

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **PITMASTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Worcester

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116769

Headteacher: Mr F N I Pritchard

Reporting inspector: Mr G Bancroft  
[3687]

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> March 2002

Inspection number: 193007

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Kibblewhite
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3687	Mr Godfrey Bancroft	Registered inspector	English Music Physical education (PE)	How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed?
13895	Ms Angela Smith	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22790	Ms Jane Pinney	Team inspector	Education of pupils in the Foundation Stage Religious education	
20969	Ms Jean Riley	Team inspector	English as an additional language Mathematics Geography	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
12116	Ms Christina Morgan	Team inspector	Science History	How well are pupils taught?
31963	Mr Malcolm Padmore	Team inspector	Design and technology (DT) Art Information and communication technology (ICT)	
1038	Mrs Sylvia Richardson	Team inspector	Special educational needs French	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated on the western side of Worcester. It has 601 pupils, making it much bigger than most other primary schools. Children's attainment when they enter the school is close to that expected for their age. The school is situated in a ward with a significant proportion of higher social class housing. However, the number of pupils coming from outside the school's traditional catchment area and from less favourable social circumstances has risen steadily in recent years. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average, but is also rising. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is higher than in most schools. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is also rising but is lower than the national average. The number of pupils with statements of special educational need is very low.

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

This is a very good school. Standards in many subjects are above average and pupils achieve very well. The quality of teaching and learning and of the management and leadership of the school is very good. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics, science, art and design, geography, music and physical education.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall.
- The provision for and the progress made by pupils with special educational needs are very good.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to their learning are very good.
- The school's partnerships with parents make a very good contribution to pupils' achievement.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are very good.
- The governing body fulfils its duties effectively.
- The provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is very good.

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

- Opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of investigation and enquiry in science.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Improvement since the school was last inspected in 1997 is good. Standards overall remain similar to those found at that time. The quality of teaching and learning has improved. The school has worked effectively to address those issues identified in the last inspection report. Common formal systems to assess the attainment and progress of pupils are in place and the information these systems provide is used well to guide teachers' planning. The management role of subject co-ordinators is developed fully. Procedures to publish agendas and share the outcomes of governors' meetings are very good. The school now has a very good strategic development plan that is linked effectively to its financial planning, ensuring the available resources are used very well.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	B	B	B
mathematics	B	B	B	C
science	B	A	B	B

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

Pupils enter the school with average attainment. Most have received some pre-school education. During their time in the Foundation Stage of their education, pupils achieve very well and make very good progress. By the time they are five, their attainment exceeds that expected for all of the identified six areas for their learning. Standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 are above average in writing and mathematics and well above average in reading. Compared with similar schools, standards are above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. Standards in English and science by the end of Year 6 are above average when compared both to similar schools and to the national picture and they are average in mathematics. Standards in lessons at the ages of 7 and 11 are above average.

National tests for attainment, taken when pupils are seven, show that reading over the last five years has remained well above average. Writing was also well above average until 2001 when results were just above average. When compared with similar schools in 2001 for seven-year-olds, reading is above average and those for writing are below average. Results of national tests for eleven-year-olds in English over the last five years were average. Overall, during this time, standards have improved at a rate similar to that found nationally. In 2001, results were above average when compared with those found in similar schools. The national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are used well by teachers and are helping to maintain the good standards evident in these areas of learning. In other subjects, standards are always at least satisfactory, and in several, they exceed the national expectation. Pupils achieve well overall and make good progress.

Good teaching motivates pupils, and, combined with very good attitudes to their learning, produces good results and achievement. Pupils with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and the higher attaining pupils all achieve very well because they are supported effectively.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are hard-working and helpful to each other. They are keen and eager to come to school.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils get on well together and are courteous to adults. Their behaviour in lessons supports their learning. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils respect each other and get on well with their teachers. They play together and cooperate well in pairs and groups in class.
Attendance	Well above average.

Pupils' enthusiasm for school, their very good behaviour and relationships make a very positive contribution to their learning.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Good

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

Teaching is very good overall. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and was praised by parents. Teachers prepare very well and know their pupils' learning needs well. Much of the teaching is stimulating and exciting, encouraging a love of learning amongst the majority of pupils. Very good planning and most effective partnerships with teaching assistants results in the very good support which all children enjoy and they achieve well, making very good progress. Teachers track pupils' progress well and ensure that teaching matches their needs.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a very good range of extra curricular activities. French is taught to pupils in Years 5 and 6. This aspect of provision is also very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Some features are excellent, but there are also some shortages in availability of one-to-one support for those with the most significant special educational needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	These pupils are supported very well. They all speak English fluently and achieve very well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good overall. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory, moral development good, social development very good and cultural development satisfactory. There are not enough planned opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of the multi cultural society in which they live.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school provides a safe and secure environment in which pupils achieve very well. Procedures for monitoring and supporting their academic progress are excellent.

The school works very effectively with parents to enhance the quality of education for each pupil. Parents make a significant contribution to the progress made by their children, particularly in listening to them reading. The quality of information parents receive explaining how well their children are getting on is excellent.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The leadership provided by the headteacher in particular is very good and key members of staff support him well. The school knows where it is going.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. They have a strong sense of direction, and understand well the strengths and weaknesses in provision. They are well-informed about developments in the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Well-established procedures for monitoring teaching are helping in achieving the general steady improvements noted in this inspection. The use of external agencies to help monitor the school's progress is a very significant development.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes sure it gets the best value it can from its resources, financial, human and material. Long-term planning is good and there are good financial controls.

The school is very well led and managed, with the result that all staff are able to undertake their duties effectively. The match of teachers to the curriculum needs of the pupils is good, but the number of support hours available for pupils with special educational needs is stretched. Accommodation and resources are now satisfactory and there have been many improvements since the last inspection. The use of the library for teaching restricts pupils' access for independent research. Arrangements to evaluate the impact of spending are good, grants are used wisely and the school ensures that it gets good value for money in all its purchasing.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like the school.</li> <li>• Parents are confident to approach the school with questions and problems.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations of how well their children will achieve.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents did not express any significant areas of concern.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teaching is good.</li><li>• The school is lead and managed well.</li></ul>	
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The inspection team agreed with parents' favourable views of the effectiveness of the school. A very high proportion of parents returned questionnaires prior to the inspection and these confirmed the views expressed at the pre-inspection parents' meeting.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Assessments undertaken shortly after pupils enter the school show their attainment to be average with a significant and growing minority having special educational needs. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs has risen steadily since the time of the last inspection. Pupils with English as an additional language generally can speak English quite well and few are at the early stages of learning English. During their time in the Foundation Stage of their education, between the ages of four and five, pupils achieve very well and make very good progress. By the time they are five their attainment exceeds that expected for all of the identified six areas for their learning.
2. When considering results and pupils' achievements in comparison to similar schools, this school is compared with the group with the second lowest proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. However, the proportion of pupils attending the school who come from socially less advantaged areas is rising steadily. There are also considerable changes annually to the pupil population of the school. About fifteen per cent of pupils who begin their primary education at the school leave before the end of Year 6. Over the same period a similar proportion of pupils join the school. Detailed analysis of national test results by the school shows those pupils who attend the school for the full period from entry to the end of Year 6 make good progress when measured against their attainment at the end of Year 2.
3. National tests for attainment, taken when pupils are seven, show that standards in reading over the last five years have remained well above average. Standards in writing were also well above average until 2001 when they were just above average. The school is targeting improvements in writing as the key to raising standards further. When compared with standards found in similar schools in 2001 for seven-year-olds, reading is above average. In mathematics, results of the 2001 national tests were in line with the national average and when compared with similar schools, teachers' assessments show that most pupils in the current Year 2 are already achieving the expected level and a significant number are doing better than this. Lesson observations and pupils' work confirm the teachers' views. Teacher assessments for science in 2001 indicated that the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected standard was in line with the national average although the proportion of these pupils reaching the higher level was well above the national average.
4. The results for eleven-year-olds in the 2001 national tests were above the national average and average when compared with similar schools. Around a third of pupils attained above average standards for their age, but around one in five pupils did not reach the expected level. As a result, the governors' ambitious targets for 2001 were not met. At the time of this inspection, the range of attainment in the current Year 6 was similar to last year, although the targets agreed by the governors are slightly lower and therefore more likely to be reached.
5. The results of national tests for eleven year olds in 2001 show the numbers of pupils reaching both the nationally expected level and the proportion reaching the higher level to be above the national average. These results are above average when compared with other schools with a similar intake. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

6. National tests in English over the last five years show standards to be above average. Overall, during this time, standards have improved at a rate similar to that found nationally. In 2001 they were average when compared with those found in similar schools.
7. Since the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, standards have kept pace with national improvements, although for 7-year-olds, there has been a decline over the last two years. It is expected that this year's tests for pupils in Year 2 will reverse this trend. Literacy and numeracy are generally good, and many subjects contribute to developing pupils' skills.
8. Standards exceed national expectations at the age of seven in art, history, music and physical education. They are in line with expectations in design and technology, geography, information and communications technology and religious education. By the time pupils are eleven, standards exceed expectations in art, geography, music and physical education. They are in line with expectations in design and technology, history, information and communications technology and religious education. There are no national comparisons for pupils of primary age in French, but pupils achieve well in their two years of study.

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

9. Pupils' attitudes and values, as well as their personal development, are very good. Parents are pleased with the way their children are developing; they believe that the high standards of behaviour in the school help their children to concentrate well in lessons, and support the school's policies on helping pupils to become independent and responsible. The inspection findings confirm the parents' views. The school has been successful in sustaining and developing these positive features since the last inspection.
10. The pupils' eagerness to learn is evident in lessons, where they settle to work quickly and concentrate well on their tasks. In Years 1 and 2, pupils respond well to the established routine of reading at the beginning of the day; they enjoy books and are keen to talk about the stories they enjoy. Lessons are interesting which means that pupils become absorbed in their tasks and take pride in the presentation of their written work. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers, and when given the opportunity, ask probing questions. Although pupils listen well in assemblies and enter into the spirit of collective worship, they are given little time to reflect on the message and as a result do not consider their own response as deeply as possible. Older pupils take part in out-of-school-hours activities, field studies and residential visits and are able to describe how much they have learnt as well as the fun that they have. All pupils respond well to the school's reward system and appreciate the achievement of others.
11. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. Pupils were involved in agreeing the school's positive behaviour code and as a result, know it well and try to meet the high expectations that are set. Their polite and courteous behaviour is a credit to the school and to their families. Pupils of all ages move around the building sensibly. In the dining hall, they respond well to the friendliness of lunchtime supervisors, with the result that meal times are happy social occasions. Pupils play together co-operatively and there is no evidence of prejudice, intolerance or bullying. As a result, the school is harmonious; relationships are very good, and boys and girls, pupils of ethnic minority groups and those with special educational needs work and play together constructively. There have been no exclusions.
12. Pupils are beginning to develop their own values and beliefs. Younger pupils appreciate similarities and differences between life-style in St. Lucia and St John's for example. They talk with respect about a different culture and confidently describe the good features of both areas. Pupils are keen

to find out about different faiths. When investigating Islamic beliefs for example, Year 4 pupils showed respect and sensitivity when questioning their Muslim friends, while older pupils offer sensible opinions about world events in the news. When given the opportunity, pupils show initiative and creativity. Pupils in Year 4 are designing improvements for part of the school grounds for example, while other pupils contribute to the school web-site and plan and organise football tournaments. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 take full advantage of opportunities to visit France and this informs their views of the lives of other Europeans.

13. Teachers and support staff take great care to provide attractive and stimulating classrooms. Pupils respond well to their efforts: they handle school equipment such as musical instruments with care and tidy away efficiently after lessons. Although pupils take responsibility for much of their own learning and show that they are able to develop their own investigations, in some lessons there are not enough opportunities for them to do this. As a result, their enquiry skills in history, science and geography for example, are not as well developed as they could be. Nevertheless, pupils' enthusiasm for school, their positive behaviour and relationships contribute very effectively to their very good personal development.
14. Attendance is very good and higher than the national average for similar schools. The number of unauthorised absences is lower than the national average for similar schools. Registration is efficiently carried out at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions and very few pupils arrive late for lessons. This judgement is similar to that made at the last inspection.

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

15. The quality of teaching is very good across the school and pupils make very good progress. In well over three-quarters of lessons in the infants, teaching was judged to be good or better and frequently very good or excellent. In Years 3 to 6, three quarters of lessons were again good or better with one quarter very good or excellent. In only two lessons was teaching unsatisfactory. This represents a marked improvement from the last inspection when teaching was judged unsatisfactory in one in ten lessons. All teachers and teaching assistants plan together in year groups and work well as a team. This ensures basic parity of provision in parallel classes in the same year group.
16. With the exception of mathematics and science, where a few teachers have insecure subject knowledge, teachers' expertise is good. Teachers' enthusiasm contributes well to positive well-managed classes. In some lessons, particularly in music and some English lessons the teachers' enthusiasm is so contagious that pupils are pushed to extra heights of achievement. Good relationships between adults and pupils is evident in all classes and contributes to a calm and purposeful working atmosphere in which pupils feel secure and able to learn from their mistakes as well as their successes. Routines are well established: lessons usually proceed at a brisk pace and pupils settle to work quickly. They concentrate on tasks and work co-operatively, even when not directly supervised by an adult. This was particularly evident in the daily group reading sessions.
17. In most lessons, teachers communicate learning objectives clearly ensuring that pupils understand not only what they are expected to do, but why. Across the school, classrooms are well organised to promote good learning. Teachers were observed using a wide range of teaching strategies, including individual, group and whole class teaching to good advantage. The use of good open questioning to assess what pupils know and understand was a feature of most lessons and has a positive effect on pupils' learning, particularly their speaking and listening skills. Most teachers make a conscious effort to include pupils of all abilities and pupils with special educational needs

and those for whom English is a second language are encouraged to take an active role in discussions. The regular use of the correct subject vocabulary is a strong feature of most lessons.

18. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Work in pupils' books is well presented and pupils take a pride in their work. This is reinforced by the good quality displays in most classrooms, which contribute to a vibrant and active learning environment that celebrates pupil achievement.
19. Teachers across the school make good use of time and resources to enhance learning. However, their planning is sometimes sketchy and does not always take into account the results of assessments and the detailed analysis of test results. Good use is made of assessment in Years 5 and 6 in order to set pupils by ability in English and mathematics. Teachers provide different or modified tasks, which match the learning needs of different groups of pupils in these subjects. However, in some classes, such as in history and in religious education, the same task is given to all pupils and planning makes no reference to provision for the range of abilities in the class. Where there is additional adult support for pupils, lower attaining pupils make good progress but without this support, some pupils struggle to cope. This was often evident at the end of the morning session.
20. There were good examples of teachers modifying their planning in the light of their routine checks on pupils' progress, but this was inconsistent across the school. In some subjects there is a reliance on commercial worksheets or published schemes to structure activities. These provide insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils and there are too few other opportunities for pupils to undertake their own research or investigations.
21. The quality of marking is variable across the school. In some classes, teachers annotate pupils' work with comments that make it clear what the pupil has done well or what needs to be improved. In a few classes, marking is limited to ticks and congratulatory comments and whilst this encourages pupils, it does not help them to remember how to improve their work.
22. Good use is made of homework to extend pupils' learning. This reflects the effective partnership with parents that is such a significant feature of the school's success. Work done by pupils at home both informs and develops pupils' learning and is seamlessly woven into the fabric of many lessons.

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

23. The curriculum for children under five is well planned and leads children effectively to achieve their early learning goals. It takes full account of the requirements for the Foundation Stage. Pupils have every opportunity to develop appropriate skills in a curriculum which includes all the features of the specific areas of learning, and as a result of teachers' ingenuity, enables pupils to engage in a good range of interesting and challenging experiences.
24. A good curriculum is in place for all year groups. It is broad and balanced and meets the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs. French enriches the curriculum for pupils in Years 5 and 6, and broadens their opportunities to understand about the lives of other Europeans. The requirements of the National Curriculum are fulfilled. The time allocated to the teaching of the curriculum is broadly in line with national figure, though the time set aside for

religious education is low. Religious Education schemes of work follow the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

25. Teachers' planning of the curriculum is satisfactory. All subjects have policies and schemes of work. Planning is managed by two subject co-ordinators, one for each age range in the school. This process ensures there is broad coverage of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study which provides pupils with opportunities to build on their knowledge, understanding and skills in each area as they move through the school.
26. The school has successfully introduced effective literacy and numeracy strategies over the past few years leading to a general improvement in pupils' learning. The school's literacy and numeracy curricula follow the national guidelines. Setting arrangements for literacy and numeracy sessions in Years 5 and 6 have been introduced and are effective in ensuring that pupils are provided with suitably challenging work. The school makes good use of opportunities to extend the teaching of literacy and numeracy in the other subjects in the curriculum through, for example, discussion of artists' work in art or the evaluation of performance in design technology. There is an effective programme of personal, social and health education that is taught through planned lessons, the subjects of the curriculum, and assemblies.
27. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good overall. They have full access to all aspects of the curriculum including, for example, in Years 5 and 6, the teaching and learning of French, so they experience full equality of opportunity. The support available in class is comprehensive for those with the more significant needs, but is insufficient for some pupils with extreme special educational needs, and may in some cases, be provided only at a late stage. This is not because the school fails to identify their needs – the process of needs identification is very thorough and the deployment of limited resources very well focussed.
28. The school makes good provision for personal, social and health education. It provides opportunities for many pupils to accept responsibility and take initiative. For example, older children help younger children with their reading and ICT skills. The school has a clear sex education policy, which is linked with science. There is a positive approach to the promotion of healthy life styles, including education about the misuse of drugs. Pupils benefit from the input provided by outside speakers and agencies, for example, the police visit the school to deliver a programme on drugs awareness. The school recognises that the current PSHE provision now requires re-developing and is currently preparing a revised and improved programme that will also include citizenship education.
29. Teachers provide a good range of extra-curricular activities that are well attended by both girls and boys. There is a Computer Club that teaches skills as well as providing pupils with the opportunity to develop skills using the Internet. There are a number of drama and dance clubs. The choir meets regularly and performs at a good number of outside venues. Visits to places of local interest make an important contribution to the curriculum. Classes visit local resources. These make a valuable contribution to the school's curriculum and to pupils' personal and social development. Visitors to the school make an important contribution to the curriculum.
30. Overall the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This corresponds with the broad judgement made in the last inspection report. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. The school has a planned programme of acts of collective worship that broadly follows the Christian calendar of festivals and which promotes an awareness of the main festivals and holy days of other world religions. Though teachers do not make the most of opportunities to introduce a sense of awe and wonder in lessons, music and art lessons make

possible some moments of reflection on the extraordinary in human responses to the world about us. This is so when pupils in Year 4 contemplate a Picasso painting of a weeping woman. They are able to pick out from the Cubist painting features that depict raw human emotion.

31. There is good provision for moral development. The school is a moral place. Teachers and the other adults who look after children in the school communicate their understanding of right and wrong. For example when there is a falling out, children are reminded of the consequences of their actions on others. Teachers and other staff act as good role models for pupils. They show good care and concern for the children and do what they can to promote good relationships. This has an impact on pupils' behaviour in class as well as around the school. Wider moral issues such as care for the world around them or for people in difficult circumstances in developing countries are explored in assemblies and in subjects such as English and religious education. As part of this caring for others, pupils are often involved in raising money for people in need.
32. Pupils' social development is very good. Teachers and other staff work hard to create good opportunities to promote social development in the school through their input in PSHE, assemblies, in class and on visits including residential visits. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to work together collaboratively across the subjects. This also helps to promote very good social skills. Year 6 provides IT monitors who prepare the IT rooms for other pupils. The good range of extra curricular activities offers a very good variety of contexts for social development including contact with other schools through competitions and with a wide range of people in musical performances. Teachers organise opportunities for social development for all pupils and so those with special educational needs are fully included in the life of the school.
33. The quality of pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The pupils in the school mostly share a common cultural background. They are given opportunities to appreciate the local heritage through the cultural activities in which they regularly participate, particularly in the choir. They find out more about a range of different lifestyles in different countries around the world through their geography lessons. In history they learn about a range of dominant and distinctive cultures such as that of the Egyptians. English provides pupils with an insight into their own literary heritage while religious education and the programme of assemblies help pupils to explore the cultural statements made by the major religions. In music, pupils experience the rhythms, melody and words of the rich cultural heritage of various countries. There is scope as there was at the time of the last inspection to increase opportunities for pupils to learn about a broader range of cultures encompassing the non-European heritage.

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

34. Support for pupils' welfare makes a very good contribution to improving educational standards. The school has a caring ethos marked by the provision of a clean, safe and ordered environment in which pupils can learn effectively and in which parents are made welcome. Arrangements to promote pupils' general well being are very good and inclusive, and pupils are offered help and support for personal difficulties as staff know all the pupils very well. The teachers and learning support assistants are supportive of both the academic and pastoral needs of pupils, including those with learning and other difficulties. Teachers are skilful at meeting the needs of pupils and work hard to maintain positive relationships. This judgement is more favourable than that made at the time of the last inspection.
35. Child protection procedures operate through the headteacher who has undertaken all the necessary training. Liaison with teaching staff is good and appropriate. The use of learning

support assistants contributes positively to the welfare and progress of all pupils. There are several members of staff with appropriate qualifications in first aid and the arrangements and provision for dealing with first aid, child sickness, accidents and emergencies are very good and well understood by pupils and staff. There is an appropriate health and safety policy and risk assessments with regard to issues surrounding fire drills and minor accidents around school take place regularly. Supervision during the dinner breaks is good and appropriate. There is a good programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE), which is delivered through RE, assemblies and lessons. This ensures that pupils are given good opportunities to reflect on the impact of their actions and behaviour.

36. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour. The headteacher encourages the staff to aim at high and clear expectations for standards in behaviour. There is an expectation that pupils will behave well and this is reinforced during lessons, break times and assemblies by the example of the adults working in school. The procedures and policy, known as the 'Pitmaston Be's', are established as an integral part of the school ethos and provides pupils with an effective system for ensuring the school's high standards of behaviour. There is very little bullying and harassment during the school day as through a policy of taking immediate action teachers effectively avoid any serious incidences. There are no recorded exclusions.
37. The monitoring and support of pupils' academic progress is excellent. The headteacher, teachers and support staff know the pupils very well and make regular assessments of their progress and in partnership with parents set targets to inform the future planning of lessons to meet the needs of each pupil. The teachers and support staff use assessments of pupils' progress to inform the future planning of lessons and setting of older pupils in English and Mathematics and builds on previous learning to have a positive influence in raising overall standards in the school. The overall use of assessment is very good and this represents good improvement since the time of the last inspection when assessment procedures were a key issue for action. The standard of marking is inconsistent and sometimes lacks diagnostic comment to offer advice on how pupils might improve their work.
38. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is good. Teachers know and care for their pupils well and class teachers are efficient in monitoring pupils' overall personal development. Monitoring depends on daily exchanges of verbal information between staff. There are Individual Educational Plans in place for pupils with special educational needs and teachers and learning support assistants have very good knowledge of pupils' targets and work towards helping them achieve their goals.
39. The arrangements for supporting, assessing and monitoring the work of pupils with special educational needs are excellent. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are very sensitively managed and receive sympathetic and well-focussed support. The records of the school's analysis of their needs and the links which have been made with outside bodies are impeccable. The work undertaken by the Learning Support Assistants is of a high quality and provides very effective support for those pupils. The overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, with early identification of needs ensuring that staff, teaching and non-teaching, are well informed and can help pupils to make the good progress they do in their subjects and skills. However, for some pupils, the amount of support available is insufficient due to constraints placed upon the provision by limited budgets.
40. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good, although at present the school has few attendance problems. Registers are maintained and stored in accordance with statutory regulations. All staff help in following up unauthorised absence and the school enlists the support of the Educational Welfare Officer when necessary. The school does not use attendance data very widely to ensure that the present high standard is maintained. During inspection lessons

observed started on time and most pupils arrive punctually at the beginning of the school day. Procedures to account for all pupils during the course of the school day were strengthened during inspection.

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

41. The school enjoys very good and effective links and partnerships with parents and the community. These make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning at school and at home. The pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting with parents show that overall parents and carers have a very favourable view of the school. Parents feel that the school has high expectation for pupils, that teaching is good and parents are comfortable with asking questions and bringing questions and problems to the notice of the school. This judgment is more positive than that made at the time of the last inspection.
42. The quality and quantity of information provided to parents is very good. Newsletters to parents are sent out weekly and keep parents informed about events and issues whilst also celebrating the school's successes. The parents of new pupils are well informed through the useful School Prospectus, meetings and visits to the school. The Governors' Annual Report to Parents provides another valuable source of information for parents and is particularly well presented to include a variety of other interesting information about the school. Parents' meetings provide very good opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress, attainment and targets and these are very well attended. Almost all parents attend the parents' meetings and feel that these evenings are useful.
43. Year Information cards provide parents with good curriculum information to inform them of the topics their children are studying. Annual reports give parents very informed details of their child's progress, suggest targets for pupils' improvement and include details of pupils' levels of attainment in core subjects and record of attendance at school. These, coupled with the copies of discussion sheets recording the topics and targets discussed by parents and teachers at parent meetings, provide parents with an excellent level of quality information about pupils' progress.
44. There are arrangements for parents of pupils with a statement of special educational need to receive appropriate information through an annual review as necessary. Parents of pupils with Individual Education Plans (IEP's) are kept well informed and are aware of the targets set for their child. The school operates an informal 'open door' policy for parents and carers wishing to discuss matters or to make complaints. A member of staff is always available at the beginning and end of the school day or by appointment. Parents say they feel very welcome in the school and are happy to approach the headteacher or class teacher with problems or difficulties.
45. The parents' involvement in their children's learning is very good. The school welcomes the help of several parents, for example with listening to reading, projects linked to topic work, and in attending residential trips for pupils. Parents are willing to offer help with school trips and other activities such as the annual school Bonfire in November. The inspection team were satisfied with the quality and consistency of homework, which compares favourably with that in other schools.
46. Many parents, carers and friends of the school attend school presentations, such as the Christmas productions. There is a very active Friends of Pitmaston Primary School Association and this arranges social and fund raising functions for the school with the help of parents, teachers, pupils and friends of the school. They arrange fund raising events such as the Christmas and Summer Fairs, Quiz Nights, and social evenings such as the Murder Mystery Evening held in March. Monies raised by the Friends Association have recently funded the new Key Stage 1 adventure

play area and will be used shortly for improvements to the Key Stage 2 play area. The School Governors have been active in arranging a Mathematics evening for parents to learn how their children are taught mathematics in school and at present a number of parents are taking undertaking lessons in ICT arranged at the school. All the many links between the school, the community and parents ensure that overall parents make a marked and very positive contribution to the work of the school and what their children achieve.

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

47. The management and leadership provided by the headteacher and key members of staff are very good. The leadership ensures there is a very clear educational direction that reflects the aims and values of the school and to which the governing body and all members of staff clearly subscribe.
48. Staff to whom responsibilities are delegated undertake their duties effectively. At the time of the last inspection the role of subject co-ordinators was identified as an area for improvement. The school has tackled this issue and good improvement has taken place. The senior management team is made up of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and phase managers and they work well together, complementing each others' skills. They monitor teachers planning within their phase and frequently observe lessons. Time is used well to release these members of staff from their teaching duties to undertake their management responsibilities. Subject co-ordinators are also given time to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision in their subjects. They do this well and prepare detailed action plans based on their findings to address any arising issues and concerns. These plans are integrated effectively into the school management plan and are shared with governors. These arrangements make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school.
49. Provision for special educational needs is very well managed, following a period of transition during which the school moved to having one special needs co-ordinator. She involves parents well in making decisions about the needs of their children, deploys support time effectively and keeps excellent records of pupils' progress. The development priorities for special educational needs have been clearly thought out in the light of rising numbers of pupils entering the school with significant special educational needs.
50. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities effectively, including undertaking those duties required by law. The role it plays in deciding the direction of the school is good and governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses evident in the quality of provision. A well-organised committee structure contributes positively to the efficient operation of the governing body. The last inspection said governors should create procedures for publishing the agendas for all meetings and recording the outcomes. This now happens very effectively. They are kept well informed by the reports provide by the headteacher, regular contact with those teachers who are responsible for the various subjects and by their visits to the school.
51. The school's strategies for appraising the performance of teachers and of other staff and for performance management are good. Careful analysis of the findings from activities to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and of other aspects of provision enables the school to identify appropriate priorities for development. The last inspection identified the need for the school development plan to become an effective means of long term planning. This is now the case and the improvement has been good. The school development plan sets out clearly what action needs to be taken, who will be responsible, what the resource implications will be, and how the initiatives will be monitored and evaluated. Because the governors and members of staff at all levels are

involved effectively in these processes, the shared commitment to improvement and the capacity to succeed is good.

52. The strategic use of resources, including specific grants and other funding is very good. Grants to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs are used effectively. Grants for building developments are also used well, for example, to pay for the recently completed, additional, classrooms and a second computer suite. The arrangements to ensure that there is appropriate financial support for the educational priorities identified in schools development plan are very good. Typical of these procedures is the very good response to the identified need to provide more learning support assistants in classrooms. The headteacher and governing body planned prudently to sustain this provision for as long possible. The impact of these appointments on the quality of education and on the standards pupils achieve has been evaluated. This evaluation celebrates the very good contribution made by learning support assistants and is affirmed by the findings of the inspection.
53. The application of the principles of best value is also good and is typified by the example of the appointment of teaching assistants. There is a significant planned underspend in the current budget. Governors have wisely earmarked this to provide an additional classroom, for the development of specialist teaching accommodation for food technology and music, and for a new library for Years 1 and 2.
54. Day to day financial management is very good. Information and communication technology is used well to ensure that systems are efficient and effective and makes a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school. The financial administrator keeps the headteacher up-to-date with the progress of the various budget headings and the headteacher provides regular, detailed and accurate reports for the governing body about the financial state of the school.
55. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are very good. These staff are supported well by their appointed mentors and are provided with time to visit other schools to observe good practice and with guidance about the planning and evaluation of their own work.
56. The quality of the accommodation and the adequacy of resources to support learning are satisfactory. The recently completed classroom block means that no pupils are taught in temporary accommodation. The new, second, computer suite is already having a positive impact on the quality of provision for information and communication technology. Teaching spaces are still in short supply and the use of the library for teaching restricts pupils' access for independent research. The governing body are aware of this and are making contingencies to address the situation by providing more teaching space in the school.

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

57. Governors, headteacher and staff should consider how to enhance further this already very good school by:
  - (1) Creating more opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of investigation and enquiry in science, by:
    - ? enabling better access to the school library, a development which is in hand;
    - ? ensuring all teachers are confident in planning for practical work in their lessons.

58. They may wish also to consider how they will address the following less significant areas for improvement:

- Developing opportunities to increase pupils' understanding of the multicultural nature of the society in which they live
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, sampling pupils' work to exemplify their attainment and progress
- Reviewing the time allocated to the teaching of religious education to ensure that it is appropriate for each year group.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	83
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	38

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

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	17	36	15	2		
Percentage	8%	23%	49%	20%	3%		

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	601
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	28

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	70

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

<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	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	4.6%

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.1%

National comparative data	5.6%
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National comparative data	0.5%
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	46	49	95

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	42	36	41
	Girls	47	47	48
	Total	89	82	89
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (93)	86 (96)	94 (98)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	39	41	42
	Girls	46	45	48
	Total	85	86	90
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (94)	91 (94)	95 (93)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	52	42	94

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	44	41	50
	Girls	39	31	40
	Total	83	72	90
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (80)	77 (78)	96 (88)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	41	42	45
	Girls	39	30	37
	Total	80	72	82
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (89)	77 (77)	87 (86)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	4
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	10
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	496
Any other minority ethnic group	1

*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)	21.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.6
Average class size	28.6

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

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	297

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a
Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a
Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

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

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

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	1,052,102
Total expenditure	1,033,855
Expenditure per pupil	1690
Balance brought forward from previous year	49613
Balance carried forward to next year	67860

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	602
Number of questionnaires returned	235

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	33	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	43	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	55	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	54	11	4	1
The teaching is good.	56	40	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	46	6	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	35	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	38	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	35	54	7	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	56	36	3	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	46	3	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	34	7	2	12

## **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**

59. Provision for children in the foundation stage is very good and is a strength of the school. Standards have improved since the previous inspection. Children in the reception classes make good, and often very good progress in their learning as a result of the very good provision and high quality teaching. Children are made to feel secure and happy and they settle quickly into the school routines.
60. The teaching is mostly good in all areas of learning and is frequently very good. There is a clear link between what the teachers plan and what they want the children to learn. Their explanations are careful and well paced and they make sure that time is spent equally with all children. Classrooms are well organised for children to make choices and work independently. The teachers receive very good support from the teaching assistants and all work together as an extremely effective team to enhance children's learning. They establish very good relationships with the children and manage them well. Planned activities are interesting so children are excited and participate enthusiastically. Teachers have very good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and firm understanding of how each of the Stepping Stones moves through to the Early Learning Goals. Assessment procedures are good and are ensuring that lesson preparation is matching children's needs appropriately. Specific strengths and weaknesses of individual children are evaluated regularly and are used to plan the next week's work and also to set individual targets in language and literacy and in mathematical development.
61. The classroom accommodation is used most effectively. The designation of each of the three classrooms for a specific area of learning provides good opportunity for children to engage in a wide variety of interesting and challenging experiences. Although the outdoor play area has been improved since the previous inspection, the lack of security and difficulty of access limits the opportunity for children's learning to be further enhanced through the continuous use of the outdoor environment.
62. The results of tests carried out when children enter the reception class show attainment to be broadly in line with expectations. Children achieve very well and by the time they leave the reception classes the majority have exceeded the Early Learning Goals of the foundation stage in all the recommended areas of learning.

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

63. Children make very good progress and by the time they are ready to start year 1 most exceed expectations in their personal and social development. They are very well behaved and polite and have good expectations of behaviour, which they obey readily. They are developing good listening skills and make good progress on their ability to concentrate on the tasks they are set. The teachers plan effectively for the development of social skills. For example, during one "Circle Time" children were taking it in turns to say which games they like to play and who they like to play with. This lesson was building well on the previous week's learning, when children had discussed what to do if they wanted to make friends. Social development was further enhanced when the teacher made good use of an unforeseen opportunity for learning. Having established

that many children did not know how to play the game of "tag" she took the class outside for a quick game at the end of the lesson. In all classes, teachers ensure there are good levels of support at the focussed activities that are set up during the day to develop co-operation amongst the children. As a result, children are increasingly prepared to take turns and to share resources. Their social skills are developed well by the good provision of role-play activities, where most play together, sharing ideas and opinions with growing confidence. This was evident when three children organised themselves to work collaboratively in the class "railway station". As one issued a ticket, another provided a guidebook for the journey and the third prepared to drive the train. The organisation of provision helps children to become more independent and self reliant; a good range of activities encourages them to make choices and decisions for themselves. Children play and work well together, supporting each other and sharing resources. Friendships are developing and all children are happy and secure in the school environment. Effective measures have been established to support children on entry to the school. There are very good links with the nursery in the school grounds, which many children have attended and children's security within the school environment is supported by the good relationships that have been forged between home and school.

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

64. Children achieve above the expectations in language and literacy. Speaking and listening skills are developing well. Most children express their needs clearly, in well constructed sentences. In each class the adults talk constantly with the children, effectively developing their powers of self expression. The daily show and tell session presents good opportunity for the reinforcement of speaking and listening skills. This was evident when children were taking it in turns to describe an item they had brought to school. Their classmates were encouraged to formulate a question to ask about the item. In answer to one suitably framed question, "how does it work?" a more able child demonstrated a broad vocabulary as he replied, "It comes on automatically". There is an effective focus on the development of the features of a book using some elements of the literacy hour strategy. Most children can identify the title, cover and picture and more able children the author. Good planning is evident in the good progress that children make in their writing. Teachers encourage children to think of themselves as writers and activities are well targeted to individual needs. Most children write their own names and confidently use writing as a means of recording. More able children write simple familiar words independently and use their knowledge of letter sounds to make plausible attempts at less well known words. Children enjoy books and handle them with care. Most children have already embarked on the school reading scheme and can read a number of familiar words.

### **Mathematical development**

65. Attainment in the mathematical area of development is above expectations. Most children can count to ten and many beyond. The majority of children are successfully developing their recognition of numbers. The most able children order number cards to 20; most are secure in ordering numbers to 10 and are able to identify which numbers are missing from a given sequence. They enjoy helping each other to complete this task. More able children have begun to record simple addition and use their knowledge of addition to solve simple problems. For example, they work out different ways of using coins to make a total of seven pence. Children use mathematical vocabulary increasingly accurately. Teachers use well a wide range of play resources and games for children's understanding of number. Learning is effectively enhanced through challenging activities that are well tailored to children's needs. As with language, as a result of ongoing assessment, individual targets are established which ensure that each child makes good progress in the development of mathematical skills.

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

66. Children learn well and have good levels of knowledge and understanding. They bring their knowledge of their own families and backgrounds to their imaginative play. From scrutiny of photographs a good range of experiences successfully develops children's knowledge and understanding of the world. To effectively enhance progress the teachers prepare interesting and motivating activities. For example, during the inspection pupils were totally enthralled as they investigated how objects fall through the air. They enthusiastically predicted whether the item would drop, float or spin, before practically recording the results by placing the article in the correct set. The teacher demonstrated high expectations through the challenging activity and children's learning was further extended as they went on to make streamers, which they took outside to investigate how they moved in the wind. Children are given regular opportunity to use the computer suite and most use the computer confidently as, for example they direct the mouse to guide the cursor as they dress a teddy bear.

## **Physical development**

67. Children develop their physical skills successfully during sessions in the hall. They manage to find spaces well, listen and respond quickly to instructions to march, stretch and curl. They are in line to exceed expectations by the end of the foundation stage. In one lesson, children made very good progress in throwing and catching skills through high quality teaching. The lesson was very well planned, resources were well organised and the teacher demonstrated high expectations. The direct teaching of strategies developed skills well. By the end of the lesson the majority of children demonstrated improved co-ordination and control as they threw a ball into the air and let it bounce into a hoop before catching it. In the classroom children use and manipulate construction and play equipment with growing confidence and dexterity. Fine motor skills are well developed, they fold, join, build and successfully role and shape malleable materials. Good pencil control is evident in their attempts at writing. Teachers' praise and encouragement results in positive efforts and improvements.

## **Creative development**

68. There are good opportunities to develop children's confidence and skills and by the time they leave the reception classes they have achieved well. Children use paints confidently, demonstrating a good awareness of colour as, for example, when one child carefully selected the colours to paint a rainbow. In music, during the weekly hymn practice, children join in enthusiastically. They clap their hands in time to the beat and sing in tune. Children enjoy investigating the sounds made by a variety of percussion instruments that are made available on the class music table. As with other areas of learning, lessons are well planned and good resources are provided which allow children to gain experience in a wide range of activities.

## **ENGLISH**

69. National tests for attainment, taken when pupils are seven, show that standards in reading over the last five years have remained well above average. Standards in writing were also well above average until 2001 when they were just above average. When compared with standards found in similar schools in 2001 for seven-year-olds reading is above average

70. National tests for eleven-year-olds in English over the last five years show standards to be above average. Overall, during this time, standards have improved at a rate similar to that found nationally. In 2001 they were average when compared with those found in similar schools.
71. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment in all aspects of English is above average. Throughout the school, pupils from all ability groups, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers include pupils from all ability groups and backgrounds effectively in all aspects of provision made for the subject. Effective provision is made for more able and higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 by teaching in sets based on their prior attainment in the subject. This provision also works well for lower attaining pupils. Learning support programmes and learning support assistants are also used very effectively to promote the learning of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.
72. Improvement since the time of the previous inspection is good. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. The accuracy of pupils' spelling and punctuation has improved considerably because teachers apply the principles of the National Literacy Strategy effectively. The quality of teaching has also improved significantly.
73. Teachers use the opening section of lessons very well to relate what they intend to teach to their pupils' previous learning. They also explain clearly what they expect pupils to learn during lessons and use the latter part of lessons well to review learning and assess progress. This helps pupils to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. Occasionally teachers do not create enough opportunities for the pupils to explain how well they think they have done.
74. Standards in speaking and listening exceed expectations in all year groups. Pupils order their thoughts logically and speak confidently, clearly and correctly. Younger pupils are delighted to explain about the work they are doing and do so in great detail. Older pupils respond well to the frequent opportunities, provided by their teachers, to discuss their work and respond to questions. When they work together in small groups they listen considerately to each other and present their views thoughtfully. An excellent example of this is when a group of Year 5 pupils, working independently, discussed how they would adapt the poem 'The Highwayman' into a short drama for presentation to the rest of their class.
75. Throughout the school standards in reading are well above those expected for pupils' ages. Younger pupils receive excellent support when significant numbers of parents visit at the start of each day to listen to them read. Each day, throughout the school, pupils read independently, are listened to reading by an adult or are taught reading skills in a shared reading lesson. This provision promotes high standards very effectively. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are enthusiastic readers and many are inspired to read each day at home. By the time they are ready to leave the school at the end of Year 6 pupils read fluently and with expression. When some read they change their voice to illustrate how they imagine the character would be speaking. They talk with great enthusiasm about the characters in the books they are reading, discuss their favourite authors and speak thoughtfully about their reading preferences. Often pupils are inspired to read by the enthusiasm of their teachers when they recommend books that pupils might enjoy.
76. Teachers provide pupils with frequent and good opportunities for writing. They respond well to these opportunities and write effectively for a range of purposes and in a range of styles. Spelling is developed well and tested regularly and the rules of correct punctuation are taught effectively. Consequently by the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are above average.

77. When pupils in Year 2 write profiles about characters from the books they have read, their levels of spelling and punctuation are well above those expected for their age. The explanations they offer show considerable understanding of the texts they are basing their writing on. For example, in one lesson pupils wrote missing person posters, described a character from 'The Owl Babies'. They responded very well to the very good model presented by their teacher. When they wrote the text for their own posters they used an excellent range of describing words to illustrate the subtle differences between characters from the book.
78. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to undertake sustained and independent writing in other subjects and to write for other subjects during their English lessons. In a Year 6 lesson higher attaining pupils worked in partnerships to write an additional episode of 'Tom's Midnight Garden'. However, they adapted their versions of the story very skilfully to place them in a World War II setting, linking successfully to their work in history. Lower attaining pupils in this age group achieve well because of the good support they receive. They are sufficiently confident to volunteer to write on the board, for example, when showing that they understand how the endings of some words change when they become plurals.
79. In another lesson, Year 6 pupils of average ability identified the techniques used by the author of 'The Silver Sword' to introduce suspense into the story. They followed this by successfully applying the techniques to their own writing. They were inspired to do this by some excellent teaching that captured their interest by using a range of teaching methods to bring an air of suspense and anticipation to the lesson.
80. Teachers use homework well to extend pupils' learning effectively. During the inspection, for homework, lower attaining Year 6 pupils wrote reviews of the books they had enjoyed. Many of these were detailed and made sensible evaluative comments about the books. Pupils also handed in their homework without having to be asked to do so, illustrating their very good attitudes to their learning.
81. Information and communication technology is used well to enhance pupils learning in the subject. There are many good examples of pupils using word processing to enhance their writing and to improve the quality of their presentation. For example, pupils in Year 5 produced an excellent anthology of 'Spooky Poems' in a 'big book' format. This work tends to happen when classes have access to the computer suite. Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently when lessons are not taught in the suite.
82. Assessment procedures are used well to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the performance of each pupil and individual targets are set to help each pupil to improve. Parents also make a significant contribution to their children's learning. Each year there are opportunities for parents to discuss with teachers how well their children are progressing and to agree a programme of improvement for their child. These programmes are reviewed regularly and improvements assessed accurately.
83. Leadership and management for the subject are good. There are two co-ordinators who share the responsibility. One teaches predominantly in Years 1 and 2, the other in Years 3 to 6. They work together closely, ensuring successfully that pupils make smooth progress as they move from year to year and providing good support for their colleagues. They undertake detailed analysis of tests results and other assessments. Consequently they have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and plan effectively to raise standards further.

84. Resources for the subject are good and there are sufficient books in all classrooms. However, because space is at a premium the library is used for teaching small groups in a variety of subjects. This means its use by pupils for reading and other research is restricted.

## **MATHEMATICS**

85. Standards in mathematics are above those expected for pupils at the ages of 7 and 11. The above average standards are the result of good teaching throughout the school which enables the pupils to enjoy learning, skilful leadership by the mathematics co-ordinators and an effective partnership with parents. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, pupils with English as an additional language and those who are mathematically gifted, make good progress in their learning.
86. Results of the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds were in line with the national average but below average when compared with similar schools. Teachers' assessments show that most pupils in the current Year 2 are already achieving the expected level and a significant number are doing better than this. Lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work confirm the teachers' views. The results for eleven-year-olds in the 2001 national tests were above the national average but compared with similar schools, the results were below average. Around a third of pupils attained above average standards for their age, but around one in five pupils did not reach the expected level. As a result, the governors' ambitious targets for 2001 were not met. At this point in the current school year, inspection evidence shows the range of attainment in the current Year 6 as similar to last year, although the targets agreed by the governors are slightly lower and therefore more likely to be reached. Since the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy three years ago, standards have just about kept pace with national improvements, although for seven-year-olds, there has been a decline over the last two years. It is expected that this year's tests for pupils in Year 2 will reverse this trend.
87. By the age of seven, most pupils know all the addition and subtraction facts for each number up to 10 by heart, and are working with number facts up to 20. Most know multiplication facts for the 2 and 10 times table and are learning to multiply by 5. Daily practice with mental calculations helps all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to recall these key facts easily. Pupils use different ways to calculate mentally and higher attaining pupils are beginning to choose the best method for themselves, for example, they use doubling and halving facts to work out multiples of 2, 5 and 10. Regular counting, making and writing numbers has enabled most pupils to gain appropriate understanding of what each digit represents in a 3-digit number and to count accurately to 100 and beyond. Pupils' written work shows that most can measure in centimetres, compare lengths and know the standard units for measuring mass and capacity. By the end of Year 2, pupils are expected to use different strategies for calculation with confidence and to know and understand a demanding range of mathematical vocabulary. Most pupils are not as confident as they could be in these two important aspects as not all teachers emphasise them enough in their teaching.
88. By the age of 11, most pupils have continued to make good progress in all aspects of mathematics. They have a good understanding of numerical operations and are able to estimate and calculate mentally with whole numbers to 1000 and with decimals. They can find percentages and fractions of quantities, and calculate perimeters and areas. Written work in ICT, science and geography shows that most pupils can extract and interpret information presented in graphs and charts. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are taught in ability groups and this enables all pupils, those who are mathematically gifted and those who find the work difficult, to make good progress. This is because pupils are given tasks that are both challenging and achievable. However, very good and

excellent progress was also seen in lessons in Years 3 and 4 where pupils were taught expertly in mixed ability groups. Although higher attaining pupils are working two to three years ahead of their year group, many of the others do not select the most appropriate mental strategy for their calculations with confidence. They do not have complete understanding of the expected range of mathematical vocabulary, particularly that related to shape and space, position and movement and handling data.

89. The pupils' keen attitudes to learning and their good behaviour in lessons make a positive contribution to their progress. Right through the school, pupils settle to work quickly, concentrate well and listen to their teachers. The high standard of presentation in mathematics books shows the care and pride that pupils take in their written work. Paired work is well established; pupils question each other and show sensitivity when working together and, through the discussion of mathematical problems, develop their reasoning and thinking skills. Pupils with special educational needs gain confidence through working with a 'number partner' and the warm relationships developed with teaching assistants in lessons also contribute to their good progress.
90. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and in around a third of lessons it is very good or excellent. Teachers have effectively adopted the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy with the result that lessons move at a brisk pace, contain a high proportion of direct teaching and are well structured to build effectively on pupils' current levels of skill, knowledge and understanding. Although lessons are carefully planned with a relevant focus for learning, not all teachers make the mental strategies or key mathematical vocabulary that pupils are to learn sufficiently clear. Where these aspects are taught and practised, and pupils have plenty of reference points such as words and number lines, learning is more effective. In all classes, teachers organise pupils well and promote good behaviour by praising their achievement. Learning for pupils with special educational needs is effective because the skilled teaching assistants break learning into small steps; they ask questions which require extended answers and demonstrate and support their explanations by using practical apparatus. Pupils are effectively included in all activities. In the small number of lessons where learning is not as effective as it could be, pupils struggle to concentrate when they have to listen to overlong explanations, begin individual tasks without having been shown what to do, or are given too many different ideas to cope with at once.
91. Teachers are supported well by effective planning procedures, a comprehensive scheme of work and well-organised mathematical resources. Although more could be done, numeracy skills are extended well in other subjects, and support pupils' learning in science, geography and design and technology in particular. Pupils' learning is not benefiting from the use of computers as much as possible at the moment, but appropriate plans to extend this are in place. Two enthusiastic co-ordinators lead the subject successfully. They give much appreciated advice to colleagues on how best to apply national recommendations and have helped to establish a strong system for pupil assessment and record keeping. Their skilful management has enabled the school to make good progress since the last inspection, particularly in the areas of assessment and achieving consistency in the quality of teaching and learning. The support of parents is harnessed effectively through regular meetings and homework. Although there are efficient monitoring systems in the school, opportunities for the co-ordinators to fulfil their responsibilities for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are currently limited. The extension of their monitoring role in order to improve the quality of their support for colleagues as well as to identify areas for further improvement with greater accuracy is identified appropriately in the governors' school development plans for the current year.

## SCIENCE

92. Teacher assessments of seven-year-old pupils in 2001 indicated that the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected standard was in line with the national average although the proportion of these pupils reaching the higher level was well above the national average. The results of national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2001 show the numbers of pupils reaching both the nationally expected level and the proportion reaching the higher level to be above the national average. These results are in line with other schools with a similar intake. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
93. At the time of the last inspection in 1997, standards were judged to be well above national expectations across the school, although the results of national tests for seven-year-olds that year showed only average attainment. Since then the school's results have been consistently above the national average. Evidence from the current inspection indicates that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language have good knowledge and understanding of all areas of the science curriculum. When given appropriate support in class, pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
94. By Year 2, pupils are already familiar with the concept of a fair test and are beginning to predict the outcomes of experiments and record their work in a variety of ways. For example pupils understand that when testing how far a toy car will travel down a ramp, the same car must be used for all the tests. They predict that if the ramp is steeper, the car will travel further. They use a bar graph to record their findings.
95. At present there is limited use of computers to support learning in science. Although pupils have used Internet sites to support learning, there is little evidence that pupils use their computer skills to report, record or illustrate findings of investigations. Reports, graphs and charts and conclusions are written or drawn by hand.
96. By Year 6, pupils know the essential characteristics of living things and are able to classify them. They can describe the life cycle of a plant, know what plants need to live, and identify the different parts of a flower. They can make simple electrical circuits, including switches, and know which materials are conductors of electricity and which are insulators. They know the defining characteristics of solids, liquids and gases and can separate mixtures using appropriate methods such as evaporation and filtration. Most pupils have a very clear understanding of what constitutes a fair test. They also understand the idea of changing variables in order to determine cause and effect.
97. The quality of teaching in all the science lessons observed during the inspection was satisfactory. Teachers manage their classes well and pupils have positive attitudes to science. Specific scientific vocabulary is introduced and used well. There is however a heavy reliance on worksheets to structure learning.
98. The emphasis in lessons, confirmed by the survey of pupils' work, was on giving pupils a sound bank of scientific knowledge. Although pupils are given opportunities to carry out experiments, these are in the main highly structured, with limited opportunities for pupils to devise their own experiments. Pupils are able to describe what happens in an experiment but have too few opportunities to be active participants in conducting them. As a result, pupils know that things happen but are not always clear about how or why. More complex scientific skills such as predicting outcomes, making inferences, and concluding and evaluating evidence are less well developed than their theoretical knowledge of science. For example, Year 6 pupils know that living

things breathe, reproduce and excrete but could not say why a mixture of yeast, sugar and warm water in a bottle will froth and inflate a balloon fixed over the neck of the bottle. Only a few pupils could suggest a sensible time scale for taking measurements of the reaction.

99. The two co-ordinators both have good subject knowledge and can provide support and advice for colleagues. A lack of staff confidence and expertise in the teaching of science was identified through observation of lessons and the purchase and implementation of a published scheme based on national guidelines has addressed this. It also ensures full coverage of all the curriculum attainment targets. However, the scheme has not given the staff sufficient confidence to allow pupils to develop their scientific skills through their own practical investigations. The co-ordinators are aware of the importance of investigative science and a science week focusing on 'hands on' investigations is planned for the end of this term.
100. The lack of assessment procedures noted in the previous report has been successfully addressed. Pupils are assessed at the end of each unit and the information gained is added to the cumulative pupils' reports with the result that progress is well tracked and difficulties are picked up quickly.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

101. Standards of attainment in art are above national expectations across the school. All pupils including those with special educational needs and those whose language at home is other than English make good progress in acquiring the skills and knowledge required by the art curriculum.
102. By age seven pupils are attaining good standards working with a wide range of media. For example they produce good results exploring the work of Klee when they produce their Magic Fish scraping lines from a black wax surface on a multicoloured base. They experiment successfully with 'hot' colours and black shapes to produce evocative pieces based around the Gunpowder Plot. They work well in 3D to produce clay relief and use fabric well to construct self-portrait collages. The variety of their work is good and shows that they are becoming increasingly self-confident artists. Their work involves good consideration of cultures other than their own. This is so in their work on Willow Pattern plates that derive from Chinese painting styles as well as the work in which they explore European artists. They respond well to a variety of challenges for example when they are given a small photograph placed in the middle of a large piece of paper and asked to fill in the surrounding blank space. The results draw very well on the images, colour and lines contained in the photograph.
103. By Year 6 pupils make good progress in broadening their work with a variety of media in a good range of styles. They produce some good work that follows the bold patterns and bright colours of Clarice Cliff. Their work following Kandinsky faithfully reproduces and explores that artist's style. In Year 4 pupils attain very good standards when they produce work inspired by taking characteristics from Picasso's Rose and Blue Periods. When they are asked their reactions to examples of his Cubist Period they demonstrate a very good understanding of the paintings. These sessions promote literacy well through encouraging pupils to express their thoughts and feelings in response to challenging stimuli. Pupils in most classes use sketch books well to explore line, texture and other ways of representing what they see and wish to express. They respond well to teachers' suggestions and modify their work as they go along to improve on what they want to express. Year 5 pupils use graphics software to explore and develop a range of images on the computer screen. This work is based on topics from their religious education lessons. Some Year 3 pupils use the Internet well to source images of Egypt that they then use to help them to develop an Egyptian theme in their paintings.

104. Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge that enables them to plan and deliver challenging, lively and interesting lessons. Introductions are good, telling pupils exactly what is to be done and leaving plenty of time for the practical aspects that the pupils enjoy most. Pupils are enthusiastic about what they are doing. They are receptive and ready to learn. Teachers' good subject knowledge informs and stretches pupils' learning. They move around the class giving good quality support, advice and encouragement. This leads to learning that builds from confidence in their individual ability to appreciate art through the doing of it. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together. Assistants are well prepared and so are able to help pupils with their work. This teamwork leads to good quality individual support and advice which extends pupils' learning effectively.
105. Art is very well co-ordinated. The two teachers have very good experience, qualifications and expertise. Art in the school was a strength in the last inspection and continues to be so. An already strong scheme of work has been reviewed and further developed to take into account nationally produced guidelines. The result is a broad and varied experience for pupils, providing very good levels of challenge. There is still some work to be done to develop assessment portfolios of pupils' work that will ensure that teachers throughout the school have a point of reference when they are considering what levels of attainment their pupils have reached.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

106. Due to timetabling restrictions it was not possible to observe any lessons in design technology. Therefore no judgements can be made about the teaching and learning that takes place in classes through the school and which is based on sound schemes of work developed from national guidelines. Nevertheless from analysis of planning, of a fair sample of work from each year and from observation of work on display, it is clear that standards in design technology are at least in line with national expectations. Pupils work with a satisfactory range of materials and processes though work with food is a relative weakness. Teachers make sure that the design process is evident in pupils' recording of their work and that it is followed. This means that all pupils will conduct some form of research before starting their tasks. They generally produce sound labelled drawings that communicate what they intend to do. Labels give details for example of materials used, of dimensions and of ways of fixing. Drawings often give alternative views of artefacts to be made so that planning is better informed. Planning is satisfactory. Most tasks include a list of the materials to be used and, with older pupils, there is step by step planning. All tasks are followed by guided evaluations in which pupils respond to teachers' questions about the progress of their making and their feelings about what they have completed.
107. By Year 2 pupils are applying the design process when they make model vehicles. They produce sound labelled drawings and lists of the components needed. They produce a good variety of outcomes to satisfactory standards of finish. They consider commercial aspects of their vehicles including the logos they paint on the sides to advertise the goods they contain. When they make puppets using fabric they model them first with paper deciding which of their designs is best before committing themselves to making the final product. They know that this avoids wasting expensive materials. They learn the importance of the use of templates to ensure accuracy in making. By Year 6 pupils make satisfactory progress in applying the design process in progressively challenging tasks. They do so when they design shelters to keep the human body warm in adverse weather conditions. They generate a sound variety of ideas and produce good step by step plans

and sets of instructions that could be used to reproduce their ideas. In Year 5 pupils attain good standards in a task to produce musical instruments. Pupils design a good variety of instruments from recyclable materials. They analyse their designs using a table that lists success criteria against which they will be judged. When Year 5 produce crispy cakes they learn about hygiene in the kitchen. In Year 4 their designs of Hindu chairs necessitate useful research into different religions, which supports and reinforces their study of religious education. The measurement they do in design technology makes sound links with numeracy. Their research and evaluations make a satisfactory contribution to literacy skills.

108. The co-ordination of design technology is satisfactory. Both co-ordinators have been recently appointed but both have a good understanding of what has to be done to improve standards in design technology in the school. They are developing a useful portfolio of samples of work covered in the school and will use this not only as a record of the progress of children but also as a tool to help standardise assessment through the school. They are actively considering the development of design booklets which would be used to guide and to record the progress of pupils through the design process and which would provide a useful record of their work. This would be a good way to ensure consistency in teaching and learning in the subject as booklets would provide an immediate and open guide to how well pupils acquire the skills and knowledge they need for design technology.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

109. Pupils make progress through the school which is at least sound, and often good. By the age of seven, pupils attain standards that are similar to those in most schools, but by the age of eleven, standards are above average. The work completed in Years 1 and 2, combined with the pupils' secure skills in literacy enable pupils to benefit from the well-planned programme of work and good teaching. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is also good as the work in lessons is adapted for them and effective additional support is provided. Tasks that require pupils to follow their own lines of enquiry support the good progress of higher attaining pupils.
110. By the age of seven, most pupils have undertaken a comprehensive study of their home area and are able to compare it with life in St. Lucia in the Caribbean. Through these studies, the pupils practise geographical skills such as in the collection of data to investigate how many cars are parked in a street, and are beginning to form and express their own views about their environment. Most pupils are able to state which features in the park they like for example and suggest sensible environmental improvements. Pupils in Year 2 have a good knowledge of St. Lucia: they are able to find it on a globe, describe homes, the climate and banana production. The illustrations in their books are careful and detailed and show that they understand key similarities and differences between life in Worcester and in the Caribbean. Pupils are developing their understanding of geographical vocabulary and higher attaining pupils can identify features such as lakes, mountains and rivers in photographs. Pupils' written work shows that by learning geography they are also effectively extending their skills in literacy and numeracy.
111. By the age of eleven, pupils talk with enthusiasm about the fieldwork they have completed. Their study of Worcester city centre for example shows that they can develop their own survey questions, analyse their evidence and come to relevant conclusions about why people visit the city. Written work shows that most pupils are able to use maps of different scales and have an appropriate understanding of the function of symbols and keys. Pupils' knowledge of places is good: they locate many European countries on a world map and describe the climate in different

parts of the world. They are aware of places in the news and recognise how people have damaged or improved the environment: many are developing strong independent views about these issues. Although pupils have made good use of ICT to design attractive covers for their geography folders, they have had only limited opportunity in school to further their enquiry skills by using information texts and the internet.

112. The pupils' positive attitudes to learning and keen interest in the world around them support their good progress. They behave well in lessons, listen carefully to their teachers and ask probing questions. When studying cultures different from their own they are interested and respectful. Pupils in Year 4 co-operated particularly well when working in pairs to plan improvements to the school environment: they are developing mature views about the need for recycling waste.
113. Geography is taught through units of work only at certain points in the year and at the time of the inspection, it was only timetabled for Years 3 and 4. In the three lessons seen, teaching was mainly of good quality and as a result the pupils gained local knowledge while also developing their understanding of maps and plans. Lessons are well planned and take good account of the learning that has gone before. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the progress made by pupils with special educational needs who are effectively included in all activities. Teachers set high standards for behaviour and the presentation of work and expect the pupils to apply intellectual effort to their learning. Strengths of the teaching include effective paired work which promotes pupils' personal development as well as their intellectual skills, the effective use of stimulating resources such as photographs that motivate pupils, and the consolidation of key learning at the end of the lesson with careful questions that check pupils' understanding. On the very few occasions where pupils lost concentration during the lesson, it was the result of overlong explanations by the teacher or being asked to tackle new work before they had fully understood what they were doing.
114. Since the last inspection, the quality of provision in geography and the standards attained in the school have improved. The improvement is the result of greater consistency in the quality of teaching, careful planning of the curriculum, accurate assessment of pupils' progress, strong links with parents and enthusiastic leadership by the co-ordinators.

## **HISTORY**

115. At the time of the last inspection standards in history were judged to be above national expectations across the school. Evidence from the current inspection indicates that standards in the infant department remain above national expectations but in the juniors standards are in line with national expectations.
116. Pupils in Year 1 are already developing a good sense of chronology, they can identify which toys their parents would have played with and which would have been played with by Victorian children. Effective cross-curricular links lead to good learning. For example the study of toys is linked to work on materials in science and pupils know that Victorian children would not have played with plastic toys. Pupils have also looked at different house building styles in the area around the school and can identify similarities and differences in the style of houses over the last two centuries. In Year 2 pupils have looked at the significance of Remembrance Day and have visited the local war memorial. During the inspection a Victorian school day was recreated and the pupils developed a good understanding of differences in schooling between then and now.

117. In the juniors pupils study a range of periods from ancient Greece and ancient Egypt in Year 3 through to World War 2 in Year 6. The emphasis changes from the development of historical skills and understanding to a more information based curriculum, although this is supplemented with a range of field trips which play a valuable part in illuminating pupils' learning. For example in Year 4, pupils studying early invaders and settlers, learn how to build an Anglo-Saxon shelter. In Year 5, pupils studying the English Civil War visit the local Commandery museum and its connections with the Battle of Worcester. They look at contemporary documents in the local record office.
118. The quality of teaching was good in the Year 2 lesson observed during the inspection and satisfactory in the lesson observed in Year 5. This reflects the evidence from the scrutiny of work. There is a heavy dependence on worksheets to structure the teaching of history, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Some of these are of poor quality and involve pupils in low level colouring activities. Although pupils use photocopied sheets, text-books and videos to gain factual information, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to interrogate a range of sources or undertake independent research. The use of information technology to support learning in history is underdeveloped although pupils in Year 3 use the British Museum web-site to support their study of ancient Egypt. Pupils have positive attitudes to history and work well in lessons.
119. The co-ordinators have good subject knowledge and are able to support colleagues effectively. They have good input into curriculum planning but have not had opportunities to observe teaching. A photographic record of displays is being compiled and there is an intention to compile an evidence file of moderated work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

120. Standards in information technology are in line with national expectations throughout the school. There are some real strengths and above average standards in the way pupils explore the work of artists using graphics software and in the communication of information in various forms. These are balanced by a number of weaknesses and below average standards in control technology and the use of sensors and in the use of the Internet for research and for communication using email. The latter weakness is one largely caused by technical problems outside of the school's control. The school is fully aware of its underperformance in these areas and has acquired the equipment necessary to teach about sensors and has done all it can to resolve the technical issues. The school has demonstrated its commitment to raising standards in IT by investing heavily in two well equipped IT rooms and other equipment and is now very well resourced. In addition all teachers have completed the nationally funded IT training programme and now have the expertise to teach IT.
121. By the age of 7 all pupils including those with special educational needs and whose language at home is other than English, are attaining overall average standards. They do so using word processors to write poetry on screen, revising their work as they go along. They make satisfactory progress in learning how to use databases to collect and store information and to communicate it in various forms. They do this when with the help of their teacher they conduct a survey of their favourite foods and then produce graphs and charts to reveal the results. They successfully learn to key in commands to control the movements of a robotic vehicle and to make it move around a predetermined course. They are not taught basic programming language and are not taught about the uses of IT in the world around them or to use sensors to detect change in, for example, levels of light or sound. They attain high standards learning to model information in a good range of tasks. They use music software to explore musical notation. They model the contents of a house or the features of the face and learn by this the power of IT to experiment with different ideas. They

model human thought when they use software that shows decision processes graphically. They model the work of famous artists such as Mondrian and discover new ways of creating images.

122. By age 11 all pupils including those with special educational needs and whose language at home is other than English, are attaining overall average standards. Pupils are attaining average standards in modelling information when they use a spreadsheet to record the costs of a party and to model the outcomes of various pricing structures. They attain average standards when they write procedures that create geometric shapes on screen. They have not been taught about the use of sensors in the world about them or about ways in which the information they produce is used for example to regulate temperature. Teachers have only recently been trained in this area and are planning now to redress fill this gap. Pupils have sound understanding of databases and how to enter, alter and search for information. Due to technical problems they can only enjoy limited use of the Internet though some pupils make very good use of it using home computers and this makes a good contribution to the curriculum. By age 11 pupils are attaining high standards in communicating information. They combine text and graphics in a wide variety of contexts that include web pages and presentational software. In the Computer Club some Year 6 pupils are constructing a web site and a number are researching existing sites.
123. Teaching is good. Teachers have an enthusiasm for IT that is conveyed in the classroom. They make good use of IT across the curriculum in a wide number of subjects. The technical problems are restricting their use of the Internet, though their planning does extend to its use in an increasingly wide number of contexts. There is a good level of knowledge and expertise that leads to well planned purposeful lessons. These build progressively on previous learning. At the end of each lesson teachers generally have a useful recapping discussion that explores what has been learnt. This gives pupils good knowledge of their own learning. Teachers manage classes well. In the lessons observed pupils were always on task. They enjoy IT and their concentration is good and leads to good progress being made. Teachers make sure that opportunities to reinforce learning of other subject particularly of literacy and numeracy are taken. There is always good challenge for pupils of all abilities. Teachers work around classes well to make sure all are working at an appropriate level. Because of this lessons have good pace and there is good achievement over time.
124. The co-ordination of the subject is very good. Both co-ordinators are very well qualified for the role through experience and by training. Their knowledge and understanding has been a key factor in the success of the recently completed IT training programme which has equipped the staff at the school with the skills they need to deliver National Curriculum IT as successfully as they do. There are technical problems that have meant that access to the Internet has been very limited and this has frustrated efforts to extend IT across the curriculum nevertheless this aspect of IT is relatively successful and this is an improvement on the situation referred to in the last inspection report. Development planning is very good and clearly sets out the ways in which the school intends to improve teaching and learning in IT. It is well costed and sets out clearly time targets for developments.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES - French**

125. As French is not part of the National Curriculum in primary schools and only a minority of schools provide tuition in a modern language, there are no national standards against which to compare the attainment of the pupils at Pitmaston. However, pupils in Years 5 and 6 can respond quickly and accurately to routine questions about themselves and describe their surroundings, their city and their homes. Year 6 pupils can use numbers accurately. Pupils make progress at least in line with

expected National Curriculum levels for pupils in Years 7 and 8 in secondary schools in speaking and listening. Many pupils achieve well in these skills.

126. The lessons rightly emphasise the use of the language and ensure that all pupils take part in lively speaking and listening activities which prepare them well for the secondary programme of study for French. Writing is less well developed as it is not a main focus of the lessons, and insufficient time is available to enable full parallel development of writing. Standards in reading are satisfactory, but some lower attaining pupils are easily led away from their otherwise good pronunciation of French when faced with the complexities of the written word. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening, because they enjoy the activity and are well drilled in a limited range of vocabulary and structures.
127. Teaching is lively and stimulating. It gives appropriate weight to drilling language patterns and ensuring that pupils can commit key relevant words and phrases to memory, so that they can be used in a range of different contexts. The teacher's enthusiasm for her subject and her very good subject knowledge are well conveyed to pupils, and her expert lesson planning ensures that there is variety and range which gives all pupils a chance of success and the development of positive attitudes to the subject. Pupils' evident enjoyment, confidence and accuracy in using everyday French make a significant contribution to their personal development. The enrichment of the curriculum French lessons provide adds to pupils' opportunities to understand and experience a culture other than their own and thereby broadens their perspectives on the lives of others.

## MUSIC

128. Standards in music are well above those expected for pupils' ages. Pupils from all ability groups achieve very well. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is excellent and pupils' attitudes to their learning are excellent. The inclusion of all pupils in all aspects of provision made for the subject is very good.
129. At the time of the previous inspection standards in music were described as satisfactory and the quality of teaching was sometimes good. Consequently in the light of the findings of this inspection improvement since the time of the previous inspection is very good.
130. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 know how to make short and long sounds with a variety of tuned and untuned instruments. They devise their own graphic scores to represent the sounds they make and write their own musical versions of well known stories they have read. They make sounds that accurately represent the actions of the characters in the stories very successfully. They are able to do this well because of the very good teaching they receive and the support provided by teachers' assistants, helping them to achieve well.
131. Pupils in Year 6 attain very high standards and are supported by excellent teaching. Their understanding of the music they make is extended very effectively by excellent opportunities to evaluate the quality and consider what improvements might be made. In one lesson pupils began by responding to beating a simple rhythm using chopsticks. This reinforced their previous learning very effectively. Inspired by their teacher they progressed rapidly to singing 'Mocking Bird' in three parts and then to accompanying the song on a range of instruments. The inclusion of all pupils in this lesson was excellent. In addition to instruments provided by their teacher many pupils brought in guitars and recorders of their own. Finally their production of the song was recorded for them to evaluate its quality. It was excellent.

132. The school has an excellent choir that is led jointly by the one of the co-ordinators and another teacher with a passion for choral singing. The choir is open to any pupils who wish to attend. During the inspection they sang songs, such as 'Fair White Horses' and "La Cucaracha' superbly. The concerts they give and the contribution they make to the very successful school productions means they are highly regarded by their community and much in demand. Many of the most able singers are part of the 'Pitmaston Singers' choral group. Their singing reaches the highest standard expected of pupils of this age.
133. Educational visits and visitors to the school make a significant contribution to the quality of provision and to pupils' achievement and enjoyment of the subject. Pupils have opportunities to go to orchestral concerts and the choir have sung in Worcester Cathedral for the mayor. In excess of sixty pupils each week benefit from additional musical tuition and many play their chosen instrument to a high standard. Lilian Boutte, the internationally renowned jazz and gospel singer, has visited the school to give a concert and run workshops that inspired the pupils.
134. The quality of leadership and management for the subject is very good. The responsibility for co-ordination is shared and the co-ordinators provide good support and guidance for their colleagues. The use of information and communication technology to enhance the quality of pupils' learning is satisfactory.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

135. Throughout the school standards in physical education exceed those expected for pupils' ages and they achieve well, making good progress. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils also have very good attitudes to their learning and this makes a very positive contribution to their achievement. All pupils are included effectively in all aspects of provision made by the school for this subject.
136. At the time of the last inspection standards were described as sound at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching was mainly sound. Since that time standards and the quality of teaching have improved. Consequently improvement since that time is good.
137. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve very well in games, making very good progress. This is because their teachers match the difficulty of activities well to the abilities of their pupils, providing appropriate challenges. Teachers also emphasise the key points that pupils need to know in order to improve. Pupils respond well by working very hard, consequently their skills improve. When pupils throw and catch and bounce and catch a ball, individually, and with a partner they do so with good control. They also co-operate well in partnerships, responding very positively to the challenge to invent a game with their partner using the skills they have been taught during lessons. Teachers for this age group provide very good opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others. They also involve any pupils who are not taking part in evaluative activities. The views these pupils express reveal considerable understanding of the activities they have observed and reflect the very good teaching. However, there are not always sufficient opportunities for pupils in Years 5 and 6 to evaluate their work and that of their classmates.
138. Pupils in Year 6 also achieve well and make good progress because they are taught well. They know the reasons why it is important to prepare for exercise by warming up. Often they lead warm up activities, correctly demonstrating the exercises they want others in their class to follow. In gymnastics their work improves significantly during lessons. This is because of the good subject knowledge of their teacher and the opportunities they are given to acquire and apply their skills.

Their work also improves in response to the good opportunities provided for pupils to observe each other and comment on the quality of what they see.

139. Year 6 pupils participate with great enthusiasm in lessons on cross country running, basketball and rugby. Their teacher's good knowledge of running helps them to understand the importance of pacing themselves over longer distances and of responding to the personal challenge of gradually improving their own performance. They do this well. In rugby they work hard during practices to develop their skills successfully. They also benefit from good opportunities, provided by their teacher, to apply these skills in appropriately adapted games that match their abilities well. They are similarly successful in basketball where their teacher's good subject knowledge and the provision of appropriate practices helps them to understand the tactics of the game and apply their skills well.
140. When teachers assess the attainment and progress of their pupils they do not make sufficient use of the descriptions of what pupils should typically achieve at particular ages.
141. There is a very good programme of extra curricular activities. These activities are very well attended and include after school clubs for cricket, cross country running, football, netball and rugby. The school's internal football tournaments and leagues, in which many pupils participate, are organised by the pupils. They do an excellent job, including recording results on a spreadsheet generated on the computer. The school has also achieved considerable success in local, regional and national competitions in various sports, reaching the finals of a national swimming competition for primary schools. Strong links exist between the school and the Worcester City Sports Development Officers and local cricket, basketball and rugby clubs. Because of these links many pupils extend their learning by attending sessions at these clubs.
142. The leadership and management of the subject are good and the co-ordinators provide good support and guidance for their colleagues. The use of information and communication technology to enhance pupils' learning in the subject is satisfactory. Accommodation and resources for learning are good. There are two large halls that teachers use well for teaching games, gymnastics and dance. The subject co-ordinators ensure that equipment is stored in its rightful place and is easily accessible for use by their colleagues and their pupils. This helps teachers to organise their lessons well and no time is lost. Resources for teaching games are in good condition and have recently been supplemented by good quality equipment provided through the school's participation in the National Junior Sports Programme. This programme also provides good training opportunities for teachers.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

143. As at the time of the previous inspection, attainment at ages 7 and 11 is broadly in line with that identified in the locally agreed syllabus. Appropriate emphasis is given to relating pupils' knowledge to their own lives and this promotes a sound understanding of the underlying principles of faith.
144. At age 7, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of stories from The Bible and understand that these stories have deeper meanings. They know about the events in the life of Christ and begin to understand what relevance these have to their own lives. For example, Year 1 pupils learn the story of Jesus calming the storm. After considering how frightened the disciples were, they draw pictures and write simple sentences about what makes them afraid and what makes them feel better. Pupils know about major Christian festivals, such as Christmas, Harvest and Easter, and, as they visit a local church are becoming familiar with the purpose of some of the Christian artefacts.

They know, for example that the font is used for the ceremony of Baptism, which they describe as being "to welcome you into God's family". In discussion, pupils have no knowledge of other faiths, but teacher's planning indicates that pupils will be fulfilling the requirements of the local syllabus by studying Judaism throughout following term.

145. At 11, pupils' knowledge of Christianity is satisfactory. They have a sound knowledge of stories from the Old and New Testaments. They recognise that Christianity has a spiritual significance to Christian believers, which is explained by studying The Bible. Knowledge of artefacts and symbols of the Christian church is satisfactory. By year 6, pupils have sound knowledge of the beliefs and customs associated with a range of faiths, such as Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism. They treat artefacts from these religions with respect and learn about the symbols associated with each of the faiths they study. They understand well that religious beliefs affect the way people live and the importance of religious symbols in their daily lives. For example, in year 4 pupils demonstrate their understanding of importance of the Sikh symbol of Kesh. They write sensitively of the fact that, in the same way Sikhs regard their hair as a gift from God to be cherished, they will endeavour to take care of their own bodies, by adopting a healthy lifestyle.
146. The quality of teaching is mostly satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers have sound subject knowledge of Christianity and other world faiths. Lessons are effectively planned and relevant and mostly promote good attitudes to learning. Clear explanations facilitate learning and questioning is used well to extend understanding. Pupils listen attentively when work is explained and respond readily when the teacher questions them. In a minority of lessons, where expectations are low, pupils are insufficiently motivated and do not concentrate wholeheartedly on the task in hand. Where teaching is good, teachers have high expectations and present ideas in a lively, interesting manner. Pupils make good progress in their understanding because of the way in which the teacher relates the knowledge that is taught to pupils' own lives. Pupils respond well in class discussions, making sensible contributions. They are tolerant of the opinions of others and keen to learn about the differences in religious practice and belief. Pupils work well together when they are required to share materials or join in role-play.
147. The subject co-ordinator has been effective in maintaining standards. A new co-ordinator has recently been appointed to oversee key stage 2, but as yet has not had sufficient time to impact on standards. The co-ordinators monitor the quality of provision through collected samples of pupils work, although they are unable to effectively monitor standards of attainment because work samples are not levelled against the recommended local authority guidelines. Co-ordinators will have the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching when religious education becomes the focus of the school development plan in the coming term. A weakness in the provision for religious education in Key Stage 2 is the amount of time allocated for teaching the subject. In some classes, pupils do not receive the recommended time allocation for the subject. Consequently, they do not cover the subject in sufficient depth, which is beginning to have an adverse effect on standards.