, such as raising and lowering a monkey's hand holding a banana. Pupils used their initiative in developing their own designs, and good ideas were shared with the class. This motivated pupils well, they enjoyed the lesson and worked hard. A good discussion at the end of the lesson drew well on what pupils had achieved and reinforced what they had learned.

126. The school has adopted a new curriculum since the last inspection, dealing effectively with a key issue then identified. The curriculum is now satisfactory. It follows national guidance and is supplemented by "help sheets" from a teachers' organisation specialising in design and technology. The scheme of work helps teachers to plan effectively, and contributes to the improvements seen in Key Stage 2. The school has sufficient learning resources for most areas of the subject, but needs more hand tools for pupils to use when working with wood and plastics.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

127. As at the time of the last inspection, standards in geography in both key stages are satisfactory. Curriculum planning has improved, successfully dealing with a key issue identified by the last inspection.

128. By the age of seven, pupils convert drawings into plans and draw accurate maps of the local area. They follow the adventures across the world of 'Barnaby Bear' and study features of the seaside in Britain. They think carefully about what they have done and make sensible suggestions as to how it might be improved. By the age of eleven, pupils compare and contrast different climatic conditions and understand the relevance of climate to people's habitats and lifestyles. In local studies, they demonstrate an awareness of the natural and human features of the locality. They know something of

the features and ways of life of people from a range of other countries and carry out a detailed study of aspects of the water cycle, looking at the features of the world's most famous rivers.

129. Numeracy skills are used well in geography. Most Year 6 pupils can use a table of statistics to plot features they are studying on a bar graph. Pupils use their literacy skills to describe and explain their work. Specialist vocabulary is carefully introduced and used well by pupils throughout the school. Information technology is beginning to be used to support pupils' learning.

130. It was possible to observe only one geography lesson during the inspection, and it is not therefore possible to make overall judgements on the quality of teaching. From the analysis of work, teachers' planning and discussion with both pupils and teachers, it is clear that work is clearly planned and relevant. Resources are adequate, though artefacts are as yet unsatisfactory in number and quality.

131. The co-ordinator has introduced an improved curriculum, based on essential skills. Topics such as the study of an Indian village, Chembakolli, ensure further enrichment. There is, however, no opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning.

## **HISTORY**

132. As at the time of the last inspection, standards in history are good both by the age of seven and eleven. Planning is good and uses a wide variety of methods and strategies to encourage the skills of thought and deduction through direct learning and practical activities. In the few lessons observed the purpose of learning was made clear to pupils and it was clear that planning is beginning to ensure a steady progression of skills as pupils move through the school.

133. By the age of seven, pupils successfully distinguish between past and present and develop a sense of chronology. They study the lives and works of famous people, such as Florence Nightingale and Queen Victoria, as well as important historical events such as the Great Fire of London. Pupils from seven to eleven years of age identify and date features in the past, evaluate evidence and begin to examine source material effectively. They study the way of life of children in Victorian times, the Vikings, the Tudors and the Ancient Egyptians with interest and enthusiasm. Throughout the school, pupils are able to absorb facts well and express an enthusiastic response both to the period being studied and the people associated with it. This is clearly demonstrated in the written work by Year 6 pupils, where pupils had used research techniques to examine Ancient Greece, looking at myths, gods, the alphabet and the Olympic Games, as well as the way in which the ideas of the Greeks had influenced our own times. There is evidence of independent research skills being promoted well, using a range of sources.

134. The curriculum is good. It ensures a wide coverage of topics and learning goals and provides a stimulating variety of activities to support teaching. Emphasis is firmly laid on helping pupils to think for themselves and on the use of first-hand and secondary source material, made available through information and communication technology.

135. Too few lessons were observed and too little additional evidence was available for a judgement to be made on the quality of teaching of history. It was clear from those lessons observed that teachers explain the purpose of lessons well and revise what pupils have learnt. Work is planned to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and more able pupils. The management of pupils is good, having a significant impact on the quality of learning and teachers are secure in their knowledge of the subject. Cross-curricular skills are also well developed and planned, in the areas of literacy, numeracy, geography, art and design and science.

136. The subject is well managed, although the co-ordinator has no opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching in the subject. The impact of teaching is thoroughly reviewed and planning changed in the light of this evaluation. Pupils' personal development is well provided for through the study of differing ways of life of other cultures, the beliefs and values of other peoples and how the past affects the present. Visits to sites of historical interest help to enhance the curriculum. Resources in the form of historical artefacts are few, but are well used.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

137. Pupils' standards in information and communications technology are below national expectations in both key stages. Standards were in line with national expectations at the time of the last report. However, since then, standards declined because old equipment became increasingly unreliable and pupils consequently had insufficient opportunities to learn information and communications technology. The school set up a new computer room in September 2000, and pupils have made good progress since then. However, this has been insufficient time to recover the lost ground, although standards are rising quickly and are approaching those expected in all years.

138. Pupils were observed using computers at various times during the inspection. They do so confidently. They use the mouse to control programs, they load and run software without help, and know what to do for instance if they want to print work out. Pupils' operating skills are well developed, and are up to the standard expected for pupils of the same age.

139. Key Stage 1 pupils use a word processor to write pen-portraits of themselves. These are edited carefully to remove spelling mistakes. Pupils make satisfactory use of different letter styles and simple layout features to enhance the quality of their work. This work is up to the standard expected for pupils of this age. Pupils research topics such as "Florence Nightingale" to support work in history using a computer based encyclopaedia, and print the information they find. They have begun to explore some aspects of computer control. In a lesson seen, they worked in small groups to program a free standing "robot" to trace out a square, following an earlier demonstration by the teacher. However, few were able to apply what they had learnt in other activities using a computer "screen-based" robot.

140. In Key Stage 2, pupils use word processors to write on a range of topics, often linked to work in English. Year 4 pupils, for instance, write fantasy stories in work to develop their use of interesting adjectives. Year 6 pupils write poems with titles such as "For Sale". These make effective use of layout facilities, and include suitable illustrations and borders to add to the impact of their work. Both of these are good uses of information and communications technology to support literacy lessons, and work is up to the standard expected. Pupils are beginning to make effective use of the Internet. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils search the Internet for information to support work in subjects such as geography and design and technology. For example, they find information on "slippers", which they add into their own design work, before printing it out. Other strands of the subject are less developed and standards are below those expected. For example, in a Year 4 lesson pupils learned how to enter data into a computer program to draw pie charts and bar charts in a topic on India in geography. However, there is no other evidence of data handling activities that extend this into more general work on computer databases. Pupils have not yet been taught other aspects of the subject such as computer modelling and control. However, this work is planned for the remainder of the school year.

141. Two information and communications technology lessons were observed during the inspection. Both were satisfactory. Whilst this is insufficient to judge the quality of teaching across the school, the good progress that pupils have made this year indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory. Both lessons seen were taken in the new computer room. The lessons were well organised and tasks were appropriate for the pupils' abilities and prior experience. The teachers

demonstrated techniques effectively, so that pupils were clear what they were trying to achieve. In both lessons, pupils found it hard to do the tasks set, because, once working on their own or in pairs, they could not follow precisely the instructions they were given. However, the teachers resolved the difficulties effectively in further discussions and individual demonstrations, and pupils made satisfactory progress in the lessons overall.

142. The school now has sufficient high quality modern equipment to support all aspects of information and communications technology teaching as a subject in its own right, and to provide some support for subjects such as science, mathematics and history. All pupils receive regular lessons in the new computer room. There is a full timetable established, which makes good use of the facility. The curriculum is based on national guidelines and meets National Curriculum requirements, although not all aspects of the subject have yet been taught this year. The information and communications technology coordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She has begun to monitor the quality of colleagues' lessons and the standards of pupils' work and to provide feedback. Now that computing resources have improved, staff confidence is improving, and further training is planned to begin in September 2001. The school is well placed to build on the good progress it has made this year.

## MUSIC

143. The standard of pupils' singing is in line with national expectations. No inspection evidence was available to assess other aspects of the subject, and it is not therefore possible to judge standards overall, to assess pupils' progress or to make comparisons with the last inspection findings.

144. Pupils sing hymns such as "Shine Jesus Shine" in assembly. Most pupils sing in tune, although some older pupils find this difficult when the pitch rises. They are enthusiastic, words are clear, and they sing rhythmically. The choir sings simple two-part song arrangements confidently. For example, they hold their own part well when singing "What shall we do with the drunken sailor" and "Oh Sinner Man" simultaneously.

145. During the inspection members of the local peripatetic brass teaching team visited the school to lead a Key Stage 2 workshop session. Pupils were treated to an excellent musical experience that embraced a wide range of music. Each item was expertly performed and discussed afterwards. Pupils worked hard to identify tunes such as "Happy Birthday" played in unusual styles. Pupils learned the basic principles on which brass instruments work, and joined in the demonstrations enthusiastically. However, no other music lessons were seen and it is not possible to assess the quality of teaching overall.

146. The music curriculum is based on a commercial scheme of work. This meets National Curriculum requirements, and provides good support for non-specialist teachers when planning lessons. The school choir takes part in local musical events such as the Gala Christmas Concert at Walsall Town Hall, and participated as part of a 4000 strong choir at the National Indoor Arena. The school has sufficient instruments and other resources for class teaching, but the range of recorded music is not wide enough to support pupils' study and understanding of life in other cultures around the world.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

147. Pupils are attaining in line with national expectations at the end of each key stage. Their progress and achievements are satisfactory throughout the school, and in some aspects of the subject, they are good.

148. In Key Stage 1 pupils learn the basics of games skills, using bats and balls and playing in teams. They use the large apparatus with increasing skill and confidence in climbing and balancing, jumping and landing safely. They begin to move in time to music in a range of dance styles. They learn the importance of doing a warm up at the start of the lessons, with stretches and exercises, and they know some of the effects that exercise has on their bodies, such as increased heart rate and breathing.

149. In Key Stage 2, pupils gain skills steadily, learning to take part in team games in a spirit of competition as well as cooperation with team members. They use a range of bats and balls with increasing skill and competence in practice sessions and in games of hockey. Football skills develop well. In all kinds of games pupils learn to control the ball, pass, dribble and trap it with increasing accuracy and skill. They learn to move in time to the music in a variety of different dance styles, including rock and roll, an Indian dance and a Tudor dance. In swimming, the most able pupils swim several different strokes with good style, and some can swim distances as far as a kilometre. They jump and dive into the water, float without support, and retrieve objects from the bottom of the pool. In gymnastics and fitness sessions pupils use the large and small apparatus with good skill and confidence; the more able pupils develop good stamina and fitness, doing, for instance, sit-ups, step-ups and press-ups, bench lifts, skipping, interval running, balancing and moving in a planned and

controlled sequence. The school holds a sports day each summer, with the pupils demonstrating the skills they have learned in athletics sessions in running, jumping and throwing. Pupils have taken part in adventurous activities such as going round an assault course with logs, cable run and net climbs; archery and boating.

150. The teaching of physical education is satisfactory in Key Stage 1, and good in Key Stage 2. During the inspection, there was one unsatisfactory lesson in Key Stage 1, and a very good lesson in Key Stage 2. Teachers plan their lessons well with a good warm-up activity, main activity and a cool down at the end. Teachers generally focus well on developing pupils' skills so that pupils learn how to do the actions properly and purposefully. Mostly, the lessons include a series of activities that are increasingly challenging, and that are well organised to meet the aims of the lesson. Pupils are generally managed well; they are well motivated and they try hard. In one particularly good dance lesson the teacher began with a good warm-up game of "Huggy Bears", and then focused on rock and roll, with very good preparation in the classroom with posters of 1950's lifestyle and dances. The lesson built well on previous sessions that practised other types of dance, and the teacher made good use of a taped series of instructions and music. Although a few pupils were silly and refused to dance properly with a partner, the lesson was very good, with the teacher ensuring that the great majority of pupils behaved well and made very good progress in a series of new movements to the music. The lesson ended with an appropriate exercise, and a very good review of what had been learned, and what the next lesson would be covering. An unsatisfactory dance lesson with younger children, however, did not motivate the children; the aims were not clear and the teaching was slow and undemanding. The pupils' learning suffered as they became restless, losing interest and concentration.

151. This subject is led and managed well. The coordinator has a good overview of the subject and is testing a new long-term plan from the Quality and Curriculum Authority as well as the one approved by the local education authority. The assessment of pupils' skills is informal, but effective in providing information for future planning and reporting to parents. The resources are good and well organised, and the coordinator has a small budget to manage each year. There is no opportunity to monitor teaching throughout the school. Some good extra-curricular activities are undertaken, including football teams and an after-school club that includes fitness, aerobics and gymnastics.

152. The school has performed soundly in maintaining standards since the last inspection. Pupils continue to attain in line with national expectations by the time they leave school, and the syllabus for physical education is continues to be well balanced. The teaching is now good overall, where previously it was considered to be satisfactory.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

153. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in religious education. Pupils at the ages of seven and eleven reach standards in line with the requirements and demands of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in the subject have been maintained since the previous inspection.

154. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 display a satisfactory knowledge of the concept of the importance of the community, with a specific focus on the Christian community. In a very good Year 2 lesson, pupils sensitively explored Christian artefacts, seeing their place in everyday life and understanding much of their significance. They also become accustomed to exploring their feelings and those of others and learn simple tales from different religions

155. The ideas of faith and trust are explored in greater depth in Key Stage 2, where pupils study specific religions, as seen in the Year 4 lesson observed on the way in which Jesus was trusted by his

disciples. The good progress made in this lesson was aided by the teacher's skilful use of challenging questions to consolidate and extend what pupils were learning. Pupils consider the nature of prayer, the symbols of Sikhism and Hinduism, sacred writings from several religions and the concepts of baptism and communion. The good progress made within lessons owed much to pupils' ability to approach their studies in a committed manner, and to listen to and respect the opinions of others. Teachers actively use religious education lessons to promote literacy skills, with pupils engaging in good speaking and listening activities and producing some written work.

156. Examination of teachers' plans and pupils' work indicate that over time pupils are provided with the opportunity to explore and extend their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world faiths, including Judaism, Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism. Pupils learn about the prophets, religious writings, festivals and stories of each of these faiths, and come to an understanding of the beliefs shared by them and how they come to impact upon and influence our daily lives. There is, however, little opportunity provided to strengthen pupils' understanding of other faiths through visits to places of worship or other first-hand experiences. The quality of teaching across both key stages is good. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and can convey it to pupils in a meaningful manner. They create and promote a reflective atmosphere where good learning takes place.

157. With its focus on different religions, cultures and countries and the opportunity to regularly discuss and write about a range of spiritual and factual issues, the subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. The subject is carefully monitored against the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and the co-ordinator evaluates the success of each topic covered. There is no opportunity for the monitoring of teaching. The leadership and management of religious education is satisfactory.