

INSPECTION REPORT

CHILCOTE PRIMARY SCHOOL

BIRMINGHAM

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103298

Headteacher: Mr. D. C. Courtney

Reporting inspector: Peter Sudworth - 2700

Dates of inspection: 29th October-1st November, 2001

Inspection number: 193394

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Chilcote Close, Hall Green, Birmingham
Postcode:	B28 0BP
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Robert Plant
Date of previous inspection:	21 st April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2700	Peter Sudworth	Registered inspector	Geography; Special educational needs; English as an additional language.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are pupils taught?
8989	Michael Romano	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
30717	Vincent Leary	Team inspector	Mathematics; History; Music.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
2749	Gay Wilkinson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; English; Art and design; Equal opportunities.	
22669	Tom Prosser	Team inspector	Science; Information and communication technology.	How well is the school led and managed?
21910	Gordon Longton	Team inspector	Religious education; Physical education; Design and technology.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Chilcote Primary School is situated on the southern boundary of Birmingham in Hall Green. It is a popular and over-subscribed two-form entry primary school with 447 boys and girls on roll in 15 classes, including the Nursery which children attend part-time. The children begin the Nursery in the September before their fourth birthday and transfer to the main school in the September preceding their fifth birthday. Just over three-quarters of the pupils are of white United Kingdom origin. Pupils of an Asian background constitute the majority of the other pupils. Whilst a significant proportion of this group are bilingual, all are fluent in English. No pupils with English as an additional language required extra language support at the time of the inspection. Fifty-two pupils were on the special educational needs register, the vast majority on the early stages of assessment. Twelve pupils were at the later stages, including five statemented pupils. The overall percentage of pupils on the special educational needs register at 7.1 per cent is below the national average. Thirty-two pupils are entitled to free school meals, a proportion below the national average. Attainment on entry is slightly above average, overall. The school's aims include the provision of a broad curriculum, including an appreciation of the arts and educating pupils to think, collaborate, communicate and take decisions. The school is in an area which, together with other local schools, receives extra finance as a result of the government's initiative known as 'Excellence in Cities'.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Chilcote Primary is a good school. The leadership and management of the school are very effective resulting in very good organisational systems reflected in the well ordered school and carefully organised curriculum. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and show very good levels of interest in school life generally. Teaching is good, helping to improve results in national tests over recent years. The school recently received a national award for improvements in standards. Pupils make good progress in their learning. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the school are very good and ensure that the school runs smoothly on a day-by-day basis. There is a continued drive to improve standards;
- The quality of teaching is good overall across the school, assisted by a well organised and rich curriculum;
- Pupils enjoy school, have good attitudes to their work and enjoy very good relationships with one another, fostering a good work ethic;
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall; it is excellent for pupils' social development, very good for their cultural and moral development and good for their spiritual development;
- Very good arrangements are made for the pupils' welfare and the monitoring of pupils' progress;
- Comprehensive monitoring of the school's progress by the governing body, parents, teachers and pupils has been very effective in the school's development;
- All the school's aims are fulfilled.

What could be improved

- The school needs to have a scheme of work and a policy for the Foundation Stage so that teachers have better guidance to plan the work for young children;
- To improve teaching further, subject co-ordinators need to have more opportunities to observe teaching in the subjects which they manage;
- The quality of marking could be better so that teachers demonstrate how the pupils can improve their work;
- There is scope to develop pupils' writing further across the curriculum so that it is more fluent and purposeful;
- Teachers are not using information and communication technology enough across the curriculum to develop pupils' word-processing skills and other aspects of their work;
- Homework arrangements in Key Stage 2 could be more consistent.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1997. It has made very good progress since that time. Standards have improved by the end of both key stages and pupils are making better progress. The quality of teaching has improved and is much more inspiring. Pupils' attitudes to learning are better. The range of the curriculum has been widened to encourage pupils to be more reflective. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is much improved. Assessment procedures and record keeping systems are better. The governing body is more pro-active in becoming informed about teaching and standards and is now a well organised unit. The range and quality of learning resources have improved with significant improvement in information and communication technology. Both the internal and external environments have been made more attractive and stimulating. The school now gives much better value for money. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	A	C	D
Mathematics	B	A	A	B
Science	C	A	A	B

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Standards in recent years have been good in national tests but fell last year in English because the cohort of pupils contained a greater proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. The school broadly met its own targets in the core subjects, however. The overall trend of performance in national tests in recent years at the end of Key Stage 2 has been above the national trend of improvement. Currently, standards are above expectations for the stage of the school year in Years 2 and 6 in English, mathematics and science and in line with expectations in other subjects in both key stages. There are, however, some good features, for example in map reading in geography in which standards are good in both key stages and in instrumental work in music. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils who have high prior attainment make good progress because of the small group arrangements and the well structured teaching. Pupils achieve well across both key stages.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils have very good attitudes to their work. Pupils show good levels of interest in all their school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good in and around the school. They are well behaved at lunch and playtimes.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. They are educated to be participative members of the community and have very good opportunities to contribute to school decision-making. Relationships are very good between the staff and pupils and amongst the pupils.
Attendance	Above average. Pupils are punctual for school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good overall throughout the school. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and manage them well. The intentions for lessons are shared with pupils so that they know what they are going to learn. All pupils are valued whatever their circumstance and their contributions to lessons are respected. They match the work well to pupils' prior attainment, particularly in mathematics and English. Literacy and numeracy are taught well. Good arrangements are made to meet the needs of all pupils. The pace of lessons is often good ensuring pupils are well motivated and challenged. Teachers often make good use of learning resources so pupils' understanding is helped. Good provision is made for pupils on the special educational needs register.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is rich and successfully designed to develop a well rounded child in Key Stages 1 and 2 and includes citizenship and personal, social and health education. French is taught in Year 4 to give pupils a taste of a foreign language. Further development is needed in the Foundation Stage to incorporate the most recent national guidance. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for effectively. Their individual needs are known well. The individual education plans are of good quality and parents are involved appropriately.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Whilst the school has a significant number of pupils with English as an additional language, none has a difficulty in understanding English and none needs special help for language problems. Bilingual pupils are well integrated into the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Pupils' personal development is very good and appropriately, pupils enter into the decision-making process concerning some aspects of the running of the school. The provision for pupils' social development is excellent. It is very good for pupils' moral and cultural development. Spiritual provision is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good procedures are in place for pupils' welfare and child protection. Pupils are well cared for. Assessment procedures are very good and good use is made of assessment to plan new learning. Comments on pupils' work could help them more to improve their work.

The school has good links with its parents. The Parent Teacher Association is strong and supports the school in several ways. There are very harmonious relationships between the school and its parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives very good leadership and is well supported by the deputy headteacher. Staff manage their subject responsibilities in many ways but they do not have enough opportunities to sample and evaluate teaching in their specific subject responsibilities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is well led by its chair. It is well organised and has good systems for identifying the school's strengths and its needs. It fulfils almost all its statutory responsibilities but should ensure that all pupils attend the daily act of collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has very good systems to analyse test results and uses the results effectively to improve performance further. The school development plan is monitored at regular intervals.
The strategic use of resources	The school plans the use of its money well and the budget is monitored well on a daily basis. Grants are used for intended purposes. Members of staff are deployed effectively.

The school has an adequate number of staff. Learning resources are good overall. The accommodation is a mix of strengths and weaknesses but eight classes are housed in relocatable classrooms and the Nursery is of inadequate size. The information and communication technology suite is of good quality. The school uses its small grant from the Excellence in Cities co-operatively with other local schools and to good effect. The school operates the principles of best value well before making purchases.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school; • The teaching is good; • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns; • The school expects the children to work hard and do their best; • The school is well led and managed; • The school is helping their children become mature and responsible. 	<p>A significant minority of parents state:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children do not get the right amount of homework; • They are not kept well enough informed about their children's progress; • The school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team agrees with all the positive views expressed by parents. The inspection team followed up the concerns of a few parents and found that arrangements for homework are inconsistent in Key Stage 2. However, parents are well informed about their children's progress through parents' evenings, open access to the school for discussion and written reports which are of a good quality. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities, provided voluntarily by the staff.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is slightly above average and by the end of the Reception year, pupils' depth of understanding is above average in mathematics and language activities and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. The children make good progress overall in the Foundation Stage. They make very good progress in their personal and social development and good progress in most other aspects. They make sound progress in their creative development. Most children attain the expectations by the end of the Reception year and a significant proportion of the pupils exceeds them.

2. Children settle quickly when they begin the Nursery. Throughout the Foundation Stage the children develop a good understanding of the daily routines. They listen carefully, follow instructions, concentrate well on their tasks and co-operate well. They take responsibility for most aspects of their dressing and undressing. In their language development they can share news, develop a knowledge of phonics, can sequence a story in the right order and many make a start to reading. They speak confidently and show interest in wanting to express their thoughts in writing. In mathematics they learn to work out practical problems as they check the beakers against the milk cartons to see how many have been drunk. They appreciate the terms 'more' and 'less' and learn how to use these correctly. By the end of Nursery, many children can count forward and back to 10 and by the end of the Reception year forward and back to 20. Some can recognise and write numbers to 10 and beyond. Many can sort into sets by given or self-chosen criteria and state which has more. They acquire a good knowledge of the world for their age by the end of the Reception. They develop good skills in using the computer, manipulating the mouse effectively to select icons, for example to colour in a picture on the screen. They appreciate that warmth, light and water are required for successful plant growth. They can control wheeled toys. They develop a good sense of personal space in the hall. They handle a variety of tools safely and with good control, such as brushes and pencils. In their creative work they draw and paint sometimes using fabric. They enjoy singing rhymes.

3. Standards in information and communication technology and religious education have improved in both key stages since the last inspection and pupils are making better progress in these subjects and also in art and design and science. Over recent years both boys and girls have been performing significantly better in English, mathematics and in science than their gender counterparts nationally. The school's Key Stage 1 girls have been doing better than the school's boys over the same period in reading and writing, although there has been little difference in mathematics. This pattern is maintained throughout the school and by the end of Key Stage 2 the girls have still been outperforming the school's boys in English, although in mathematics and science, overall performances between the genders are broadly similar. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels at the end of both key stages have been consistently good. No obvious reason could be found for the superiority of the girls' performance against the boys in English which follows a national trend. However, the average difference between the school's girls' and boys' performances is much greater than the average national difference in English.

4. In 2001 standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were above the national average for the proportion of pupils who gained the expected level in reading and well above average in writing. They were well above in reading for the proportion of pupils who gained the higher level and very high in writing. The Year 6 cohort did not fare as well as in previous years as it contained more pupils with special educational needs. An additional consideration was the mobility in the particular

cohort. Just over one quarter of the pupils who took the end of Year 2 national tests in the school had moved elsewhere by the end of Year 6, a higher proportion than normal for the school. Nevertheless the proportion of pupils who gained the expected level was slightly above average. These factors contributed to the fact that comparative results with similar schools were well below the national average in English at the expected level and average at the higher level.

5. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are good in both key stages. Pupils listen attentively and express themselves confidently and fluently. They make good progress in all aspects of English. By the end of Year 6, pupils have continued the good progress made in Key Stage 1 and the majority read well with good expression. Their comprehension of the text is good. They can scan well to locate information in books. Their writing skills are also good. Some effective use was made of writing across the curriculum, for example in history. However, in too many instances pupils' writing was not expansive but incoherent and in truncated form, a result of answering a series of questions. The audience intention was unclear. In isolated examples all pupils had copied from text and all had written the same.

6. Pupils' attainment in mathematics was above the national average in both key stages and there has been a trend of rising standards in recent years. Current standards are above average. By age 11 pupils use the four rules of number confidently. Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge of percentages and fractions, negative and positive numbers and can use these correctly with reference to the four quadrants. The school has made very good progress in improving standards in mathematics since the last inspection. Some good use was made of mathematics in other subjects, for example in geography to analyse climate statistics. Much of this improvement in mathematics has been due to the setting arrangements which extend the able pupils and challenge pupils with special educational needs pupils appropriately.

7. Standards in science too have improved since the last inspection. In the most recent national tests, almost half the pupils attained the expected level and almost one half the pupils reached the higher level, a proportion well above the national average. The proportion of Key Stage 2 pupils gaining the expected level was well above the national average and also for the higher level. Pupils make good progress in science and the attainment of current pupils in both key stages is above expectations for their age. A significant proportion of current Year 6 pupils is expected to obtain the higher level in the subject.

8. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. No pupils required additional support for their competency in English, although a few of these pupils are on the special educational needs register for general learning difficulties. They make as much progress as the other pupils with special educational needs. Overall pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the good arrangements made for them including individual and small group tuition. Effective use is made of information and communication technology to develop sight vocabulary and knowledge of letters and letter blends. The two pupils with physical difficulties are supported well and they are making good progress. Pupils with behavioural problems are managed well and conflict is avoided enabling other pupils to make good progress as well as those experiencing emotional difficulties.

9. In both key stages pupils make satisfactory progress and attain expected standards in art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology, history and geography, although pupils' map reading skills are good in both key stages. Instrumentalists make good progress as a result of small group specialist tuition in music but, in general, pupils make satisfactory progress in class music lessons and reach expected standards. The provision of information and communication technology is better since the last inspection and pupils are beginning to make better progress in such skills, although these were still at expected levels at the time of the inspection and the subject still developing. Many pupils have home computers which helps to hone their skills. There is

still more scope to use their information and communication technology skills more effectively across the curriculum. Standards in physical education are in line with expectations by the end of both key stages and progress is satisfactory overall up to the end of Year 5 but it accelerates in Year 6 due to the enthusiasm of the staff and their knowledge of the subject. In Year 6 pupils make good progress and a few pupils' attainment in gymnastics and dance are better than expected. Progress and attainment in religious education are as expected in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils have very good attitudes towards their learning in all parts of the school including the Foundation Stage. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils' use of initiative in lessons is very good. They research well at home for their studies. Attendance in the school is good. Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves are very good and are a strong feature of the school. An overwhelming majority of parents responding to the questionnaire stated that their children like school and that the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best.

11. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, have very positive attitudes to their learning and enjoy school. Their attitudes contribute to the fulfillment of the school's aims. Pupils respect the 'The Golden Rule', published in each classroom, 'We respect and care for each other and our school'. Children listen respectfully to their teachers and work hard. They share willingly with one another; and, when given responsibility, show that they can work independently of adults.

12. Pupils' personal development is very well catered for. Opportunities for developing independence are good in the Nursery and Reception where conditions are rather cramped. They are very good elsewhere, particularly in Key Stage 2, where pupils have many opportunities to exercise responsibility and express their opinions. These include the democratically elected School Council, which meets weekly. Members give the views of the class and take back the resultant actions. The food group is also important. Elected pupils from each Key Stage 2 class, can discuss what sort of food should be served in the dining room and they critically analyse the menu. This fits in very well with the healthy eating discussions which form part of the personal social and health education programme taught throughout the school. The environmental group helps to keep the school largely litter free. Several pupils undertake individual monitor activities, including the role of register monitor. Year 6 pupils can be elected to serve as House or Vice Captain. Twenty pupils have been trained to act as peer mediators. They wear a red cap to identify them, and two are on duty at lunchtimes in each playground. They help resolve disputes between pupils. In Key Stage 2, pupils help to run the school bank. Pupils' involvement in the wide range of extra-curricular activities also plays an important part in raising pupils' self-esteem and giving them independence.

13. Within the curriculum, pupils research projects in Key Stage 2, particularly in history, science and geography. Year 6 pupils research, for example, the River Cole and visit the river. All Key Stage 2 pupils have one lesson each week on 'Thinking Skills'. In these sessions they are taught to provide evidence and to think through a problem and develop their analytical skills. These lessons also help to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.

14. The youngest pupils are keen and enthusiastic in their learning. Year 1 pupils in a numeracy lesson, were enthusiastic when counting a number pattern sequence and were eager to learn. They were polite and well behaved, and clearly showed respect for one another's views. They responded very well and took their turn to answer the teacher's questions. In a Year 6 class council meeting, run by the two School Council representatives, they discussed the Key Stage 2 homework policy and the lack of games equipment for lunchtime. This discussion was conducted maturely and constructively.

15. Behaviour in the school is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school at lunchtimes and breaktimes. Their behaviour in the dining hall is often very good, and they clearly show respect for others in their attitudes towards teachers and midday staff. Pupils have discussions called 'circle time' in each class which enable pupils to discuss their feelings.

16. Pupils know right from wrong, understand that there are rules of behaviour and that they should keep to them. Very few instances of inappropriate behaviour were seen. The school's behaviour policy is consistently applied, and the school pays great attention to giving pupils house points and certificates in assemblies for good behaviour, attendance or work. The pupils respond well to these awards, which motivate them and raise their self-esteem. Pupils behave particularly well in assemblies. In one assembly pupils were asked to consider progress made on two targets they had made to improve their attitudes and behaviour since settling in at the start of the term. In silence they were invited to make a promise to their own particular God and this was a good feature of the assembly.

17. School attendance is above and unauthorised absence below national averages. Pupils generally arrive punctually to school and to lessons on time. Some of the absence is due to parents taking their children on holiday in term-time. There was one temporary exclusion last year. The school is reluctant to exclude unless faced with no other alternative. Bullying in the school is not a problem, and sexism, racism and other forms of harassment are very rare. All of these aspects are discussed with children during well structured personal, social and health education lessons, in circle time and in assemblies.

18. A large majority of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that behaviour in the school was good, and that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. Pupils and their parents indicate by their involvement in activities and their enthusiasm for the school that the work ethic has been generated by the headteacher and staff and this is a major factor in the school's success.

19. Since the last inspection in 1997, most aspects of pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved. Relationships and pupils personal development in the school are now very good. The house system has been developed and attendance is now good. Behaviour has improved.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20. Overall the teaching is good throughout the school. It ranges widely from occasionally excellent to only very occasionally unsatisfactory or poor. Most teaching is good or better. Of the lessons observed during the inspection 22 per cent of lessons were very good and excellent and of these five per cent were excellent. Ninety-six per cent of all lessons were satisfactory or better including almost one half which were good. Three lessons were unsatisfactory and one was poor. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection.

21. The quality of teaching throughout the Foundation Stage is good and sometimes very good. Relationships with all the children are very good and learning is well managed and organised particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons. Medium- and short-term planning is firmly in place and daily planning in the Reception classes ensures a very good match between the activities and the children's learning needs. In the Nursery the teacher and Nursery nurse work closely together and the good relationships that have been established support children's involvement in all the activities that are provided. Effective use is also made of the learning support assistant who works closely with the teacher and Nursery nurse to promote children's achievement. In the Reception classes the teachers work closely with the classroom assistants as, for example, when the classroom assistant played the part of Mother Hubbard to extend the children's understanding of the book they were reading in literacy lessons. Assessment of the children during the first few weeks after admission provides early identification of pupils with special educational needs and is also used to inform pupil grouping and planning in the Reception classes. Regular records are kept of children's progress in each of the six areas of learning throughout the Foundation Stage. However, systems for the ongoing observation and assessment of children's learning that could support progress and inform planning have not yet been developed.

22. Excellent teaching is characterised by a very good pace of learning, challenging material which pupils rise to. On occasion they ask if they can have more of the same. This was the case in an excellent mathematics lesson on angles and exterior angles of a triangle with able Year 6 pupils. They made significant strides in their learning in this lesson. The planning was detailed. The mental warm up was fast moving and the teacher assessed their understanding by brainstorming what they knew, gauging what the pupils understood about angles and then building on this. The teacher used any wrong answers skillfully by referring the pupils to what others had said. All elements of the lesson were tightly timed. As a result pupils were totally focused but assured in their own capacity to be successful. Very good questioning brought out pupils' inferential thinking. Pupils were asked, for example, to work out the external angle of a triangle given two interior angles. They were led, but through their own discoveries, to realise that the external angle equalled the two interior angles. Pupils were really stretched but loved it. There was much discussion, which enabled the pupils to see that there were different routes to come up with the same answer. Good advice was offered for calculating answers 'Use all the information you are given to solve the problem'. Such good advice is taken on board by the pupils. In another stimulating mathematics lesson by a different teacher in Key Stage 2, pupils were reminded to use mental strategies which they understood and which were efficient. In the mental session which followed, pupils did that and as a result sharpened their skills. In this same lesson the teacher insisted on precise, technical language and so answering questions helped to build up their own mental scaffolding to aid their learning. They responded well in developing their understanding about quadrants and by the end of the lesson were able to use all four quadrants to demonstrate rotational symmetry.

23. In another excellent lesson pupils were really made to think about code breaking and the lesson stimulated the pupils from the beginning when a mystery envelope was produced. Pupils responded with lucid explanations and they were highly motivated to succeed in cracking the code. Pupils were kept on their toes. Occasional review breaks got the pupils to assess their progress and knowledge before moving on with the next steps of the lesson.

24. A very crisp introduction and continual use of technical language challenged Year 6 pupils in another excellent lesson when they examined critically a piece of text. The texts were well chosen and pupils were encouraged to be brave and have a go at answering. This encouragement led to pupils being actively involved in all stages of the lesson. Questioning moved pupils' thinking forward 'Why do you think the script gives you some information about the characters? Who would need this information? Why? Why is it in bold text?' The teacher used technical language which pupils were giving back in their own words such as 'inferred' and 'implicit' and they were able to use terms such as 'clauses' and 'complex sentences' quite naturally in their discussions.

25. Most lessons are planned well. Many teachers make good use of resources to help pupils' understanding. Good use is made of overhead projectors and well prepared transparencies which ensure lesson time is used well. Some teachers set very clear time limits for the completion of tasks which speeds up their learning and ensures pupils keep focused on task. In a design and technology lesson, the excellent use of yoghurt packaging stimulated their learning and also helped to develop the pupils' language skills. In a very good history lesson, pupils gained a very good understanding of a typical Victorian classroom and lesson as the pupils' own classroom was turned into a school room. They used steel nibs, ink, slates and did copperplate writing. On occasion they had to wear the dunce's hat. These good examples which were more typical of the use of resources were not consistently applied. In a lesson on poetry in which Lear's reference to going to sea in a sieve was mentioned, there was an assumption throughout that pupils understood the term 'sieve'. In a Key Stage 1 history lesson comparing old and new toys, no toy artefacts were used to bring home the contrast in types.

26. Teachers usually match work well to the pupils' prior learning. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Teaching is effective in the small group arrangements. Good use is made of information and communication technology when the pupils are taught by the special educational needs co-ordinator in withdrawal sessions. These lessons are usually carefully timed so that pupils do not miss other important lessons. However, they sometimes miss good quality assemblies as a result. Combined with other small group settings for concentration and memory skills and the good attention given to them in lessons, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Equally very good arrangements are made for able pupils and they are given extension lessons with the use of challenging materials in English, mathematics and science. These systems ensure that all pupils are challenged appropriately resulting in good progress. In the foundation subjects, whilst most work is well matched to pupils' prior attainment, enabling pupils to work with interest, a very small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was observed. In these lessons planning is poor, often without any clarity about the aims of the lessons, the introduction is disjointed and the time elements which are to be spent on different aspects of the work are not detailed. Consequently pupils are not challenged appropriately, pupils give back a limited response and there is not enough time to complete the work.

27. No specific teaching was required for the pupils with English as an additional language as all bilingual pupils are fluent in English. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are well written and reviewed regularly contributing to the good progress which they make. The small group arrangements for these pupils in literacy and numeracy contributes significantly to their progress as does the involvement of the parents in working with the pupils at home.

28. Pupils are included in the learning whatever their circumstance. Those with a musical talent are given an opportunity to learn an instrument. Pupils with physical disabilities are supported well and given the same opportunities as other children. For example, special arrangements were made for a pupil with cerebral palsy to receive the same instruction as others in the class. In one such instance

the pupil could not work in the information and communication technology suite on the first floor. The classteacher instructed a teaching assistant carefully during the lunch-hour about the program and the expectations and the pupil received the same opportunities as other children. The child learned well as a result and made good progress. In the Nursery a child with a muscular condition was supported well by a teaching assistant who enabled her to take part in all the activities which the other children did.

29. Teachers share the lesson intentions with pupils in almost all lessons and explain any words, which might be peculiar to the subject. This ensures that pupils are clear about the subject content. Occasionally too many learning objectives are introduced into a lesson. Teachers use praise well to encourage pupils and they respond by contributing answers to questions knowing that their answers will be valued and they will be praised for trying. All pupils' contributions to lessons are valued.

30. Teachers usually have good subject knowledge of the content they teach and they research it well. They use technical language effectively which the pupils are then able to give back in their own work. Occasionally pupils are provided with inaccurate information as in a Year 6 mathematics lesson on parallelograms when it was assumed that squares and rectangles were not parallelograms. Literacy and numeracy lessons are usually taught well. Summary plenaries are used well, not only to check pupils' understanding but also to take learning on further, as happened in a Year 3 mathematics lesson on odd and even numbers when the relationship between adding different combinations of odd and even numbers was explored. Teachers' weekly and medium-term planning is good in these two subjects and well considered, taking account of different pupils' needs. Most teachers wrote detailed lesson plans for the inspection week and there was a good link between the quality of this planning and lesson quality. The weakest teaching was a direct result of weak planning.

31. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and some use humour well. The very good quality of the relationships helps the classroom atmosphere and the quality of learning. Teachers usually manage the pupils well and have good expectations of behaviour to which the pupils respond well. The pace of lessons is often good as a result because there are few interruptions in most classes to manage inappropriate behaviour. Teachers are well supported by the teaching assistants who are deployed effectively.

32. Teachers use mathematics well across the curriculum, for example in geography to compare rainfall and temperature figures and in science to analyse their results. Some good use was made of literacy across the curriculum, as in history when pupils undertake empathetic writing. In geography, however, their writing was often a response to questions and was incomprehensible without the question references. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology across the curriculum except in the individual and group sessions with pupils who have special educational needs where it was used well to consolidate and further their sight vocabulary and knowledge of letter blends. Homework is used to good purpose to extend the work done in school.

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

33. The curricular opportunities offered to the pupils are good overall, preparing pupils well for the next stage of their education. All statutory requirements are met and the pupils benefit from a very good range of extra-curricular activities, an improvement since the last inspection. A weakness is provision for the under fives. The planning does not cover the recommended areas of learning fully. Not all children in the Foundation Stage are provided with an effective and well planned range of learning opportunities.

34. The Foundation Stage curriculum is based on national guidance called the Early Learning Goals and, in the Reception classes, the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies. Because of the limited space in the Nursery classroom, it is difficult for the adults to provide regularly the range of experiences needed to support the delivery of the whole Foundation Stage curriculum. In the Nursery the curriculum is provided through a balance of adult-directed activities and free-play with adult-selected materials and activities. In the Reception class there is a greater emphasis upon adult-directed activities with opportunities for guided play, either being given when directed tasks have been completed or occurring alongside directed activities relating to thematic work. In both the Nursery and the Reception classes there are very few opportunities for children to make independent choices about what they will do, which materials they will use and to solve problems for themselves.

35. As yet the school has not developed a Foundation Stage policy or scheme of work that could guide and inform curriculum planning and support continuity and progression. Following the resignation of the previous co-ordinator, the school has recently appointed a new co-ordinator who will join the school in January 2002.

36. For pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2, the school provides a good range of learning opportunities. The curriculum is rich with a strong emphasis on the arts. It is successfully designed to develop a well rounded pupil. It includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education, French for Year 4 and a 'Thinking skills' programme to develop problem-solving strategies in the older pupils to enhance learning. Some pupils with special educational needs are following a programme to develop their concentration skills.

37. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are being implemented successfully. Teachers' planning is consistently and securely based on these strategies. Medium- and short-term planning is generally good in all subjects. This provides a consistency of approach that was lacking at the time of the last inspection. It is proving effective not only in raising standards achieved by all pupils, but also in raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do. In literacy however, not enough attention is given to the programme of study in writing. This is evident in the limited amount of extended writing in English and other subjects across the curriculum. In religious education, work is based on the local agreed syllabus, supported by National Curriculum guidelines. This programme now provides good support and guidance and helps to promote pupils' spiritual and moral development along with the daily acts of worship. There are now clearly planned and good opportunities for spiritual development throughout the curriculum, a significant improvement since the last inspection.

38. In planning the curriculum, the teachers draw on subject schemes which take account of recent statutory changes and draw on national guidance as to what each year group should be learning. In mathematics and science, good attention is given to developing skills of investigation. In some cases, good links are made between subjects. Year 1 benefited from meaningful links between mathematics and history where number lines were used to reinforce counting skills. Links to art and design and technology were evident where pupils have made Egyptian masks.

39. Provision for personal, social, and health education is good. There is a detailed policy and a good programme of personal and social education is continuous through both key stages and there are good elements of health and sex education including learning about the dangers of substance misuse. Assemblies, 'circle time', 'Thinking Skills' lessons and the School's Council make a significant contribution to encouraging pupils to discuss issues and dilemmas confidently.

40. Curriculum provision is good for pupils' with special educational needs. Their needs are known well and provided for through individual tuition and small group work and they are well supported by teaching assistants and the special educational needs co-ordinator, as well as by their own class teachers. The individual education plans are of good quality and known to, and followed by, all who teach them. The school is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all its pupils and is generally effective in this area. The school promotes educational and social inclusion well and is strongly committed to raising the achievement of all its pupils. The school's policies and practice ensure that higher attaining pupils, including the gifted and talented, are identified early in their school life. Target-setting, specialist teaching and support are major strengths of the provision resulting in the raising of standards in English, mathematics and science and aspects of music. The school is particularly successful in the way that teachers ensure that pupils with physical disabilities take part in all activities. For example, a pupil unable to access the computer suite for her information and communication technology lesson was provided with a computer and teaching support in an appropriate room. A weakness is the practice of taking pupils with special educational needs out of assembly for extra support. Whilst this results in some good learning, they miss out on important aspects of the school's assembly.

41. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. There is a varied programme of after school activities for boys and girls in both key stages. Several members of staff give of their free time to provide a wide variety of aesthetic, creative, cultural, intellectual and sporting activities including 'Euro club', orchestra, choir, recorder groups and computer club. Sporting activities include netball, rugby and football. These activities are generally well attended. The school provides a good range of visits and visitors to extend and enrich the curriculum. Educational visits are made to areas beyond their locality, for example Sarehole Mill and the Black Country museum in Birmingham. Pupils also explore the local environment to carry out geography surveys. In addition, Key Stage 2 pupils go on residential visits to Kingswood and Red Ridge. The school has international links with schools in Germany and Norway where exchange visits are made. This does much to promote their personal, emotional and social development. Pupils are involved with visitors into the school, including the local clergy, community police officer, school nurse and professional sports people. The school has sound links with other educational institutions. They are involved in sporting activities with other primary schools. Satisfactory links are made with the main receiving high schools, although Year 6 pupils do not have automatic entry to a local high school because of pressure on places at the nearest high school. The school's situation near to the southern City boundary and the lack of high schools in the area is resulting in much uncertainty and anxiety for both parents and pupils. Year 6 pupils traditionally make visits to the various secondary schools they attend and appropriate records are passed on. The school has useful and effective links with a local bank that involves the pupils in the management of their own school bank. Students from local schools and colleges gain work experience at the school, thus providing useful assistance.

42. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and it has improved significantly since the previous inspection. It is now a strength of the school.

43. The provision for the pupils' spiritual development is good. There are some opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual awareness within the curriculum, for example as young children examine the inside of various fruits and look for seeds, and through collective worship which focuses on different themes throughout the year such as journeys, the theme during the inspection week. Music helps to provide a calm atmosphere conducive to worship. Assemblies have a strong spiritual content and are sometimes of a very high quality. In one such assembly, pupils were invited to think about

their journey through the school year and were challenged to set themselves two targets to be accomplished during the next half of the term. In the second, the excellent telling of a moving story helped pupils appreciate how a supreme being might be walking with them through their lives and at times holding them in His arms during times of crisis.

44. Pupils visit a local church and clergy come into school to take part in assemblies and talk to pupils. Pupils celebrate harvest, Christmas and Easter, and are made aware of festivals of other faiths such as Eid and Divali. Pupils are given many opportunities to consider the wonders of the natural world through visits to local areas of beauty. The pupils are proud of their contribution to the development of the school grounds, which provide an area of tranquility and peace, as well as providing pupils with physical challenges. The good attention to artistic display throughout the school, including works of art chosen by the pupils, contributes to the pupils' development of spiritual awareness. The much improved programme of religious education makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual development.

45. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The detailed behaviour policy is put into practice consistently both in lessons and around the school. The code of conduct is supported by rules, agreed by the pupils and displayed in the classrooms. All staff encourage positive approaches to behaviour and follow the school's discipline policy. Pupils are helped to understand the difference between right and wrong and to see the consequences of their actions on others and themselves. There is a strong emphasis on good behaviour throughout the school. Staff create an orderly environment and help pupils to become responsible members of the community. Literature introduces pupils to a range of traditional stories which often have a moral theme. All adults in the school set a good example to pupils and encourage good relationships. Collective worship makes a valuable contribution to pupils' moral values and attitudes.

46. The provision for pupils' social development is excellent. Social skills are developed successfully during lessons, breaks and lunch times. Staff have worked hard to build up an awareness of the school as a community where each member is valued and works for the common good. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility. Pupils are expected to care for their surroundings and to take responsibility for classroom equipment. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to work in pairs and small groups, and to undertake special responsibilities. For example, from an early age, pupils help as monitors in classrooms. During the inspection the meetings of the pupils' School Council and the group of pupils elected to meet the canteen staff on a regular basis to discuss school lunches were very impressive. Pupils chaired both groups and the pupil secretaries were responsible for making all the arrangements and distributing agendas and minutes of meetings. All pupils representing Years 3 to 6 spoke very well and took their responsibilities very seriously. These pupils report back to their classes in class council time which, when linked to lessons on citizenship and the lessons to promote thinking skills, help to develop pupils' social skills. Pupils also attend the Young Peoples' City Council in Birmingham and take part in debates on a variety of themes. Another group of pupils has been closely involved with the architect, drawing up a master plan for the development of the school grounds. Work has already begun and pupils are enjoying the results. Another important group of 20 pupils has special responsibilities at lunchtime. Working on a rota basis they patrol the playground in their capacity as mediators helping any pupil who has a problem, being particularly keen to help those who are lonely or need a friend. If they come across more serious problems they immediately inform the staff on duty. The school held its own elections at the same time as the national election, giving pupils an opportunity to take a keen interest in the election process. During assemblies pupils are invited to announce details of competitions they arrange among themselves to raise money for the development of the school grounds or the school in

Zimbabwe, which they support on a regular basis. Each year the school also supports a different national charity, usually linked to children of their own age. House captains confidently invite interested pupils to a meeting to arrange an assembly in the near future. The school organises residential visits each year for Years 4 and 6 pupils. Both venues chosen provide pupils with opportunities to develop their independence and personal and social skills through a range of challenging and exciting activities. For the first time this year arrangements are being made for pupils to visit one of their foreign link schools in Norway.

47. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is very good. Pupils are presented with many aspects of European culture, particularly through their links with schools in Germany and Norway. The three schools have shared information about each other's schools, localities and cities. A teacher from a local secondary school provides French lessons. All pupils are encouraged to appreciate and celebrate their own culture through the work of artists, through listening to and appreciating music and taking part in cultural events. All pupils visit live theatre once a year and pupils attend concerts given by The Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. A group of African dancers visited the school and trained some pupils who joined in the final performance given to all the school. The school encourages the playing of musical instruments. The school orchestra reaches a high standard and performs regularly for pupils and parents. The school choir takes part in many concerts and all pupils are given the opportunity to perform in concerts arranged at various times throughout the year. Classrooms and other areas provide stimulating displays of artists' work as well as celebrating the pupils' own work. Through history lessons pupils appreciate how life and culture has changed. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of the richness and diversity of other cultures are well developed. The school has improved this aspect of the pupils' knowledge and understanding since the previous inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48. The school has very good procedures for ensuring pupils' health and welfare. Parents responding to the questionnaire overwhelmingly stated that their child likes school. Teachers know the pupils well and set very good expectations to make the school a community in which everyone cares for everyone else.

49. The school has a very effective policy for child protection, and follows the guidelines of the local area child protection committee. The headteacher is the named person, has received appropriate training and has very good contacts with the relevant outside agencies. All staff, including lunchtime supervisors, understand the procedures that they should follow if they have concerns. The school has an effective health and safety policy. There are sufficient qualified first-aiders in the school, and each class has a linked midday supervisor. Suitable systems are in place to deal with accidents, fire, first-aid emergency action, and the administration of medicines. The caretaker, who is also a governor, the co-ordinator for personal, social and health education and the headteacher, together carry out audits for safety and risk assessments. Health and safety requirements are met and chemicals kept in a locked store. Good procedures are in place to maintain a safe environment. Pupils are reminded about safety in practical lessons such as science, design and technology, art and design and also in the weekly personal, social and health education lesson. Pupils enjoy citizenship and health education lessons which cover all aspects of life, such as healthy eating, fairness and playing safely. There is a strong focus on safety and individual needs and such aspects are discussed sensitively and in a caring way. The special educational needs teacher and support staff give good support to those pupils with whom they work.

50. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. The clear behaviour policy is known to all, with a separate booklet for parents. Staff apply this consistently. Rewards are a major influence in pupils' development, with a well structured system to reward good achievement, effort or work through awarding house points to pupils, headteacher's awards and general praise for pupils' achievements. This raises pupils' self-esteem and is a key part of the school's system for behaviour management. However, there are rare occasions when sanctions are necessary which include verbal warnings or removal from class. Pupils are given targets for behaviour in appropriate cases and these appear in the pupil's target book, and are reviewed termly with the parents. Exclusions are rare, but the procedures used meet local authority guidelines.

51. Procedures for monitoring attendance are very good. Attendance is monitored well. Parents are contacted if any absence is unexplained. A weekly award is given to the class with the best attendance. Registration procedures meet statutory requirements.

52. Arrangements for monitoring and eliminating aggressive behaviour are very good. There is very little bullying, but when it occurs it is dealt with speedily and effectively. The school keeps good records of any such incidents.

53. Midday supervisors give awards for behaviour in the dining hall and playgrounds. Pupils' records of achievement start at entry and include all certificates outside school, bronze, silver, gold and platinum swimming awards, headteacher's award and a weekly 'worker of the week'. Courtesy awards are given at each Friday achievement assembly by each teacher and help to promote good behaviour.

54. There has been improvement in several aspects since the last report. Particularly noticeable is the monitoring of pupils' personal development, especially in terms of behaviour, target-setting and achievement. The school is an orderly community, and does all it can for the health and welfare of its pupils.

55. Assessment procedures and practices have improved considerably since the previous inspection and are now very good. There are effective procedures for monitoring and recording pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science. Teachers set individual targets for pupils to achieve which are discussed and agreed with pupils. These targets are also shared with parents at the October parents' meeting. Most parents feel well informed about their children's progress, although a significant proportion responding to the questionnaire expressed a negative view on this aspect. The inspection team agrees with the majority parent opinion. In addition to the compulsory National Curriculum tests at the ages of seven and eleven, pupils take optional tests in Years 2, 3, 4, and 5 in English and mathematics helping the teachers to track the pupils' progress and make predictions about their future progress. The results that pupils achieve in national tests are carefully analysed to assess progress and to plan future work. For example the school identified the need to improve the pupils' attainment in writing. There are consistent arrangements in English, mathematics and science to ensure that pupils' work matches the requirements of the National Curriculum as they progress towards the expected levels of attainment by the time they leave the school. The assessment co-ordinator keeps very detailed records of the progress of all pupils and tracks their progress as they move through the school. The school monitors the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Comparisons are made between the attainment of boys and girls and of pupils who transfer from other schools. The school identifies more able pupils and provides extension work to meet their needs. Assessment in other areas of the curriculum is satisfactory.

56. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. The personal development of pupils is monitored by their class teachers and other adults in the school. In addition to the Record of Achievement books, the pupils' Target Book includes a social development section. In consultation with the pupils, teachers highlight and tick statements about the pupils' personal development and these are discussed with parents at the October meeting. These targets are reviewed termly. Special celebration assemblies are held at the end of each month when teachers nominate four pupils to receive the headteacher's award. Parents of pupils involved are invited to attend. Many other achievements are celebrated, for example in swimming, or a pupil's success in an activity outside the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

57. The school's partnership with parents makes a good contribution to the education their children receive. Parents expressed many positive views about the school. An overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire felt comfortable approaching the school with any concerns. They also felt that the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. Some parents expressed the view that homework provision was erratic in Key Stage 2 and that consistency in the established system of the home-school book had fallen down. The inspection team agrees that some teachers are erratic in the information they provide about homework and this could be improved. The inspection team is not supportive of those parents who state that it is not possible to see the teacher of the ability set if that teacher is not the class teacher. Good arrangements are made in this respect but many parents do not make use of this opportunity. The team does not support the view that there are insufficient opportunities for extra-curricular activities. There is a good range of opportunities in this regard. Whilst the provision in Key Stage 1 is limited, there is a very good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities in Key Stage 2.

58. The school makes very good efforts to communicate with parents. It holds target-setting meetings with parents each term, agreeing targets for behaviour, work, and attendance. The school holds regular curriculum meetings, sends out an annual questionnaire and gives feedback on any issues raised. There is a newsletter at least monthly and these are clear and informative. Parents of special educational needs children are invited to the regular reviews. The school contacts parents immediately to discuss problems of attendance, behaviour or work, and parents can contact the school at any time if they have concerns. During the inspection, it was noticeable that teachers were keen to discuss with parents any problems they might have. This was shown by the time spent after classes, by teachers seeing pupils off home and making themselves available to parents.

59. Parents' involvement in the work of the school is good. They help particularly in Key Stage 1 with information and communication technology suite, the library and with the school orchestra. They also help with visits and swimming. Parents' evenings are well attended. The PTA raises considerable sums of money through a range of events and enables extra purchases to be made, such as the newly installed climbing equipment. Many parents help their children with their homework and sign the homework diary where this operates. They also commit themselves to the school's policies on homework, attendance, behaviour and work through signing the home/school agreement. Parents are given good information about the school through the prospectus, Nursery handbook, the governors' report and annual reports about their children's progress. They also receive advance, written information about their children's studies.

60. Induction arrangements for parents and pupils are comprehensive, with parents being welcomed when their child attends Nursery. Any worries or concerns are discussed with parents, and they are able to support their child in class for a few weeks if necessary.

61. The impact of parents on children's learning is slightly improved since the last inspection by the provision of target-setting information. Otherwise, the partnership with parents continues to contribute well towards pupils' learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. The leadership and management of the school contribute most effectively to pupils' all round achievements and the school's aims are met in full. The headteacher leads with dedication and is a good practical support for staff and pupils. He knows his pupils well and receives very good respect from them. The head teacher, ably supported by his deputy and senior management team, provide very clear direction for the work of the school. They and the governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are appropriately focused on raising standards further through continuing improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. The headteacher had only just taken up his post at the time of the last inspection but since then he has improved many of the school's management systems significantly.

63. Five of the teaching staff are new to the school this year. There is a good mentoring system for newly qualified teachers and effective induction procedures for new teachers and supply teachers. The school provides training and support from within the school. Established and new staff co-operate well as a team and are strongly committed to good relationships and the educational inclusion of all pupils at the school

64. School improvement planning is good. Within the three-year plan, the headteacher and subject co-ordinators, identify appropriate action for development. Consequently there are well-focused whole-school priorities, with appropriate emphasis on the national priorities of literacy, numeracy and information technology. Governors and staff carefully monitor the progress of the improvement plan.

65. The delegation to staff of management responsibilities for the curriculum is clear. Co-ordinators monitor pupils' workbooks and teachers' plans, but unless their curriculum area is the focussed area for that half-term, they do not have sufficient opportunities to monitor lessons. Consequently, their influence on bringing about improvements in their subjects is somewhat limited. The headteacher and members of the senior management team observe lessons and, through sharing their observations, effectively bring about improvements in teaching and learning. Performance management arrangements are now well embedded in the school's practice including the setting of objectives for the headteacher and all staff.

66. The governing body is very effective in its support of the school. Governors ensure, through visiting the school and from reports from their focus groups, that they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They hold their meetings in different classrooms, which enables them to see work from different year groups. There are named governors for literacy, numeracy, early years and special educational needs and these governors regularly visit the school. They provide reports for committees and full governing body meetings. Governors are active in shaping the direction of the school, becoming more involved in, for example, sampling teaching across the key stages and monitoring the results of tests and holding the head accountable for what is happening around the school.

67. The chair of governors visits the school at least once every week, and he is very supportive of the headteacher and the school staff. The governing body fulfils almost all its statutory responsibilities and ensures that the prospectus and annual report now fully comply with legal requirements. This was an omission identified in the previous inspection report. Some pupils do not attend the collective act of worship as they are withdrawn for special needs work. The alternative arrangements made for the act of worship for these pupils are unsatisfactory.

68. Financial planning is sound and is relevant to the school's priorities. Specific grants are used effectively, and the headteacher and governors apply the principles of best value when setting priorities and in their use of learning resources. The governors are aware that there is to be a reduction in the admission numbers relating to pupils attending the school, have planned for this and are operating a deficit budget. At this time they are using sums from their budget surplus to manage this transition.

69. Day-to-day financial administration is efficient and satisfactory use is made of new technology. There are secure arrangements for ordering and paying for goods and services, and the school takes good care to obtain the best possible value for money. Funding allocated for specific purposes, such as that designated for pupils with special educational needs, is appropriately used to support pupils' learning. The recommendations of the most recent auditor's report have been effectively acted upon. The overall good quality of teaching, above average standards in English, mathematics and science, effective management combined with pupils' very good attitudes and personal development ensure that the school provides good value for money.

70. The school's accommodation is unsatisfactory. The Nursery area is inadequate in terms of its internal space. It is cramped, and very difficult for the staff to organise. The Reception classes are of an adequate size but there is no secure, separate play area available for Reception pupils. This hinders the children's development and prevents them obtaining a full range of practical experiences. The classrooms are mostly adequate in size, although eight classrooms are situated in mobile classrooms. These rooms can be uncomfortably hot in summer, have no toilet facilities, although they now have a water supply. Children's learning is interrupted as they lose valuable curriculum time when having to cross the playground to reach the toilet area in the main building, or to cross to the main building for some lessons or assemblies. The school makes effective use of classroom accommodation not required for classes. Apart from the inadequate temporary buildings, the school still suffers from a lack of sufficient hall space, which prevents the whole school gathering together. The need to store dining tables and chairs in the hall limits the amount of space actually usable and restricts the space in physical education lessons. The playgrounds are adequate, although small for the numbers of children on roll. Security issues have been well thought through and the site is extremely well maintained and cleaned to a very high standard. Accommodation has not improved significantly since the last inspection except for the fully equipped information and communication technology suite which is one of the strengths of the accommodation.

71. The school is well staffed. It has an adequate number of qualified teachers to meet the needs of pupils in the Foundation Stage, those with special educational needs and to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. Appointments since the last inspection have given a good blend of experience and expertise. Recently appointed teachers and teachers new to the profession are given much support and are fully informed on all procedures. Classroom assistants are appropriately deployed. All members of staff benefit from training and professional development courses. Arrangements for performance management have been agreed.

72. The amounts and quality of books, other resources for learning and equipment are good overall. They are good in mathematics, special educational needs, English, information and communication technology, physical education, religious education and design and technology. There are some good features in the provision for science. In other subjects the amounts and range are satisfactory.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

73. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in improving standards and the general quality of provision. In seeking to make further improvements in standards, the headteacher, staff and the governing body should:

- **Develop a school policy and a scheme of work for the Foundation Stage which informs its practice and guides the teaching and learning;**
(Paras 21, 33, 34, 35)
- **Further improve the quality of teaching by:**
 - a) enabling subject co-ordinators to monitor teaching and standards through first-hand observations of lessons;
 - b) developing formal mechanisms for reporting to their colleagues on the quality of their work;
 - c) following up issues which arise;
 - d) sharing good practice around the school.
(Para 65, 105, 115, 127, 132, 139, 149, 156)
- **Improve the quality of aspects of marking so that;**
 - a) written comments on pupils' work enable the pupils to improve their work;
 - b) instructions written in pupils' exercise books are followed up by the pupils.
(Paras 92, 103)
- **Ensure that the quality of pupils' writing in different subjects is consistent across the school and that the pupils are aware of themselves as an audience when writing.**
(Paras 32, 37, 90, 130)
- **Develop the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum so that:**
 - a) pupils realise the range of purposes for which a computer can be used;
 - b) pupils' skills are more finely tuned and so that they speed up their word-processing skills.
(Paras 9, 32, 90, 113, 139, 141, 144, 145, 161)
- **Rationalise and refine the homework arrangements in Key Stage 2 so that:**
 - a) there is a greater consistency of practice across the year groups and across the key stage;
 - b) parents know what is expected and are informed how they can help.
(Para 57)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	110
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	17	45	29	3	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	421
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		32

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	52

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	53

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	01 [00]	31 [25]	30 [33]	61 [58]

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26 [24]	29 [24]	29 [25]
	Girls	29 [31]	30 [31]	30 [32]
	Total	55 [55]	59 [55]	59 [57]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 [93]	97 [93]	97 [99]
	National	84 [82]	86 [85]	91 [90]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29 [24]	29 [25]	30 [25]
	Girls	30 [31]	30 [32]	30 [33]
	Total	59 [55]	59 [57]	60 [58]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 [95]	97 [99]	98 [100]
	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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	01 [00]	21 [33]	40 [30]	61 [63]

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11 [29]	18 [28]	21 [30]
	Girls	36 [28]	34 [27]	34 [30]
	Total	47 [57]	52 [55]	55 [60]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 [90]	85 [87]	96 [95]
	National	75 [75]	71 [71]	87 [84]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15 [27]	15 [29]	17 [27]
	Girls	39 [28]	33 [28]	37 [25]
	Total	54 [55]	48 [57]	54 [52]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 [87]	76 [90]	86 [83]
	National	72 [71]	74 [71]	82 [79]

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

Exclusions in the last school year

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	2
Indian	38
Pakistani	20
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	5
White	286
Any other minority ethnic group	5

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

	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	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – YR 6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.7
Average class size	28.1

Education support staff: YR – Year 6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	136

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	00/01
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	£
Total income	926,136
Total expenditure	946,793
Expenditure per pupil	2104
Balance brought forward from previous year	56,290
Balance carried forward to next year	35,633

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	486
Number of questionnaires returned	170

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	44	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	38	51	6	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	64	6	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	53	16	0	7
The teaching is good.	36	60	1	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	55	12	1	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	42	4	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	40	4	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	23	62	9	1	5
The school is well led and managed.	42	45	6	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	47	4	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	40	22	5	16

Other issues raised by parents

Parents are very concerned about secondary transfer arrangements and the fact that there is no defined school for their children to move on to. The situation has got worse and is being made worse by the fact that neighbouring Solihull will no longer take children from Birmingham. This is concerning both parents and pupils. Parents made mention of the fact that the grounds and the accommodation are 'fairly poor'.

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

74. Children are admitted into the 26 place Nursery class at the beginning of the year in which they become four and transfer into a Reception class at the beginning of the year in which they become five. All children attend the Nursery class part-time and attend full-time when they enter one of the two Reception classes. The school assesses children during the first half of the term following admission into the Nursery and assessment indicates that children's overall attainment at this time is slightly above the national average. Baseline assessment is administered when children enter the Reception year and again before they transfer into Year 1. Baseline assessments indicate that the attainment of the majority of children on entry to the Reception year is above the national average. By the time that they are ready to start in Year 1 the majority of children, including those with special educational needs, will have attained the early learning goals and some children will exceed them. Judgements are similar to those at the time of the last inspection report.

Personal, social and emotional development

75. Both the Nursery and the Reception classes give appropriate attention to children's personal, social and emotional development. By the time they end the Reception year children will achieve the early learning goals in this area and they make very good progress in this aspect of their development. In the Nursery class most children have settled well and show a good understanding of daily routines such as snack time and playtime. They sit quietly and are attentive during whole-class activities and most are ready to answer questions and suggest ideas during whole-class and group activities. They listen carefully to and follow instructions appropriately as, for example, when lining up in the hall to go back to the Nursery. They talk about themselves and the things that interest them with each other and with both known adults and visitors. In areas such as the outside sand pit they play happily together sharing resources and equipment well. They are able to select an activity for themselves from those made available. They enjoy taking responsibility for serving others at snack time and do so carefully and thoughtfully. They persist at adult-directed tasks with good concentration and perseverance. They help with tidying up when asked and take responsibility for putting aprons on for messy play. In the Reception classes they show a good understanding of classroom rules and routines and respond quickly and sensibly to the teacher's directions. They show consideration for others in their activities, as for example when going to the hall they line up and move around the school quietly. They are sensitive to each other's needs and are ready to help each other. They cooperate well in both pairs and small groups as they work and they take turns happily. They work well and with good concentration on teacher-directed tasks even when they are not directly supervised and are eager to join in new activities. They talk readily together and to adults about what they are doing. They take responsibility for most aspects of undressing and dressing themselves and put their clothes away so that they can find them easily when changing again. There are well established rules for behaviour in both the Nursery and the Reception classes and these, together with the good role models provided by the adults, make a good contribution to the very good behaviour of all the children.

Communication, language and literacy

76. By the time they complete the Foundation Stage the majority of children will achieve the early learning goals in this area and some will exceed them. They make good progress in this area of their development. An appropriate priority is given to the development of children's language and literacy skills in both the Nursery and the Reception classes. In the Nursery class the children enjoy sharing personal news or talking about stories they hear and the adults listen with real interest. They share ideas on what they are doing as they play together and they listen carefully to adults and each other. They are beginning to develop an understanding of phonics through learning the sounds of individual letters and some can name objects that begin with the same sound. They listen to stories, rhymes and nursery rhymes and remember and join in with

saying the words of songs and rhymes with obvious pleasure. They are learning to recognise and write their Christian names. Books are always available but lack of indoor space prevents the development of a comfortable area where children can choose to sit and read for pleasure. In the Reception class an appropriate emphasis is given to the development of early reading skills through well planned activities based on the Literacy Framework. In class and group activities they listen attentively and can make appropriate responses to questions and instructions. When answering questions or making comments they speak confidently and clearly and many have good vocabularies. The majority of children can recall the sequence of stories in the right order. They have good book knowledge and can identify and talk about such features as author, illustrator and title page correctly. They are continuing to develop their knowledge of letter sounds and names and some are able to use this knowledge to build monosyllabic words. Children are developing their handwriting skills and the majority form letters correctly in writing activities. They are interested in writing and confidently use their emerging writing skills in their play. Most children can write their Christian names legibly and correctly. All the children in the Reception classes take books home to read with their parents, as well as words to learn, and are also heard to read in school with records kept of their progress. The most able are able to read simple texts using both their knowledge of the appearance of key words and their phonic skills to do so successfully. Many of the guided play activities in both the Nursery and Reception classes had the potential to provide further opportunities for the development of the children's language and literacy skills. However limited adult involvement and the absence of a clear learning focus meant that these opportunities were not always used as well as they might have been.

Mathematical development

77. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children will achieve the early learning goals for this area and some children will exceed them. Overall they make good progress. An appropriate priority is given to children's mathematical development in both the Nursery and the Reception classes. In the Nursery class the emphasis is upon oral and practical activities that help the children develop an understanding of number, shape and pattern and comparison of length, weight and volume and the appropriate mathematical language to describe their experiences. Through their exploration of the story 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' they make comparisons of size. They are beginning to learn how to interpret data as for example when, with the help of the teacher, a group of children arranged milk cartons and beakers to show what they had drunk at snack time. They were able to recognise and comment on the difference between the columns they had made and answer questions about more and less than as well as count. The daily opportunities to join in number action rhymes help them to learn number order and to count forwards and backwards to ten. They are beginning to develop an understanding of number value and correspondence through activities such as laying place settings in the home corner and serving snacks. In the Reception classes the planned numeracy activities based on the Numeracy Framework have clear learning objectives and the use of mathematical language and appropriately challenging questions by the teachers provide good opportunities for mathematical development. Children confidently count forwards and backwards to twenty and beyond and some can recognise and write numbers to ten or beyond. They can sort objects into sets using different criteria such as colour or kind and can correctly identify which sets have more or less objects. The children can make and draw sequential patterns. Through guided play in sand and water and with construction materials they are developing their ability to make accurate comparisons about size and volume.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

78. In both the Nursery and the Reception classes knowledge and understanding of the world is taught through selected topics. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children will achieve the early learning goals for this area and they make good progress overall. In the Nursery they talk about themselves, their families and important events in their lives such as their birthdays. Through play with sand, soil and water they are learning how different materials behave and how they can be changed through the addition of other materials. For example, in an adult-directed activity children added water to 'Readybrek' to make porridge and they were able to talk about their mixture's consistency. Limited space makes it difficult for adults to provide three-dimensional displays to support the children's interests. Children are learning how to use the

mouse to add colour to a picture on the computer. In the Reception classes they can talk about the differences and similarities they observe in different fruit and vegetables. Through planting seeds they understand and can talk about the importance of warmth, water and light for successful growth and are developing a good understanding of the difference between living and non-living things. Good displays related to aspects of the topic provide further opportunities for children to deepen their understanding. They can use the mouse to select items to create patterns and pictures and can print these. They use tools and equipment purposefully and safely.

Physical development

79. By the time they leave the Reception class the majority of children will achieve the early learning goals for this area of development and they make good progress. In the Nursery they have daily opportunities for outdoor activity both at playtime and during outdoor play. They use wheeled toys with good control avoiding each other and other obstacles. However, the outdoor area is small and this limits physical activity and use of larger equipment. They are beginning to understand the idea of personal space as they move to music in the hall and are developing skills in managing and controlling equipment such as balls. In the Reception classes the children enjoy opportunities for physical activity in the hall and work well in these lessons. They are beginning to understand how their bodies work and the need for care through warm up and cool down activities. They respond quickly to instructions and are attentive to the teacher's suggestions. They use space well showing appropriate awareness of others around them and move with confidence and control. The children handle pencils, crayons, brushes, glue spreaders and scissors and are taught how to use these safely and with control. The Reception classes do not have access to a separate secure outdoor area and therefore the children do not have opportunities to experience and develop spontaneously the full range of physical movements and skills except at playtime.

Creative development

80. By the end of the Reception year the majority of children will achieve the early learning goals for this area and they make sound progress. In the Nursery they draw and paint and use a variety of materials including fabric, to make pictures and patterns. For example, they have used paint to illustrate the different sized objects and furniture in a large picture of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. They enjoy singing simple rhymes and join in with all the actions enthusiastically. They have regular opportunities for imaginative role-play and dressing up but the lack of learning focus and adult involvement often leads to low level play in this area and reduces its effectiveness. Because of the limited indoor and outdoor space opportunities for daily creative play with paint and found materials are not made available. Children in the Reception classes use paint and crayon to illustrate aspects of their work and cut and join materials in guided activities, such as making flowers as part of their topic work.

81. Parental involvement is encouraged through regular newsletters as well as the initial induction procedures. The relationships between teaching and non-teaching staff and parent-helpers are good and make a good contribution to the well being of all the children. The school has developed satisfactory induction procedures to support children and their parents on children's entry to both the Nursery and the Reception classes.

ENGLISH

82. The overall attainment of pupils in English is above national expectations by the end of both key stages, a similar judgement to that at the time of the last inspection, and they make good progress. On the evidence of lessons observed, a scrutiny of work and pupils heard to read, most pupils are likely to attain in line with national expectations and a significant proportion will exceed national expectations by the end of both key stages. The use of setting in Year 2 and Key Stage 2 and the additional group work for both less and more able pupils make a significant contribution to the good progress made by all pupils.

83. At Key Stage 1, in the 2001 Standard Assessment Tests, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 in reading was above the national average and the percentage of pupils achieving Level 3 was well above the national average. In comparison with similar schools the percentage achieving Level 2 or above was above average. In writing the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 was well above the national average and the percentage achieving Level 3 was very high. In comparison with similar schools the percentage achieving Level 2 or above in writing was well above average. Trends over the period 1996 to 2001 are well above the national trend. There are no current significant differences between the attainment of girls and boys.

84. At Key Stage 2, in the 2001 Standard Assessment Tests the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 in English was slightly above the national average and the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 was above the national average. In comparison with similar schools, however, the percentage achieving Level 4 was well below average and the percentage achieving level 5 was average. These results reflect the higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this particular cohort. Apart from the slight dip in 2001 trends over the period 1996-2001 are well above the national trend. In the 2001 tests girls performed better than boys in writing.

85. In both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils with special educational needs make good progress and the provision made to meet their needs is good. Teaching linked to individual education plans, the setting of precise targets and well-matched learning materials contribute to their success. Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of these pupils.

86. Standards in speaking and listening are good at the end of both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils listen attentively to teachers, other adults and each other and make appropriate responses. They are eager to participate in whole-class and group discussion, expressing themselves clearly and confidently and drawing on wide vocabularies to maintain the general flow of discussions. They can ask relevant and sensible questions. They show sensitivity to the needs and ideas of others when making responses. They can use appropriate language to talk about stories, discuss grammatical features, empathise with characters and events and express feelings and emotions. The most able readers read aloud with good expression taking account of punctuation and features of print. By the end of Key Stage 2 progress in speaking and listening skills continues to be good. Pupils show an appropriate understanding of formal language structures and can take account of different contexts and audiences when making informed comments or asking questions. For example a pupil from Key Stage 2 chairs School Council meetings most ably. They express themselves confidently and fluently using a wider range of vocabulary and take good account of the contributions made by other pupils. The majority read aloud from self-chosen books with good expression that shows sound comprehension. The well planned whole-class and group activities that are a daily part of literacy lessons contribute to the good progress made by pupils throughout the school.

87. In both key stages an appropriate emphasis is placed on reading and standards are good overall. In Key Stage 1 pupils listen to a variety of stories, poetry and non-fiction books attentively. They respond appropriately to questions about plot, events, characters and vocabulary and can make personal responses to the stories they are studying. They are developing their understanding of the difference between fiction and non-fiction. By the end of the key stage most pupils read with appropriate fluency and expression. When reading unfamiliar words they rely mainly upon good phonic strategies to work out what the word says. They enjoy reading and talk positively about reading at home. They use personal dictionaries appropriately and are beginning to develop sound study skills. By the end of the Key Stage 2 most pupils read a variety of texts fluently and with enjoyment and use self-correction strategies effectively. They read aloud with lively expression showing good comprehension. However, on those occasions when less able readers meet an unfamiliar word they rely upon phonic strategies to work out what the word says and make little use of other strategies such as context or spoken language skills. Most pupils can identify the central

meaning in stories they are reading and can refer to textual evidence to support their judgements. The most able make mature responses to ideas expressed in the books they are reading and can empathise with characters and events. Most pupils use an appropriate range of linguistic terms with understanding when discussing texts and demonstrate a sound understanding of syntax and grammar. They can scan texts for information accurately and select information appropriately in order to make judgements and have good study skills. They have a good understanding of dictionaries and thesauri and use these to support their work. Pupils in both key stages take class library books home either to share with parents or read on their own and home-school reading diaries provide an effective means of communication between parents and teachers. Pupils are heard to read regularly in school and teachers keep careful and detailed records of their progress. Phonic skills and spelling are systematically taught throughout both key stages.

88. Pupils begin to learn cursive handwriting in Year 2 and handwriting is taught regularly and systematically throughout the school. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils can produce fluent cursive handwriting when required and many are beginning to develop a personal style. Pupils can write carefully and present their work well when their work is closely monitored and teacher expectations are made explicit. For example, drafted written work edited and presented for display is of good quality with well-formed letters of consistent size. However, on some occasions, pupils take insufficient care in the presentation of work in class.

89. The school has identified writing as an area for development. In both key stages pupils write for a variety of purposes and audiences including imaginative fiction, personal writing, poetry, play scripts, reports, factual accounts, instructions, letters, lists, note taking and labelling. The content and quality of their imaginative writing are very good and words are well chosen for effect. For example, a year 6 pupil wrote 'There in the middle of a dark, frosty sky was a haunting light'. In Key Stage 1 pupils are beginning to plan and reflect on what they write and undertake some revision and editing to improve their work. They are beginning to write with greater complexity and most have a good understanding of basic punctuation, although in lessons, their writing does not always reflect what they know. By the end of Key Stage 1, whilst higher attaining pupils can use their knowledge of key words and phonics to assist them in writing words, there is a significant proportion of pupils whose written spelling in lessons is inconsistent including that of high frequency words. Pupils take spellings home to learn and are regularly tested on these. They are beginning to develop the skills to use dictionaries and thesauri to support their writing. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils can plan their writing and write extensively, using complex sentences and paragraphs in an appropriate style. They incorporate textual features into their imaginative writing, such as words in capitals and deliberately unfinished sentences, to enhance effect. Most pupils use a range of appropriate punctuation and spell accurately. They have regular opportunities to draft, revise and edit their work. When appropriate their work is well presented with fluent handwriting and many pupils are beginning to develop a personal handwriting style.

90. In both key stages there are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills. Pupils write for a range of purposes in subjects other than literacy, for example fictional and factual narrative in history, although the use of worksheets sometimes limits opportunities for them to write extended fluent prose. Speaking and listening skills are developed in discussion activities related to all areas of the curriculum as well as in role-play and drama. Some, but insufficient, use is made of computers in classrooms to support learning.

91. Overall pupils' attitudes to learning are very good in both key stages. They are well behaved and apply themselves with good concentration, purpose and interest to any tasks they are set, even when not directly supervised. They co-operate well and help each other both formally and informally in discussing aspects of their work. Their response in the English lessons observed was positive and lively.

92. The quality of teaching in English is good overall with some instances of very good or excellent teaching in both key stages. Where teaching is good, teachers make effective links between previous work and new learning, set clear time targets for what pupils are expected to learn during the lesson, match the tasks to meet individual needs, maintain a brisk pace and have high expectations for both pupils' achievement and behaviour. All teachers have a good understanding of the subject and plan lessons with clear learning objectives that take full account of the National Curriculum programmes of study and the literacy framework. Teachers use information from standardised tests to inform initial pupil groupings and their good relationships with pupils and sound knowledge of their attainment ensures that pupils are usually appropriately challenged through well differentiated activities. Good records are kept of pupils' progress in all aspects of English and these, together with test results, are very well used to inform individual and year group targets and planning. Pupils' work is regularly marked and in some cases annotated with comments that help pupils to make progress, although this is not consistent practice across the school. The work of classroom assistants in providing additional support during literacy activities makes a valuable contribution to pupils' attainment and progress and teachers plan appropriately for this support. Homework in spelling, reading and writing is given regularly in some classes and this is monitored and marked.

93. The subject co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and provides informed support and advice for colleagues. There are detailed policies in place for all aspects of English and these, together with the literacy framework, are used to inform planning and ensure continuity and progression. The National Literacy Strategy that the school has adopted as its scheme of work is well established. The co-ordinator regularly monitors medium-term planning to ensure that work is consistent with the framework and also monitors pupils' work termly. Standardised and optional tests and termly assessments are also monitored and evaluated and the co-ordinator has a satisfactory understanding of the issues that need to be addressed to raise standards. Training in issues related to literacy form part of the school's in-service programme. Literacy resources are satisfactory and these are appropriately organised to meet the needs of each key stage. All classes are well resourced with a satisfactory range of general reading material as well as having graded readers for home-school reading for those pupils who have still not mastered the reading process. There is also a well resourced school library that uses a simplified Dewey classification system. Resources are used well and make a positive contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. The school undertakes a range of activities to promote English, including such activities as poetry and book days and displays of pupils' English work from all year groups in the school hall.

MATHEMATICS

94. Results of national tests in the summer of 2001 show that at age seven pupils achieve above average standards in mathematics when compared with schools both nationally and of a similar kind. At the age of 11, pupils continue to achieve above average standards when compared to schools nationally. Against similar schools, results in 2001 were average. Results over the past five years show a clear trend of rising standards and over recent years results have mostly been well above the national average at the end of both key stages. The Year 6 cohort in 2001 contained several pupils with special educational needs and consequently results were not as high as the previous year.

95. Inspection findings are that standards at the ages of seven and 11 are above average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The previous inspection judged pupils' attainment at age seven to be above average when compared with national standards and similar to the national standard at Key Stage 2. The school has made good progress since then.

96. A key issue from the previous inspection required the school to provide work which challenges and stimulates all pupils and thereby improve the attainment of pupils with above average ability. In mathematics, the school has been successful in meeting this requirement. Teachers are developing successfully their expertise in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy and the benefit to pupils is evident in the good rate of learning in most lessons. In addition, the analysis of test results and strengths and weaknesses identified are shared with the staff resulting in realistic but challenging targets being set for all pupils. The grouping of pupils by ability for lessons is effectively used to secure mathematical knowledge of all pupils. The school has identified a small number of gifted and talented pupils and provides them with high quality challenging mathematical work.

97. By the age of seven, most pupils count and write whole numbers to 100, many are able to add multiples of 10 up to 100, counting on and back in steps of 1 and 10. Pupils know what each digit represents. For example, when studying the number sequence: 16, 36, 56, 96 pupils noticed that the numbers went up in twenties and 76 was the missing number. Many know by heart their 2 and 5 times tables and use this counting skill to support their learning in calculations and problem-solving situations. Most are able to perform simple addition and subtraction operations. They understand in a practical situation odd and even numbers. They think carefully about number patterns and are able to sequence double digit numbers on a number line. A higher attaining pupil observing that “if you change the top number in the line from nine to ten the zero becomes one,” showing an understanding of changing number patterns and zero as a place holder. The majority of pupils recognise a number of two-dimensional shapes; the higher attaining pupils are able to identify the more complex shapes, such as cylinders, pyramids and cuboids. They use appropriate mathematical vocabulary and symbols. All pupils make good progress in mental mathematics, including pupils with special educational needs.

98. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils understand place value to 1,000 and above. They can multiply whole numbers by 10 and understand multiples of 10. Most pupils add and subtract numbers to one decimal place, writing their calculations on paper. Higher attaining pupils use all four number operations to two decimal places and are able to calculate fractions and percentages of numbers and quantities. They understand that multiplication is the inverse of division and use this to check results. Pupils are able to carry out calculations involving multiplying with two digit numbers. Most show ease with multiplication, ably demonstrating skills in splitting numbers. For example, in Year 6, pupils multiplied two digit numbers together correctly by a process of breaking these numbers down into sets for easier calculations. In data handling they are able to interpret accurately pie chart information and record their results in fractions and decimal fractions. They are developing strategies for solving problems, an improvement since the last inspection. For example, Year 4 pupils have learned to use a four-step approach which involves identifying the important parts of the information, choosing the appropriate calculation, carrying out the calculation and finally referring back to the problem. This process guides their problem-solving work very effectively. Year 4 pupils also understand the principle of approximation and rounding to estimate the answer, although using and applying mathematics is not a strong feature in all their work. They learn to collect and record data. Most have used computer programs to produce graphs and charts from a data-base. They readily use this knowledge in other subjects, such as plotting graphs showing the heights of a river at various distances from its source in geography.

99. By the age of eleven, most pupils confidently use all four number operations to two decimal places and quickly calculate fractions and percentages of numbers. Most show real facility in multiplication, ably partitioning numbers. They work equally confidently with positive and negative numbers and create co-ordinates that they record on four quadrants. They have a good understanding of shape and space. For example, pupils are able to use their knowledge of angles to calculate

missing angles on a range of shapes. Higher attainers skilfully apply this knowledge in problem-solving situations where they show developing skills in calculating external angles of a complex shape from their knowledge of internal angles. A key strength is the pupils' ability to explain how they have arrived at an answer and their use of technical language. A Year 6 pupil explained to his class how he had calculated the exterior angle of a triangle from his understanding of the mathematical relationship between internal and exterior angles of a triangle.

100. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good overall with examples of very good teaching in both key stages and excellent teaching at Key Stage 2. Where the teaching is of a high quality, the pupils are clearly informed of the learning objectives of the lesson. There is good pace and the teachers communicate strongly to all the pupils an enthusiasm and expectancy of success in a supportive environment. The quality of questioning is high allowing pupils thinking time to explain their methods of calculation. Pupils and teachers are involved in mathematical dialogues. Throughout the lesson the teachers are constantly assessing pupils' work and setting challenges, resulting in very good progress. For example in a Year 6 lesson, pupils when demonstrating competencies in plotting co-ordinates in four quadrants were given problem-solving activities of a challenging nature. Similarly in a Year 6 oral session on fractions, high quality questioning and activities significantly advanced pupils' agility in number handling. Most pupils responded well to challenge and enjoyed working hard. This results in very good behaviour and attitudes to mathematics. They work independently without the need for adult supervision, working co-operatively in pairs and groups. Relationships are good and set a positive atmosphere where pupils can join in class discussions with confidence.

101. Common features of the better teaching were very good subject knowledge, well prepared lessons where the numeracy framework is used as a basis for planning, sharing the objectives with pupils and making good use of the sessions at the end of the lesson to assess learning and point up future goals. Where teaching is occasionally less effective, there are too many objectives; explanations are unclear and the pace too slow, resulting in some pupils not always understanding the task and becoming bored and restless. Also, the plenary sessions at the end of the lesson are not always used effectively to provide pupils with sufficient information on what they have learnt and areas requiring further development. On these occasions pupils' progress is limited. Overall, however, progress in mathematics is good.

102. Pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils, which includes a number of gifted and talented pupils are supported effectively, by means of grouping by ability throughout both key stages. Target setting, both class and individual, is an effective feature in helping to raise standards. Most teachers make good use of the high quality assessment information that is available. This results in most of the staff having good knowledge of pupils' standards in mathematics. There is very effective use of additional staff who skillfully support the diverse needs of all pupils. Teamwork is of a high quality, all staff working very well together.

103. Where homework is given it is effectively re-inforcing learning. Marking of work however is only satisfactory in most year groups. Teachers' comments rarely focus on how work might be improved.

104. Pupils develop their skills of numeracy in other subjects satisfactorily at both key stages. There are examples of work on data handling in science and geography, also in history and design and technology. Pupils generally make good use of information technology to help them develop their mathematical skills.

105. The mathematics curriculum is well planned. Comprehensive long-, medium- and short-term planning ensures that pupils make good progress as they move up through the school. The newly appointed co-ordinator works closely with the assessment co-ordinator and numeracy management group. These good partnerships contribute to the raising of standards throughout the school. There is regular checking of teachers' planning. The co-ordinator is not currently monitoring teaching but it is planned for in the school's action plan. Assessment procedures are very good. There is a good range of resources, which are well organised and easily accessible to staff.

SCIENCE

106. Since the school was last inspected in April 1997 the provision and standards have improved, particularly at Key Stage 2, where standards are now well above the national average, an improvement since the last inspection. Throughout the school, both the curriculum and teaching are now good overall and the pupils at both key stages now make good progress and current standards are above average at the end of both key stages.

107. In 2001 the teacher assessments indicate that 98 per cent of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 have achieved the expected level and almost one half of the pupils attained the higher level, a proportion well above the national average. In comparison with the assessments for 2000 there was a 13 per-cent fall in the number of pupils achieving the higher level. This fall had been expected by the school as the year group contains a significant number of pupils with special educational needs. Throughout the Key Stage teachers are targeting pupils in an effort to ensure that they make good progress.

108. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests, at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level or above was well above the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level was also well above the national average. Since the school was last inspected in 1997, results have improved from being in line with the national average to now being well above the national average. This improvement is better than the national trend. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress and achieving well. The rise in standards is attributable to improvements in the quality of the science curriculum and to good teaching that is boosting pupils' learning. A key factor is the teachers focus on using scientific language. This is enhancing pupils' understanding of appropriate terms in both their oral and written responses.

109. Pupils in Year 1 carry out investigations using their senses to explore, observe and describe properties of a range of objects. They sort out objects by visible characteristics and turn suggested ideas into a form that can be investigated. For example they investigate whether materials that shine require light to make them do so. In Year 2 pupils understand that a circuit will not work if there is a break and that if a switch is inserted into a circuit it needs to be made of metal. A characteristic of all the lessons seen is the good quality of discussion and the sharing of ideas by the pupils.

110. The skills and knowledge pupils' gain in Key Stage 1 are built on and extended well at Key Stage 2. Much of the work pupils do is in the form of investigations, which helps them to make good gains and reach at least average standards in this aspect of their work. During the inspection Year 3 pupils enjoyed setting up an experiment and predicting what would happen over time to materials that are put into a landfill bucket. In Year 4 pupils used a variety of different magnets to investigate the forces that interact with each other. In Year 5, however, pupils' understanding of the structure of the skeleton would be enhanced if they had access to a skeleton.

111. By the end of the Key Stage, pupils have become confident investigators, organising and recording their work well, needing little input from their teachers and making well judged predictions of their results. When preparing to record the results of their experiment on thermal insulation, Year 6 pupils discuss and analyse their observations in pairs before deciding on the format for recording their information. Pupils understand the concept of a fair test by making one change in an experiment. For example, when measuring insulation the proposal to change the level of water in one container was rejected, as it would have resulted in changing more than one variable.

112. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 is good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory. Teachers have a firm knowledge of the subject, giving pupils good access to the curriculum. During lessons, teachers use good questioning techniques to assess pupils' understanding and to enhance learning. Good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs and the planning and organisation of lessons are good. Teachers use work sheets to support learning and to assess pupils' understanding but no longer use them to occupy pupils in low level tasks as reported in the previous inspection.

113. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The one unsatisfactory lesson observed was the result of poor use of time and a too slow pace which results in pupils not being given sufficient time to complete their investigations and to fully develop their understanding. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are good. Sound planning leads the pupils to a firm understanding of the topic and they make good progress. A significant fact in fully challenging the pupils is the differentiated work within the classes and the setting of the pupils into ability groups in the upper half of the school. There is very little evidence of any information technology being used to help with the delivery of the curriculum or to enhance pupils' learning. This is an underdeveloped area of the curriculum.

114. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They listen carefully in lessons, share tasks sensibly in-groups, and show good respect for equipment and other resources. There is good liaison between classroom assistants and teachers which mean that pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum.

115. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She is aware of developments needed and most are already included in the school's development plan. She has developed a very good portfolio of assessed work, which is used to evaluate standards of work across the school. The monitoring of teachers' plans is good but the monitoring of teaching is limited to the release time available and as a result is underdeveloped. As a result of the analysis of national test results, the co-ordinator's specialist knowledge and teaching skills are used to target pupils throughout the school in order to raise and maintain more consistent standards.

ART AND DESIGN

116. Because of the way the subject is blocked within the curriculum it was not possible to observe lessons in Key Stage 1 during the period of the inspection. Judgements are based on the observation of lessons in Years' 4 and 6, a scrutiny of pupils' work, evidence of past work and teachers' planning. These indicate that pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress overall in art and design and achieve standards that are expected nationally for their age and similar to judgements made at the previous inspection. These findings reflect those reported at the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress,

117. At Key Stage 1 pupils are given the opportunity to explore and experiment in a range of media in different art forms as, for example, in Year 2 where they use different papers or paint and wax resist to create seascapes. In Year 1 they develop their understanding of colour through mixing their own paints. They learn about the work of artists through studying the work of Monet and have worked in pairs to paint pictures in Monet's style.

118. Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to develop their understanding of techniques and media and to apply these to different aspects of their work. They plan and try out aspects of new work in their sketchbooks. For example, Year 4 pupils made drawings of Grecian urns, including potential decorative motifs, with pencil and crayon before undertaking their final work using paint. In Year 5 pupils have further developed their colour-mixing skills to paint patterns using tonal shades of one colour. Year 6 pupils have worked from photographic images to develop self-portraits using pastel.

119. Pupils' attitudes to art and design are good. In the lessons observed pupils showed a lively interest in, and enjoyment of, the activities they were involved in and were keen to get on with their work. They worked well, applying themselves with good concentration, listening attentively to their teachers. Their relationships are good and they co-operate well as they share ideas and talk about both their own work and that of others.

120. The quality of teaching in the two lessons observed was satisfactory overall. Teachers plan and organise their work well and use a variety of appropriate activities to enthuse the pupils, although on some occasions, the desire to ensure pupils' success limits individual creativity and challenge. Skills and techniques are taught with clear instructions and exemplification and these are further promoted through good questioning and individual support during lessons. Teachers are careful to recap previous learning at the beginning of lessons and make effective use of plenary sessions to reinforce learning objectives through the sharing and celebration of pupils' work.

121. The subject co-ordinator is well informed and enthusiastic. There is an effective policy and the school has recently adopted national guidance as its scheme of work. Long- and medium-term planning is securely in place and this supports teachers in their lesson plans. The co-ordinator monitors medium-term planning and keeps samples of pupils' past work for reference. She is responsible for managing the budget for this subject. There is a satisfactory range of materials to support pupils' work. The school has developed an exceptionally high quality collection of art prints and artefacts and the display of selections of these, which is done by Year 6 pupils each half-term, makes a significant contribution to pupils' appreciation and understanding of art, as well as to the ethos of the school.

122. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Pupils' observational drawings of natural forms and the careful display of finished work by teachers stimulate a sense of awe and wonder at the marvels of the natural world. The links between art and other subjects are used well by teachers as a stimulus for pupils' artwork. For example, Year 4 pupils developed their drawing skills when making careful drawings of the skeleton of a bird in science. The use of books as a source of inspiration, as in Year 2, where pupils have painted favourite story characters and in Year 1, where they have painted pictures that show key aspects of the story 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch', makes a good contribution to literacy. Good use is made of visits to support pupils' learning, for example pupils regularly visit local art galleries and the co-ordinator regularly arranges for a range of artists to visit the school as a stimulus for pupils' work. The attractive and stimulating artwork displayed around the school makes a significant contribution to its welcoming atmosphere as well as contributing to the climate for learning fostered by the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

123. By the end of both key stages pupils' attainment is in line with national explanations. Standards are similar to those found at the previous inspection.

124. Very few lessons were being taught during the time of the inspection, but good evidence has been drawn from looking at pupils' work, talking to teachers and pupils, examining completed work and looking at photographic evidence.

125. Year 1 pupils study reflective clothing used by people who help us. They make a list of people who need to be seen, for example the lollipop lady and draw a diagram labelling the reflective aids. Year 2 enjoy designing a special machine that would help to clear up litter and rubbish. Towards the end of the lesson they show their designs to the class, carefully explaining exactly what they intend each part to do. Year 3 investigate yoghurt packaging and identify the purpose of the different texts on the packages. This forms an important link with their literacy work. They intend to use the information gained to make their own yoghurt packaging in another lesson. Pupils use design and technology to support other subjects. Year 3 pupils make Egyptian masks to enhance their project on Egypt. Year 4 make a link with their science by designing and making an electric circuit which will activate an alarm. Year 5 carry out a biscuit enquiry. Pupils investigate personal preferences in biscuits, making a tally chart of the results which links well with their development in mathematics. They decide if there is a difference between the brand name biscuits and a shop's own make. They compare the ingredients and write instructions for making short bread biscuits which they follow to produce their own. Year 6 investigate soups which would nourish the over sixty-fives.

126. The teaching in the lessons observed in both key stages was at least good and in a Year 3 lesson very good. An obvious strength in the teaching seen was the careful planning and the efforts of the teachers and support staff to involve all pupils fully, including those with special educational needs. This enabled all pupils to improve their knowledge and also to improve their self-esteem and social skills. Other evidence shows that teachers throughout the school have a good understanding of the need to involve pupils in all aspects of planning and designing before construction begins. Pupils of all ages and abilities appreciate this aspect of the subject, and pupils who find difficulty in reading and informal writing enjoy making designs and gaining practical experiences. The range of activities and the obvious relevance to pupils' experiences are good features and have led to an enthusiasm for creativity. This was ably demonstrated when a large number of pupils attended the after-school design and technology club.

127. The co-ordinator is very keen and enthusiastic. She has produced a new policy and draft scheme of work which awaits approval. The resources are good, well stocked and readily available. The role of the co-ordinator is still developing but she has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom.

GEOGRAPHY

128. The school's geography scheme meets National Curriculum requirements and is well organised. This enables the pupils to make steady progress throughout the school, build up their skills sequentially and meet nationally expected standards by ages 7 and 11. Standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Their skill development is particularly effective in map reading in which pupils make good progress. This is because good opportunities are taken to base early map reading on known territory, such as the school grounds and the local streets. Pupils develop good skills as a result in orienting their maps correctly and most pupils are able to follow a route with a large scale Ordnance Survey sectional map by the end of Year 3.

129. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can locate position by reference to right and left, know the countries of the United Kingdom and can position them on a map outline. They know about the different kinds of weather and the effects that weather can have on economic activity. They contrast the features of seaside places with those of their home area. They begin to be concerned about their local environment and make suggestions about how it can be improved. They have definite ideas about positive and negative features of their locality and express their opinions and ideas well.

130. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a good understanding of the course of a river and the different stages a river might acquire from source to mouth. They understand the term gradient and make good use of their mathematical knowledge to compare the gradients of different rivers from known statistics indicating the steeper gradients nearer to the source. They make good use of weather statistics to plot rainfall and temperature, combining block and line graphs on one sheet to look in depth at the climate of specific areas. They understand natural human disasters which can occur from exceptional weather conditions and nature's continuing effect on the earth, such as coastal erosion or lava deposition. Written work in their exercise books, however, is sometimes disappointing. On occasion it is copied and at other times their writing is an obvious response to questions. Sentences then are ill-formed, the writing is truncated and this does not contribute to pupils' writing development. Furthermore the writing cannot be interpreted when returned to a few weeks later for revision purposes because it cannot be understood without reference to the original questions.

131. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It was consistently good in Key Stage 1 and ranged widely in quality in Key Stage 2 from very good to poor. Overall teaching observed in Key Stage 2 was sound. In the best teaching, preparation is good, lessons are well paced, good use is made of practical work and first-hand experiences and pupils are challenged well. Teachers seek definitions from pupils to check they understand the content, for example, the terms ascribed to house types before they go on a local visit. Good use is made of geographical terminology, such as street furniture and physical and human features. In these lessons pupils understand the task and use the well prepared resources effectively to develop their learning. They concentrate well on the tasks and show much interest in their work. There were also some weaknesses. In the poor lesson the work was ill prepared and did not build on the pupils' stage of development. Many pupils struggled with the content as they tried, for example, to place Afghanistan onto a blank world map. Many pupils struggled to do this and the positioning and scale of their attempts were often inaccurate. Many could not find the country in their atlases and struggled throughout. The introductory part of the lesson did not help them as the map projected onto the screen was too small to be interpreted. Explanations were unclear and, when the pupils worked, there was too much noise. Pupils lost their concentration and interest as a result. The sharing of books in another Key Stage 2 class restricted pupils' progress and affected concentration levels. Pupils became noisy as a result.

132. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator checks teachers' medium-term plans against the intended curriculum but she has not evaluated teaching in the subject. Resources for learning are adequate. Whilst there is not a skills check list to gauge progress, teachers periodically check pupils' understanding against a key learning objective.

HISTORY

133. By the end of both key stages, pupils attain standards which are in line with national expectations. This sustains the judgement made in the last inspection. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in both key stages. Higher attaining pupils have a good knowledge of historical facts. They are less skilled in comparing sources of information to explain differences between interpretation of things that happened in the past.

134. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils begin to develop a sound sense of the passage of time and know how things change over a period. They know about famous events such as the Gunpowder Plot through stories and pictures. They also learn how life is different compared with the past by asking their parents how they came to school and which toys their grandparents played with. For example, Year 1 pupils talked about their toys which are often worked by battery, comparing and contrasting them with the less sophisticated toys of their grandparents.

135. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a good knowledge of events and aspects of life during the Tudor period. Pupils have acquired sound knowledge of why the Romans invaded and settled in Britain with a strong focus on the city of Birmingham in Roman times. Good work has been undertaken on the Victorians. They have studied the development of industry and education in Britain. Year 6 pupils use evidence to understand how changing technology altered the way of life of working people in the nineteenth century. Through their studies about inventors, they are aware of how the telephone, sewing machine and motor car inventions first affected the lives of people at the time. They know the main differences in the way pupils are taught today compared to Victorian pupils. They are developing their skills in distinguishing between fact and opinion. Pupils gain an understanding of ways of life from visits to places of historical interest, such as Sarehole Mill and from re-enactments of historical events by visiting specialists.

136. Pupils' attitudes to history are generally good. They are keen to discuss what they know and share their opinions. They listen carefully to their teachers and give a variety of sensible answers to questions. They show great interest in all topics studied and there is evidence that pupils have a deepening understanding of how people, places and attitudes change over time. The presentation of work in exercise and topic books is generally good. Most pupils behave well.

137. The quality of teaching in both key stages is satisfactory overall but occasionally very good in Key Stage 2. Teachers make sure that the pupils understand what they were going to do and find out. However, the resources available in the school are not always used. For example, in Year 1 pupils compared and contrasted old and modern toys but the investigation was confined to reference books and worksheets. The teachers developed the pupils' understanding of time distance by involving pupils in plotting a time line and locating toys on it. This approach was effective in developing the pupils' interest and understanding of history and how things change.

138. At Key Stage 2, a particular strength of the lessons is the quality of questioning which encourages pupils to explore their ideas and develops their use of historical language. For example, a well chosen video about Ancient Greece extended pupils' understanding of Greek wars and the sources and artefacts used for evidence. Well focused questions helped pupils to understand the role of the archaeologist in revealing information about the past. Resources are generally well used in this Key Stage. For example, in a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils compared and contrasted school life in Victorian times with the present day, turning their own classroom into a Victorian one to emphasise the differences. Their investigations were significantly enhanced by the opportunities provided for 'hands on' experiences of using artefacts. In the planning there are clear details of each week's aims but they do not always identify the needs of the higher-attaining pupils. These pupils find some of the activities too easy and require involvement in more challenging investigations. Links to other subjects are satisfactory. Timelines are used in some lessons to reinforce counting skills, links to design and technology were evident where pupils have made Egyptian masks.

139. The management of history is satisfactory. Although only recently appointed, the co-ordinator has a good understanding of what needs to be developed. There is a policy and scheme of work. The co-ordinator has not yet monitored the quality of teaching and learning but has a good idea of standards from looking at teachers' planning and pupils' work. However, the use of assessment to guide planning is at a developmental stage. Resources are satisfactory and are well used in lessons although, with the exception of videos, there is insufficient attention given to the range of information technology available for use in this subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

140. Since the previous inspection there has been a marked improvement in the provision of resources available to support the teaching of information and communication technology. A major improvement has been the installation of a computer suite with sufficient computers for pupils to have individual access to a machine. Some effective in-service training has taken place and the value of this is reflected in the pupils' growing confidence and skills. This was an area of weakness in the last inspection report.

141. At the time of the previous inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were below national expectations. They are now at expected levels. Standards are not higher than this at the end of the key stages because pupils have not yet had sufficient experience of the full curriculum. Technical problems have restricted pupils' access to the Internet and control technology and the use of information technology across the curriculum require further development. These areas are being addressed and there is a clear curriculum overview in place to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are being planned.

142. By age seven, most pupils are working at expected levels for their age. Pupils begin to use the computer as soon as they start school. In the Reception class, pupils develop fine motor skills to control the mouse as they recognise letters on the keyboard, explore and experiment with colour. This early work is built upon so that by the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils can type their own names using different fonts and size of text. They are able to import graphic images, which they combine with text. They can draw shapes, choose and fill these with different colours to form their own pictures. Most can program a floor robot to move forwards and backwards, make right and left turns. They can devise a program using these movements to make patterns.

143. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are competent in a range of skills and are familiar with a variety of programmes. They work independently to combine text and picture. They have good experience in handling data and enhance their numeracy skills by doing so. Year 4 pupils, for example, interpreted data in several fields and then recorded in both line and pie charts. Year 3 pupils, when combining graphics and text successfully, load information from a disk, retrieve and insert graphics and then alter size and position. By the age of 11, pupils have a good understanding of word-processing, although their keyboard skills are not yet as finely tuned as they might be, and they use these programmes to write stories, labels and election information when standing for the School Council. Pupils are becoming knowledgeable and confident when working with spreadsheets. They can change and enter data and formulae and answer 'what if?' questions. They predict and check their predictions.

144. Pupils access all National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Their learning, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. Modelling techniques are however less developed and the use of CD-ROM's and the Internet to research topics is not well developed.

145. Computers are used well in literacy and numeracy lessons to help support pupils' learning. They are also well used to help pupils with special educational needs to develop their work. Only a limited amount of information technology is being used in other areas of the curriculum. The school now has the resources and the pupils have the skill to use computers to help them with their learning. Information technology needs to be planned and included into the whole school curriculum and not taught mainly as an isolated subject. The school is aware of this need.

146. Pupils generally have good attitudes to work and enjoy working on the computer. They are well behaved and are keen to answer questions. They listen attentively and show high levels of interest in the tasks they are set. They relate well to other pupils and discuss their ideas with each other.

147. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There is a good pace, the lessons are well organised and the pupils are provided with clear objectives for the task in hand. Within the lessons seen, teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge and give clear instructions to the pupils. The in-service training that the whole school is undertaking is helping to develop staff confidence and the staff members, who have advanced skills within this area, are supportive of their colleagues.

148. The co-ordinator has only recently taken responsibility for this curricular area. He is enthusiastic and demonstrates sound knowledge of the subject. Discussion with the subject co-ordinator and evidence from teachers' plans show that teachers plan the key knowledge, skills and understanding, to support pupils' attainment. A curriculum map covering the programmes of study for information technology has been established so as to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are taught. The subject co-ordinator gives effective support and advice to teachers when planning topics of work.

149. No monitoring or evaluating of teaching and learning has been undertaken by the co-ordinator. As yet records of pupils' progress are not being kept and assessment is in need of further development. Resources in the school to support teaching and learning are good.

MUSIC

150. Standards at the ages of seven and 11 match the levels expected nationally. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment make satisfactory progress overall and standards have been generally maintained since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make a similar rate of progress to others in their year groups. Pupils are better in listening to and performing music. Standards are not as good in composing and appraising skills.

151. A significant number of boys and girls from Years 2 to 6, learn recorders, woodwind, string and brass instruments. Their attainment is very good. Many can sight read formal notation and confidently play their chosen instrument with a good degree of competence. They participate annually in an inter-schools music festival and perform at assemblies. These experiences play a significant part in the development of the pupils' personal and social skills. Also they provide excellent learning opportunities for the musically-gifted and other pupils who flourish in this environment and achieve high standards in performing. This is evident in their experiences of playing chamber music with the Acocks Green Players. When given the opportunities, their skills developed in music tuition sessions have a positive impact on their performances in class lessons. For example, Year 6 pupils demonstrated good appraisal skills in a lesson, using technical vocabulary when evaluating a taped excerpt of the Blue Danube waltz by Johann Strauss. This raised the standards of critical listening and response by most of the pupils.

152. By the age of seven, pupils sing clearly and in tune. They perform well together in singing practice. By Year 2, pupils are able to sing a range of action songs such as 'Ollie the Octopus' from memory, keeping good time, and remembering that the chorus is repeated after each verse. They are developing an awareness of patterns in music. The majority of pupils can remember and repeat a simple pattern by clapping correctly and keeping to the beat. Using untuned percussion instruments they make up their own short rhythm and sound patterns, these being successfully repeated by the rest of the class. They are developing skills in group music making. For example, a Year 2 class used percussion instruments to create sounds for a 'Firework composition'. However, composing is at an early stage of development. Pupils listen to a variety of music, which includes music of other cultures and times. They are able to talk in simple terms about the range of sounds they hear. They know that different instruments make different sounds.

153. The pupils build on these skills in Key Stage 2 through opportunities to listen to and respond to music from different times and places. They are introduced to Western classical composers, for example, Mozart, Beethoven and Vivaldi, Afro-Caribbean and music from other traditions. They are developing satisfactory listening skills being able to identify many of the instruments being played in an orchestral arrangement. They are able to perform their own rhythmic patterns using a range of percussion instruments and understand the function of a 'rest' in music notation. No composition work was seen during the inspection and there is little recording of previous compositions. Discussions with pupils indicated that creating their own music is a developing area. Pupils learn about music and composers such as Johann Strauss and his waltzes. Through listening to his music, Year 6 pupils learnt to recognise that musical compositions have specific features such as 'pitch', 'pace' and 'patterns'. Many offered interesting opinions on how the music affected them. For example, one pupil said, "It reminds me of when I was in Switzerland, there was a stream and it gradually got quicker".

154. Pupils' attitudes and enjoyment of the lessons enhance their learning. This is often a consequence of the teachers' own enthusiasm for the subject. They are well behaved and generally attentive and persevere to improve both their individual and group performances. The pupils are confident when performing in front of an audience knowing that their contribution is valued. For example, in a Key Stage 1 singing practice, they sang a range of hymns with competence and real enjoyment. They generally select and handle instruments with care.

155. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages, an improvement since the last inspection. Lessons are well planned. Pupils' previous knowledge and understanding are used to extend and develop skills. Performing skills, in particular singing, are well taught. There is a sound pace to the lessons and practical opportunities for pupil involvement. The best lessons have one or two clear objectives, good pace and enjoyment as a high priority. As a result, the pupils concentrate well and listen to each other. In the less effective lessons pupils are over-directed, thereby limiting their opportunities for creative music-making. A significant minority of the pupils benefit from high quality tuition from specialist teachers. Teachers evaluate what the pupils are able to do and ensure that they improve on their earlier performances.

156. Pupils benefit from the high profile given to music in the school in a variety of ways. Significant numbers take part in extra-curricular activities such as orchestra, choir and recorder groups and a wide range of instrumental tuition provided by the Local Education Authority's music service. There is a sound policy and effective guidelines and good assessment provision, an improvement since the previous inspection. However, the considerable expertise of the co-ordinator is not yet being used sufficiently to support teachers in the classroom in order to develop the skills of those who are less secure. Resources are satisfactory and well organised.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

157. Standards of attainment are average at the end of both key stages, although there are a few examples of above average attainment in gymnastics and games in Year 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in their learning overall in both key stages. The sound standards found at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained.

158. By the time they are seven, pupils understand the purpose and importance of warming up before engaging in physical exercise. Pupils are trained to take care while moving apparatus. They listen well to instructions and practise forward roles, improving their style considerably during the lesson.

159. In Key Stage 2, younger pupils work on balances, developing their ability to move in and out of balances. The very good support from a support assistant enables a pupil with physical disabilities to take a full part in the lesson and enjoy her movements as much as the other pupils. This is an excellent example of inclusion. In Year 6, pupils make good progress in their physical skills. During the inspection, the two Year 6 classes were observed learning ball skills to use in games. Pupils practise a variety of passing movements and during the lessons make good progress in handling the ball and throwing accurately to a partner. All pupils change quickly and quietly at the beginning and end of lessons. They listen carefully to instructions and work hard to improve their performance. In some classes pupils enjoy an element of humour which teachers introduce to keep their pupils' interest.

160. The quality of teaching is good overall. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory when too much was attempted in the lesson. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are good. They give clear instructions to pupils so that they know exactly what to do. Lessons are planned effectively to build up skills over a sequence of lessons, and teaching methods are effective overall, with many good and practical suggestions for improving techniques and levels of performance. Classes are well managed and teachers make good use of the space available. For example, before the Year 6 lessons, monitors set out markers in the playground according to the teachers' instructions so that no time was lost and there was plenty of space for everybody. Swimming instruction is provided for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5. The majority of pupils reach the expected standard by the time they leave the school and many pupils swim very well. Effective teaching in most classes enables pupils to make good progress in the acquisition of skills and understanding of the different areas of physical education.

161. The subject is managed effectively. Pupils have good opportunities outside class to practise skills in soccer, tag rugby, netball and athletics. The pupils use these skills as they take part in competitions against other local schools. A parent, who is qualified in soccer, helps with training. There is equality of opportunity for girls and boys. There is a little use of information and communication technology, for example to plot pulse rates after exercise, but there is scope for this to be developed further. The school has a large hard surface area, which is well used, but there is no grassed area for games. Resources for learning are good. The school has received good support from the Tops programme in sport, play and dance. The school is in a good position to go on to improve further.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

162. The observation of lessons, an analysis of pupils' work throughout the year and discussions with pupils and teachers indicate that pupils are attaining the standards expected for those following the Birmingham Approved Syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, enabling them to make progress in their learning in line with their ability either as a result of work, which is adapted to suit their needs, or by additional help from their teacher or support assistant. The school has made very good progress in developing the subject since the previous inspection when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. The subject now makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

163. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils reach the expected standards in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. In Year 2 the teacher was able to draw on the pupils' first-hand knowledge of the use of water from their own experience. Pupils were keen to talk sensibly about Christenings and the significant use of water in the Muslim religion before prayer. All pupils were interested in each other's contributions and were prepared to learn of each other's customs and beliefs. Pupils visit a local church and prepare a list of questions they want to ask. Pupils also learn about religious treasures in the Christian, Muslim, Hindu and Jewish religions. Pupils are familiar with many stories from the Bible and know some from the sacred books of other religions.

164. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 listen to the story of the prodigal son as they think of God as a father figure. They list adjectives which best describe the father and the two sons in the story thus making an important link with their literacy studies. Year 4 pupils reflect on the concepts of authority and tradition developing an awareness of customs and traditions which help to shape lives. Year 5 pupils think about leaders they know and link their thoughts to a study of the importance of leaders in religion. They discuss leadership and write about special qualities leaders need. By studying the lives of Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa and Florence Nightingale, Year 6 pupils understand how faith can lead to providing help to others through positive actions. Working in groups, pupils explore what these people did for others and find out what sacrifices they had to make to accomplish their goals. Each group then reports back to the whole class. Pupils speak very confidently and all listen well to the contributions of others.

165. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding of the subject. They use precise, specific language in their discussions with pupils in order to increase their vocabulary in a structured way. Pupils are often questioned and always appear willing to respond. Pupils are managed well and have very good relationships with their teachers. In all the lessons observed, behaviour was good, and pupils respected each other's work and took care of resources. For example in one class a teacher had brought a very precious family Bible and a Qur'an. Pupils handled the Bible with care and observed the traditional customs before touching the Qur'an. At the end of each lesson there is a short period when all the class gather together to discuss their work and to reflect on their achievements. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to hear what other pupils have to say.

166. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over responsibility for the subject but the school had already responded very well to the issues raised at the previous inspection. Teachers have worked hard to implement the new policy and scheme of work. Religious education lessons make a significant contribution to spirituality and the excellent ethos in the school. Resources are good and have recently been re-organised to make it easier for teachers and pupils to link them to particular themes. Assessment is satisfactory and is effective in promoting the progress of individual pupils.