

INSPECTION REPORT

EAST PARK INFANT SCHOOL

Wolverhampton

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104308

Headteacher: Mr N Sullivan

Reporting inspector: Dr B D Male
14906

Dates of inspection: 20th – 24th March 2000

Inspection number: 194448

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hollington Road Wolverhampton West Midlands
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Allen
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Dr Brian Male	Registered inspector	English as an Additional Language English History	What sort of school is it? /What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led & managed?
Mrs Sue Boyle	Lay inspector	Equal Opportunities	How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs Chris Cheong	Team inspector	Under-Fives Mathematics Art	How good are the curricular & other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mrs Margaret Hatfield	Team inspector	Science Music Physical Education Religious Education	Pupils' attitudes, values & personal development
Mr Alex Scott	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs Information Technology Design & Technology Geography	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a Community Infants School taking pupils from 3 to 7 and maintained by the Wolverhampton LEA. It serves a large, ethnically mixed housing estate near the centre of Wolverhampton where social and economic conditions are often unfavourable. The school was built in 1952 and converted to an Infant School in 1966.

At the time of the inspection there were 277 pupils on roll in 9 classes. There were a further 79 children attending the nursery on a part-time basis. 42 of the full-time pupils were under five years old at the time of the inspection. Forty per cent of pupils are eligible for free schools meals, which is well above the national average. Thirty per cent of the pupils are on the Special Needs Register which is above the national average. There are 2 pupils for whom English is an additional language. During the last year 27 pupils joined the school and 24 left. Most pupils enter the school with standards of attainment well below those usually found.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school gives its pupils a good start in the nursery. The school is setting appropriately challenging targets, and standards of attainment across the school are rising. Standards in reading are in line with the national average, standards in mathematics below average, and standards in writing well below average. Compared to similar schools, standards are well above average in reading, average in mathematics and below average in writing. Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to their work. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils behave well across the school, and have good attitudes towards their work.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development.
- The school provides a wide curriculum with a good range of learning opportunities.
- There are good arrangements for assessing pupils' progress and setting whole-school targets.
- The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Parents are well informed about the school and very supportive of its approach.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment need to be raised, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The school needs to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school.
- More opportunities need to be created for speaking and listening to enhance learning.
- The school needs to maximise learning time within lessons.
- The rate of attendance is well below average and adversely affects progress.

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

The school's strengths outweigh those areas needing improvement. The school is already improving its standards, and working to ensure the consistency of teaching.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1997. Since then standards of attainment have been rising steadily in reading, writing and mathematics which was one of the Key Issues

set. The pupils' good attitudes and standards of behaviour have been maintained, and the building has been improved. In terms of the other Key Issues: the schemes of work have been completed and implemented, and the governors now fulfil their duties well, but pupils' progress remains quicker in the nursery than in the rest of the school.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
reading	D	D	C	A	well above A average B above average
writing	E	E	E	D	average C below average D well below average E very low E*
mathematics	E*	E	E	D	

This year, standards in reading are likely to remain well above those of similar schools. Standards have risen significantly in mathematics and are now below average nationally, but likely to be in line with similar schools. Standards in writing remain well below average nationally and are likely to be below similar schools. The similar school comparisons are partly improved by the higher number of pupils now registered as eligible for free school meals. There is a trend of rising standards in all three aspects. Standards in science are average nationally. Standards in information technology and religious education are in line with expectations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and are keen to get on with their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well in class and particularly well in the playground and at lunchtime.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils learn to behave well socially and to take responsibility. They are often caring and considerate to each other and they relate well to their teachers.
Attendance	The rate of attendance is well below average and this has an adverse effect on progress and attainment.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years

Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory
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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.

In the school as a whole, forty per cent of the teaching is good or better, ten per cent very good, and five per cent unsatisfactory. This is a positive profile, and an improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is never less than good overall in the nursery and is often very good, with high expectations and warm relationships that promote good progress. The great majority of teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, with some teaching very good, and a small amount unsatisfactory. Teaching of English is mainly good as the National Literacy Strategy provides a firm framework and clear expectations. Teaching of other subjects is satisfactory overall.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad curriculum and a wide range of learning opportunities including music and dance, but the timetable arrangements allow too many interruptions to lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision for these pupils. Individual education plans are appropriately drawn up, and the Code of Practice fully implemented.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good overall provision for personal development. Provision for social and cultural development is good, and provision for spiritual and moral development is sound.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has good arrangements for monitoring pupils' academic and personal progress, and makes secure arrangements for their safety and welfare.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher manages the school effectively, and has ensured that there are policies and procedures in place that underpin the rise in standards. The role of the senior management team needs clarifying in order to ensure a clear educational direction and consistent standards of teaching across the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body was only formed in the term of the inspection, but it already has a good overview of the school and is fulfilling its responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school takes many steps to evaluate its performance and sets effective targets. It now needs to be more urgent in taking steps to meet these targets.
The strategic use of resources	There is generally effective use of resources across the school, and the principles of best value are applied. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school building provides spacious classrooms and wide corridors that are well used for learning activities. Even so, there are not enough rooms for all classes to have fewer than thirty pupils. There is a relatively low number of teachers but a high number of support staff to provide a good overall ratio of adults to children. The level of resources is generally satisfactory across the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The way children are settled into school• The open approach of the headteacher and the information they receive from the school• The attitudes and values that the school promotes• The help given to individual children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is no area where parents would like to see improvement

Parents were extremely supportive of the school in their responses to the questionnaire and in their meeting with the Registered Inspector. The inspection endorses their positive comments. The school is planning to involve parents more directly in its the daily life and in work in the classrooms.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Many pupils enter the school as four-year-olds with standards of attainment well below those expected for children of this age. They make satisfactory overall progress across the school, and by the time they leave as seven year olds, standards of attainment are average in reading, but below average in mathematics and well below average in writing. This is an improvement since the last inspection in reading and mathematics, but not in writing. Standards in information technology and religious education are in line with expectations across the school.

Children under five

2. Pupils under five years old receive a good start to their education in the nursery, where high expectations and a very supportive ethos with warm relationships, enable pupils to develop well. Pupils make good progress, but by the time they are five, overall standards of attainment are still generally below those usually found.

Key Stage 1

3. In national tests for seven-year-olds in 1999, the school's scores in reading were in line with the national average, and well above the average of similar schools. In writing and mathematics, the school's scores were well below the national average, and below the average of similar schools. In mathematics, the number of pupils attaining the expected level (Level 2) was in line with the national average; but there were comparatively few pupils attaining the higher level (Level 3), and this brought the overall standard down. By contrast, in writing, an average number of pupils achieved the higher level (Level 3), but a very low number the expected level. All three aspects show a trend of rising standards over the last three years, with the strongest trends in reading and mathematics.
4. Inspection evidence shows that the school has maintained its standards in reading with this year's pupils. Standards in writing are still well below the national average, but this year there are more pupils attaining the expected level (level 2) but fewer attaining the higher level. Standards in mathematics are higher than last year, but still below the national average.
5. Standards in science and information technology are in line with national expectations, and in religious education standards are in line with the expectations of the Wolverhampton Agreed Syllabus. In other subjects, standards are broadly in line with expectations. It was not possible to see sufficient history for a judgement to be made.
6. Pupils are achieving very well in terms of their potential in reading, and appropriately in terms of mathematics. Many pupils do not achieve their full potential in writing.

Progress of different groups

7. Pupils with special educational needs make generally good progress in meeting the targets set out in their Individual Education Plans. This is particularly the case where these targets are about improving skills in literacy and mathematics. The variation between the progress of high, average and low attaining groups is in line with that usually expected. Girls tend to score higher than boys in national tests, but this is broadly in line with national trends.

Core subjects

8. Standards are below average overall in English; standards in reading are average, but standards are well below average in writing, speaking and listening. By the age of seven, most pupils read fluently and with understanding. Standards in writing are low across the school. Few pupils make a confident start to writing in the early years, and letters are often poorly formed. Many pupils have difficulty with simple spelling and grammar. Too few older pupils are able to write sequences of sentences, extending ideas where words are chosen for variety and interest.
9. Standards in mathematics are below average in all aspects of the subject. Many older pupils are developing a good understanding of number, but few have a good recall of number facts.
10. Standards in science are in line with the national average in both the knowledge-based elements and the investigational aspect of the subject. Pupils' knowledge of the life and living processes element of the subject is higher than in other aspects.
11. Standards in information technology are in line with national expectations. By the age of seven, most pupils have developed competence in operating a computer for simple word processing, although ability is less well developed in the data handling and control elements.
12. Parents are generally pleased with the progress pupils make and the standards they achieve.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' good attitudes, behaviour and personal development have been maintained since the previous inspection.
14. Nursery children like coming to school and are confident in leaving their parents and carers. Their behaviour is very good and they are developing very good attitudes to learning. Warm and constructive relationships with staff motivate the children well, and impact very positively on their personal and social development. They relate well to each other and willingly become involved and help in daily routines.
15. At Key Stage 1, most pupils enjoy coming to school and are eager to be involved in all the activities the school has to offer. They listen attentively to their teachers and to each other, apply themselves willingly to their work and are well motivated. Many join in discussions with confidence and enthusiasm. For example, in a literacy lesson, Year 2 pupils were keen to talk about the feelings of the characters in the 'Rumpelstiltskin' story. Most take pride in their work presentation, which is mainly good. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, enjoy lessons and display good attitudes to learning. They respond positively in lessons, make good efforts to do their best, show interest and sustain concentration, confirming parents' views that their children like school.
16. The school is an orderly community. Overall, pupils' behaviour is good, and they generally respond well to the school's high expectations of good behaviour. This reflects the opinion of the great majority of parents. Pupils' behaviour around the school at playtimes and lunchtimes is very good. In lessons, behaviour is generally good, and often very good, but there are times when unacceptable behaviour is observed, mainly because staff lack effective strategies for dealing with it. Pupils are

friendly, courteous and trustworthy, and show respect for each other. This was exemplified in a Year 1 religious education lesson, where pupils felt valued and responded very well to the teacher's encouragement to respect each other. There were no exclusions during the school year prior to the inspection.

17. Pupils' personal development is good. It is enhanced by Year 2 pupils experiencing an annual residential camp at the Kingswood Centre. Pupils are helpfully involved in daily routines, and willingly take responsibility; for instance, as register monitors and for assisting with lunchtime procedures. They are involved in various charities, such as 'Red Nose Day' and a sponsored event to support pupils overseas. They are developing a sense of community; for instance, the Year 2 school choir sings carols to senior citizens at Christmas. Pupils are involved in caring for the environment, particularly in keeping it litter-free.
18. The quality of relationships is good overall, and is significant in effectively motivating the pupils. Pupils relate well to teachers and other adults. However, there are times when some teachers do not always relate well to pupils, so that pupils do not feel valued, for example, when the teacher's voice is raised unnecessarily, and when there are needless reminders about 'rules'. Pupils relate well to each other and are mutually supportive, for example, in a Year 1 numeracy session, they helped each other to find correct digits. Pupils co-operate well, and many work independently, as well as collaboratively, when required; for example, in Year 2 science group activities. Pupils show respect for other people's feelings, values and beliefs; for example, when Year 1 pupils responded very positively to a Red Indian story of how birds were created, and to the teacher's inspiring demonstration of Hindi writing. Pupils reflect on and discuss their own behaviour, feelings and experiences with growing confidence; for instance, when Year 1 pupils composed prayers, and Year 2 pupils discussed the human life cycle in religious education.

Attendance

19. Attendance rates are very low with comparison with other schools. They were low at the previous inspection and since then have not risen significantly. Most pupils arrive punctually at the start of the day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in the nursery, and satisfactory overall in the rest of the school. In the school as a whole, forty per cent of the teaching is good or better, and ten per cent very good. Five per cent of the teaching is unsatisfactory. This is broadly in line with the findings of the last inspection.
21. The teaching of children under five is good overall, with some very good teaching in the nursery. There are very good relationships with the children and a very positive ethos for learning. The happy atmosphere helps pupils to settle very quickly into the routines, and activities are well prepared to link learning to play. For instance, in a lesson on counting, the teacher used well-prepared materials to link a song about stripy shirts to actual objects in a way that made counting a very real experience and greatly enhanced learning. Teaching and support staff collaborate well together and expectations are generally high, although there could be an earlier focus on literacy skills. Pupils respond very well to the teaching and show good concentration from an early age. They apply themselves well to their tasks and make good progress.
22. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1 with a third of the

teaching good and a tenth very good. The very good teaching is in one Year 1 and one Foundation Class. The teaching of English is good overall as the National Literacy Strategy provides a firm framework and clear expectations. Teaching of other subjects is satisfactory overall.

23. In those lessons where teaching is very good, there is a very brisk pace, high expectations and a clear structure of work that promotes learning. For example, in a Foundation Class mathematics lesson, the teacher made very effective use of well prepared materials for children to move large coins from a 'purse' on a board to represent their purchases, and then relate these to a large number line. The physical movement of objects underpinned the mental processes and produced very good learning at a high level for these young children.
24. In a very good mathematics lesson in Year 1, the teacher's very lively and enthusiastic approach, together with very effective use of well prepared cards, kept all pupils involved in learning about angles and the degree of turn. Her very good use of mathematical language and very effective questioning made each pupil think and learn in a very natural way.
25. Learning objectives are very clear and are very effectively shared with pupils. For instance, in a Year 1 literacy lesson looking at a class book on a journey down a river, the objectives, which were to look at aspects of punctuation, were written clearly on the board and were returned to at the end of the lesson to review progress. This is very good practice that promotes learning well.
26. The quality of teaching varies across the Foundation and Key Stage 1 classes, with the great majority satisfactory but with some classes where teaching is mainly good, or very good. A small minority of lessons were unsatisfactory during the inspection. The reasons varied: in one lesson the level of expectation was too low to promote effective learning, in another the introduction went on too long and covered ground that was already well understood. In a small number of lessons in Year 2, the behaviour of a number of pupils was disruptive and insufficient attention was paid to the teacher. The school needs to share the very good practice that is already in the school and enable teachers to work more together so that models of good teaching are seen by all. A great majority of the satisfactory lessons lack the excitement that enthuses and inspires pupils and challenges them intellectually.
27. The teaching of the new National Numeracy Strategy is effective across the school and is already raising standards. The National Literacy Strategy gives clear structure and expectations and means that the teaching of English is generally good, particularly in the teaching of reading. The teaching of writing is not as effective as that of reading, especially outside of the literacy hour. There is not a clear framework for the teaching of writing from the nursery stage, which sets out clearly the expectations at each stage. A great deal of time is given to the teaching of reading with all pupils being heard individually as well as in groups, and teaching focuses on a pupil's particular skills and level of development. There is much less direct teaching of writing and it does not always address pupils' specific learning needs, but is more generally targeted to the class. Pupils need more opportunities to engage in sustained pieces of writing, and they need to discuss with their teacher the quality of their writing so that they understand what they need to do to improve.
28. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers plan effectively so that work is appropriately matched to the needs of individuals. Targets from Individual Education Plans are effectively incorporated into lessons and pupils receive effective additional teaching support from teachers or other adults.

29. Teachers provide many opportunities for speaking and listening, but more use of paired and small group work, where pupils need to explain and respond to each other, would enhance learning of subjects as well as extending speaking and listening skills themselves. This could also be enhanced by developing the role of pupils in the review sessions at the end of lessons, and structuring opportunities for pupils to report back and lead discussion in the context of subject lessons as well as their own experience.
30. The school timetable is such that lessons such as science are often interrupted by physical education or music sessions. This is disruptive organisationally and interrupts learning. There are also many interruptions to lessons from people bringing messages or asking to take pupils out for extra help; these also disrupt learning. These interruptions, together with a great deal of time spent on administrative and organisational arrangements such as fetching coats and then returning to class before going out into the playground, take away a great deal of the time that would otherwise be available for learning.
31. Pupils respond well to the teaching at Key Stage 1, and make satisfactory overall progress. Where teaching is most effective, such as in reading, pupils make good progress. Pupils apply themselves particularly well to their set tasks and are keen to get on with their work. They work at a good pace and most sustain their concentration well.

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

Curricular opportunities

32. The school provides a broad curriculum that provides a good focus on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, but which also provides a wide range of other learning opportunities such as dance and drama. The school has effectively introduced the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy and has good strategies for teaching the basic skills within these, but it does not ensure that these lessons are uninterrupted. This detracts from the quality of learning within the lessons.
33. The school generally ensures equal opportunities for all. Pupils with special educational needs have generally equal access to the curriculum. Individual education plans are detailed and of good quality so that the identification and planning of programmes for these pupils is good and the provision made is also good. Pupils receive an appropriate balance of additional support provided by teachers and teaching assistants both within the classroom and through a programme of withdrawal, but they sometimes miss lessons in other subjects when receiving extra support in English.
34. Good use is made of resources within the community, with visits planned to contribute to pupils' learning. There is no programme of extra-curricular activities, but this is not unusual in an infant school.
35. The school has established effective links with the community and other agencies to contribute to the quality of education. There are effective links with the Junior School, but these are pastoral rather than curricular. There are good links with various colleges to provide places for students, and the headteacher plays an active part within many educational forums. The school has been accredited as an "Investor in People" and works closely with the local Chamber of Commerce.

Personal development - including spiritual, moral, social and cultural

36. Provision for pupils' personal development through the daily life and routines of the school is good, and the school is planning to develop more structured opportunities for personal development through 'circle time'. Although the school has worked hard and is mostly successful at this aspect of provision, there are some school routines which do not encourage pupils to be independent or take responsibility; for example, the practice of lining up the Year 1 pupils to ensure that they all go to the toilet at lunchtime, and pupils returning to their classrooms with coats before going into the playground at breaktimes.
37. Spiritual development is satisfactory, and is fostered mainly through religious education and collective worship. Acts of collective worship are mainly Christian in nature and make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils are helped towards a sense of self and their place in the world through those teachers who listen to them and value their ideas. This supports pupils' spiritual development by encouraging pupils to share their thoughts and to respect the views of others. However, not all teachers relate to pupils in this way and some can be fairly dismissive when pupils get the wrong answer. They do not always make time to listen to pupils.
38. Pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They know, for example, which areas of the playground are for running around in and which are for quiet play, and are careful not to transgress the rule. Pupils are helped towards an understanding of rules and rule making by being involved in the development of their own classroom rules.
39. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Provision for pupils to play together in ways which encourage them to share and to co-operate is a strength. For example, in the playground, pupils can if they wish play together with the toys set out for them on mats, or if they prefer they can choose a more active game. They are well supported in this by adults who help them and often join in with the play. In the classroom, there are sound opportunities for pupils to act as monitors, performing routine tasks such as taking the register to the office. Older children are encouraged to help at lunchtime by giving out cutlery and trays. These jobs help pupils to gain an understanding of community. In some classes, pupils are expected to get their own equipment and to organise themselves, although this is not happening throughout the school. Provision for social development is enhanced by the residential visit. Most adults in the school relate to pupils in ways that are appropriate, and there are some examples of adults who are good role models. However, some adults do not set a good example for social behaviour in their dealings with pupils.
40. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils have good opportunities to visit museums and art galleries and to go to the theatre and cinema. Book weeks and regular visits to the public library help to foster a love of literature. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to learn the recorder and to listen to musicians. In the nursery and at the playground club, children learn about local culture through traditional ring games. A focus for multicultural education is the celebration of Diwali, and this effectively helps pupils to gain insight into the values and beliefs of others.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. Assessment and record keeping procedures at Key Stage 1 are good. The school

makes good use of the national and other test information to set whole-school targets, and to determine trends and areas for development. The effectiveness of the assessment information that is gathered in the nursery is limited, as it does not correspond with the nationally recommended early years curriculum. This makes it difficult to track children's progress toward the 'Desirable Learning Outcomes'. The school is not yet making full use of short-term assessment to enable detailed target setting for individuals and groups of pupils to take place.

42. The school makes mainly satisfactory provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety, and monitoring of health and safety is mainly appropriate. However, the school has not been carrying out formal risk assessments. Child protection arrangements are in place and work well. There is scope to involve mid-day supervisors more by giving them a copy of the child protection policy and ensuring that they are clear about who the designated person is for child protection. The school talks to children about child protection in ways that are appropriate to their age.
43. The school works very closely with the educational social worker who has only recently been appointed. Monitoring arrangements for attendance and punctuality are good and concerns are quickly followed up. The school talks to parents about the importance of attending, but this seems to be having little impact on attendance rates, which are low. In view of this, it should now consider taking a more pro-active approach to promoting attendance.
44. Arrangements at lunchtime are very good. Pupils are well supervised and mid-day supervisory staff are clear about procedures in the event of an accident. Playground toys are enhancing provision and the school has plans to provide furniture to improve further the quality of provision.
45. The school is effectively promoting good behaviour, particularly outside lessons where pupils are well managed and are clear about appropriate behaviour. However, the school's behaviour policy is not effectively informing behaviour management in all classrooms, and this results in different teachers using different approaches when dealing with pupils. Some of these approaches work well and some are proving less successful. The school has an effective policy for bullying and this is evident in the way in which pupils relate to each other.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Parents and carers are exceptionally supportive of the school in their views, and the school has established good links with parents.
47. The school mostly provides some very good information, and parents are very satisfied with the quality of information they receive. Pupils' annual reports are very informative and have ideas for parents to enable them to help their child with learning. Through open days, curriculum evenings and parents' evenings, parents find out about the work their child is doing in school. However, the school does not give parents advanced information about the work their child will be doing, although this is something it is planning to do in the near future.
48. The impact of parents' involvement with the life of the school is limited. Some parents help in the nursery and a few help out in the library and with the school bank, but parents are not invited to help in classrooms. This is unusual for an infant school. There is no parent fund-raising association, although parents do organise events such as the Christmas Fair. Parents are given useful information, verbal, written and

in video form, to enable them to help their child with reading at home, but it is difficult for the school to assess the usefulness or impact of this information because parents are not expected to complete a reading record card. It also means the school does not have a record of reading done at home. The lack of a home reading record card means that pupils read from where they last read in school, which could make parents feel that their contribution is not valued.

49. The arrangements for parents and carers at the start and end of the day mean that parents have to wait outside the building when bringing or collecting their child. Staff go outside to speak to individual parents about concerns, but it is not easy for a parent to approach a teacher. This practice is in the interest of security, but inevitably restricts the informal opportunities for parents to look around classrooms and talk to teachers. Most parents are keen to help their child with learning at home, although some feel that the allocation of half a term for mathematics homework is too long.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

The headteacher and senior staff

50. The headteacher manages the school effectively and has ensured that there are policies and procedures in place that underpin the rising trend of standards. The role of the senior management team is not clear, particularly in respect of ensuring the consistent quality of teaching. As a result, the educational direction the school should take is not always made sufficiently clear to teachers. The headteacher has very good relationships with parents and had ensured that the achievements of the school are well known.
51. The role of subject co-ordinators has been extended since the last inspection and they generally manage their subjects effectively, but they do not have job descriptions and their role in monitoring and evaluating their subjects is under-developed. Many have only recently taken over the role. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has been well managed and is already impacting positively on standards. The provision of support to pupils with special educational needs is generally well managed, and the Code of Practice is fully implemented.
52. There are explicit aims and values that inform the work of the school. The school meets these in terms of providing equality of opportunity, safety and security. The curriculum provides for the needs all pupils and promotes self-respect and mutual responsibility. The trend of rising standards indicates that the school is moving towards its goal of high expectations and standards.

The governors

53. The governing body had only recently been formed at the time of the inspection, following the creation of separate bodies for the Infant and Junior Schools. It has already developed a good overview and is taking many active steps to involve itself in the life and work of the school. It is fulfilling its responsibilities well.

Monitoring, evaluation and targets

54. The school is using many measures of its performance and is well aware of its needs. This has improved significantly since the last inspection. The overall targets set are appropriately challenging and progress is being made towards these. There is a shared commitment to improve.
55. The school's development plan is a very lengthy document that covers a wide range of the school's work. Its prose style does not always make the targets easy to discern

and they are often expressed in very general language. For instance, Target 6 on discipline is to “continue to develop and refine the discipline policy” without saying how, although it suggests that the policy is already very successful. The target for English contains no clear plan as to how standards in writing can be improved. In almost all targets, the financing is left “to be identified”; this does not help relate the plan to the school’s budget. The timescale set by the school for achieving its targets is often rather long, and there is a belief that things need to ‘bed down’ for extended periods before being moved on. For instance, the new library room is still being developed after two terms. In many cases this timescale is not sufficiently urgent to affect the education of pupils who are in an Infant School for only a short time.

Strategic use of resources and principles of best value

56. Effective use is made of resources across the school. Financial planning is sound, and all spending is appropriately accounted for. The budget is scrutinised thoroughly by the governors and the best value principles of challenge, consultation and competition are applied appropriately. Specific grants, such as those for special educational needs, are used appropriately.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.

57. There are a relatively low number of teachers for the size of the school, and class sizes are large. The school compensates for this by employing a higher number of ancillary staff. This means that the total adult to pupil ratio is favourable. Although the school has sufficient funding for more teachers, there are not enough classrooms and so the present arrangements represent the most effective use of money. The predicted fall in the number of pupils caused by proposed changes to local housing will rectify this situation in due course anyway. The school building provides spacious classrooms and wide corridors that are well used for learning activities. There is a generally satisfactory level of resources across the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. In order to build upon the trend of improving standards, the headteacher, governors and staff need to:

- 1) Raise standards in English and mathematics by:
 - In writing:
 - ◇ providing a clear framework of teaching writing from the nursery stage
 - ◇ providing clear and precise teaching of writing to address specific identified learning needs
 - ◇ creating more opportunities for older pupils to engage in sustained pieces of writing that build into sequences of sentences
 - ◇ ensuring that there are opportunities for pupils to receive feedback on the quality of their writing, and that there is an expectation to improve
(paragraph 99 refers)
 - In mathematics, continuing the development of the National Numeracy Strategy
(paragraph 110 refers)

- 2) Ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school by:
 - clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team for this area
 - sharing the good practice that already exists in the school
 - enabling teachers to work together so that models of good teaching are

available

(paragraph 50 refers)

- maximising those lessons that enthuse and inspire pupils, and challenge them intellectually

(paragraph 26 refers)

- 3) Enhance learning by creating more opportunities for pupils to speak and listen in structured situations by:
- making more use of paired and small group work
 - developing the role of pupils asking questions and making suggestions in the review sessions at the end of lessons
 - structuring opportunities for pupils to report back and lead discussion in the context of subject lessons
- (paragraph 29 refers)*
- 4) Maximise learning time within lessons by:
- ensuring that time-tabling arrangements do not split lessons
 - reducing the interruptions to lessons
 - reducing time spent on administrative and organisational arrangements such as fetching coats
 - ensuring that introductions to lessons are no longer than necessary
- (paragraph 30 refers)*
- 5) Take steps to improve the rate of attendance at school.
- (paragraph 19 refers)*

The school may also wish to address the following minor issues and could also make them the subject of an action plan:

- Sharpen the targets in the School Development Plan and reduce the timescale for their completion
- Make full use of short-term assessment to enable detailed target setting for individuals and groups of pupils to take place.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

59. Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	94
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

60. Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Un-satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	10	29	56	5		

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

61. Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	40	277
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/a	89

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	86

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	24

62. Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

63. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	54	41	95

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	43	37	44
	Girls	40	38	37
	Total	83	75	81
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (83)	79 (67)	85 (73)
	National	82 (80)	83 (78)	87 (83)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	41	42	45
	Girls	39	37	35
	Total	80	79	80
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (75)	83 (75)	84 (86)
	National	82 (80)	86 (83)	87 (85)

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

64. Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	14
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	18
Indian	8
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	148
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

65. Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

66. Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	30.7

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	233

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	40

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	62

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13.3
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

67. Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	522,902
Total expenditure	541,941
Expenditure per pupil	1,673
Balance brought forward from previous year	126,430
Balance carried forward to next year	107,391

68. Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	277
Number of questionnaires returned	205

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	30	0	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	62	33	2	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	47	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	38	10	3	4
The teaching is good.	70	24	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	40	8	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	24	0	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	26	1	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	52	40	5	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	71	26	1	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	31	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	39	12	2	15

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

69. The overall attainment of children on entry to school is generally well below the nationally expected levels. Children make good progress through the nursery and early reception classes, but by the time they are five years old, pupils' standards of attainment are still below those normally found for their age group, except in personal and social development, and creative development, where pupils achieve levels of attainment expected of their age group. The curriculum provided for them ensures that prior attainment is being built on effectively, and the range of experiences across all areas of learning means there is a systematic development of new skills and knowledge in most areas of the curriculum. Occasionally, tasks do not challenge the higher attainers.
70. At the time of the inspection, forty-two of the children in the reception classes were below five years of age. Children enter the reception classes either at the beginning of the autumn or spring terms of the academic year in which they are five. Prior to that, they attend the nursery class on a part time basis, with many of them attending for three terms. The curriculum meets the requirements of the national guidelines for children under five and is well planned to meet the nationally recommended Desirable Learning Outcomes.
71. Personal and social development is a strength of the nursery, with very good progress being made by the majority of children by the age of five. Children work alongside one another well, and are beginning to learn to co-operate with others; for example, children in the nursery share and take turns well with different model animals without being asked by an adult. They show appropriate self-respect, and are developing self-confidence, which is demonstrated in opportunities given to them to report back about activities that they have chosen to work with that day. Staff promote this area well. The children are beginning to establish effective relationships with adults and other children. They demonstrate independence very well in selecting activities and materials and in personal hygiene. They carry out instructions well, working when asked to do so, generally with a high level of independence and commitment to the task. Their behaviour is very good, and their attention span and concentration are good. A good example of this seen in the nursery was two boys working for a very long time with a computer to select and colour a picture. The awareness of right and wrong is well promoted by the teachers. The children mostly treat their own and other people's property with care and consideration, picking up toys from the floor and clearing away with enthusiasm.
72. The attainment in language and literacy development by the age of five is well below that normally found. Listening skills are well promoted by the staff. Most of the children listen to each other with interest in large and small groups. They are willing to talk, some using a growing vocabulary with increasing fluency to express their thoughts. A very good example of this was children in a reception class talking about methods of fastening card in models they were making of "bodies" and saying how they would change it to make it better next time. Most pupils join in well with singing rhymes and songs. Elementary reading skills are established quickly in the reception classes, but more could be done in the nursery to draw attention to the printed word, or to help children read familiar words that are of interest to them. In the nursery, most children are unable to recognise letters of the alphabet by shape or sound. The nursery staff provide good opportunities for children to start to draw and write, but

- insufficient attention is given to the correct formation of letters. Most pupils, therefore, by the time they are five, are unable to form letters correctly or write clearly.
73. Attainment in mathematics by the age of five is below the level expected for children of this age. Pupils are learning to use mathematical language appropriately to describe amounts, positions and shapes. By the time they are five, they are able to join in number songs and sort objects; for instance, when packing toys away and taking part in number games. Also, by the time they are five, most are able to count to ten and some beyond, and count a few objects, but few pupils can write numerals accurately. Some children are beginning to show an awareness of number operations such as "one more". The reception classes promote this understanding well. In the nursery, children are given too few opportunities to solve practical problems and develop an awareness of number operations and their associated language.
 74. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world at the age of five is below that generally found. Some can discuss their homes and families, but show little awareness of the wider environment in which they live. They are aware of the weather, and a few of the changing seasons. They are involved in a sound range of activities, such as making daffodils and printing flowers, to support this understanding. They are able to talk a little about the recent past and events in their own school lives when they look at photographs taken of themselves in the nursery.
 75. In the area of physical development, children's attainment levels are lower than the majority of five-year-olds. Staff give the children many opportunities to handle pencils, crayons and modelling tools, and they are beginning to develop skills of physical control. Their mobility, co-ordination and awareness of space are being developed by work with small equipment, such as balls, and some large apparatus in a very limited space. The nursery class has access to a newly enclosed outdoor play space and a satisfactory variety of outdoor toys, but this is not fully in use yet and limits progress in this area.
 76. Attainment in the area of creative and aesthetic development is as expected for five year olds, and the children make very good progress. Staff regularly provide a wide range of activities including art, craft, music and imaginative play. Children express their ideas in drawing, painting and modelling well. In doing so, they show they can use their imaginations and communicate their feelings effectively. In the nursery, good figure drawings show a range of skills developing well, with some showing many features of a person, while others omit some detail.
 77. The overall quality of the teaching for children under five is good, with some very good teaching in the nursery and reception. Teaching and support staff collaborate well together. In the nursery, the management of pupils' behaviour is very good. Relationships are positive. There is a happy atmosphere, in which children feel secure. Planning is satisfactory, appropriately using the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children of this age group. Preparation is very thorough. A short check list is undertaken on entry to the nursery, ongoing assessment is then undertaken, but this assessment does not reflect fully the Desirable Learning Outcomes around which the nursery bases its work. This is limiting expectations. Targets for individual children are not set. On entry to the reception classes, baseline assessment is undertaken and is soundly used to plan the next steps for pupils' learning. Effective use of support staff enhances children's progress.
 78. Early education is well resourced and co-ordinated. Arrangements for starting the nursery and reception classes are good, with parents receiving a video. Arrangements for liaison with parents and carers and for reporting to them are good, but the written information given to parents when their child starts the nursery lacks

detail about the curriculum for this age group.

ENGLISH

79. **At the end of Key Stage 1, standards of attainment are below the national average. Standards in reading are higher than in writing and in speaking and listening. Pupils make satisfactory overall progress through the key stage. Standards in reading have improved since the last inspection.**
80. In national tests for seven-year-olds in 1999, the percentage of pupils attaining the national expectation (Level 2) was in line with the national average in reading, but below average in writing. The proportion attaining the higher level (Level 3) was average in reading and well below average in writing. Compared to schools of similar background, the overall standards were well above average in reading and below average in writing. Standards in both aspects have risen over the last three years.
81. Inspection evidence suggests that the school has maintained the average standards in reading this year, and that standards in writing remain well below average. Pupils achieve well in reading in terms of their potential, but do not do so in writing. This is mainly because more time is given to the teaching of reading with significant input from support staff, and teaching is well focused.
82. Pupils enter the key stage with standards of attainment below average in reading and speaking and listening, and well below average in writing. They make better progress in reading than in writing. This results from the focus on reading in teaching, especially in the literacy hour, and the extra help pupils receive from support staff. Progress is generally equivalent for boys and girls and for different groups within the school, but comparatively fewer pupils attain the higher levels in writing. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in terms of their targets.
83. By the age of seven, almost all pupils start to reveal confidence and usually listen carefully, making appropriate responses. Many show an understanding of the main points in discussion, but few are able to explain more complex ideas clearly.
84. By the age of seven, most pupils are able to read simple texts with appropriate accuracy and understanding. Most read independently, establishing meaning through appropriate strategies and have good word recognition. Many are able to talk about the stories they have read and relate their opinions to the text. About a third of pupils reach the higher level of reading more difficult texts and understanding the main points within informational books. Library skills are not well developed. This is partly because there is little scope for developing these skills.
85. Standards of writing are very low across the school. Many younger pupils still struggle with individual words, and too few older pupils are able to write a sequence of sentences. Spelling of even simple words is often inaccurate. Handwriting is often poor with letters not properly formed, inconsistent in size, and a mixture of capital and lower case letters. Very few pupils indeed reach the higher levels of writing, where sequences of sentences extend ideas logically, and words are chosen for variety and effect.
86. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good. They generally behave well and they enjoy reading and listening to stories. Pupils are generally keen to write, but are seldom expected to improve on their original versions and so have not built up an

expectation of refining and revising their writing. Most pupils are keen to read and enjoy books.

87. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Pupils are engaged by the lessons and are keen to learn. They listen attentively and try hard with their work. The literacy hour sessions are generally well conducted with a good concentration on the development of skills and clear learning objectives shared with pupils. The basic literacy skills are generally well taught. For instance, in a very good Foundation Class lesson, the objective of finding rhyming words and linking these to spellings was clear to all pupils, and they were enthused by the teacher's lively approach to search for these. The teacher used some very effective methods in which pupils pretended to 'grab' words from the air and then stretch them between their hands as they sounded them out. The physical movement was very effective in reinforcing the learning.
88. The teaching of reading is generally good. There is a good range of literature available and a great deal of time is spent hearing pupils read in groups and as individuals. The teaching and books used are based directly on pupils' level of attainment and learning needs. Although pupils take their reading books home to read to parents, their progress is not recorded and there is no opportunity for parents to comment on the reading records. This limits the contribution parents can make.
89. The teaching of writing is not as effective as of reading, especially outside of the literacy hour. There is not a clear framework for the teaching of writing from the nursery stage, which sets out clearly the expectations at each stage. A great deal of time is given to the teaching of reading with all pupils being heard individually as well as in groups, and teaching focuses on a pupil's particular skills and level of development. There is much less direct teaching of writing and it does not always address pupils' specific learning needs, but is more generally targeted to the class. Pupils need more opportunities to engage in sustained pieces of writing, and they need to discuss with their teacher the quality of their writing so that they understand what they need to do to improve.
90. Teachers provide many opportunities for speaking and listening, but more use of paired and small group work, where pupils need to explain and respond to each other, would enhance learning of subjects as well as extending speaking and listening skills themselves. This could also be enhanced by developing the role of pupils in the review sessions at the end of lessons, and structuring opportunities for pupils to report back and lead discussion in the context of subject lessons as well as their own experience.
91. The contribution of other areas of the curriculum to pupils' competence in English is sound. Pupils are developing appropriate mathematical, scientific and technical vocabulary. They listen well in physical education, and follow instructions carefully and safely. Reading skills are adequately developed across all subjects, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop writing skills in other subjects.
92. The subject is generally well managed and the arrangements for the introduction of the literacy hour have been effective. Management should now focus on ensuring that the very good teaching of English in some classes is spread across the school. There is an appropriate range of fiction and non-fiction books, and some classes have very attractive book corners, but the new library room is still being developed.

MATHEMATICS

93. **At the end of Key Stage 1, standards of attainment are below the national average in all aspects of mathematics. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the school. Standards have improved since the last inspection.**
94. In national tests for seven-year-olds in 1999, the percentage of pupils attaining the level expected for their age (Level 2) was below the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 3) was well below average. Overall, standards were well below the national average and below the average of similar schools.
95. Test results over a three-year period show a significant rise in levels of attainment. The inspection findings confirm that this trend is continuing, and that standards this year are below the national average, but in line with similar schools. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with standards of attainment below those normally found. Pupils make sound progress in relation to their prior attainment, and pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in terms of their targets.
96. Across the key stage, pupils are beginning to demonstrate ability in working out number facts. Many of the older pupils are beginning to understand place value, with a significant minority beginning to show some good understanding in areas such as working out doubles and knowledge of the multiples of 2s, 5s and 10s. Overall, their recall of number facts, without resorting to using their fingers, is not strong. They can use mathematical language to name 2-D and 3-D shapes and know how many sides and corners they have. They gather information, such as favourite Womble songs, and communicate their findings in simple graphs. Pupils are beginning to extend their range of mathematical vocabulary well and use it confidently to describe how they solved a problem or describe the position of an object.
97. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and their response in lessons is satisfactory. The vast majority of pupils settle to their work well. They are mostly attentive during instructions and class lessons. Pupils sustain concentration fairly well, and apply themselves willingly to the activities set for them. Pupils have a lively interest in their mathematics work. They respond enthusiastically to the teachers' questioning and many are keen to answer. They co-operate well when given opportunities to do so.
98. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some examples of good and very good teaching. In a very small proportion of lessons, teaching was unsatisfactory. Lessons are well planned, mostly with good regard to the differing abilities of pupils within the classes. Resources are carefully prepared. Teachers share the learning objectives with the class and, in better lessons, return to them at the end. Also in better lessons, interruptions are minimised, all the pupils are facing the teacher for the class teaching parts of the lessons, and all pupils are focused on the work in hand. In the best lessons observed, the teachers used a wide range of mathematical and every-day language to extend pupils and aid their understanding. They form strong connections with previous learning and give clear exposition and timings. Resources are well chosen by the teacher to hold their interest, such as toys to buy and sell as part of the reception class's work with money, which are well matched to lead pupils on from what they already know and understand. Most teachers use effective ways to ensure that all pupils contribute to mental arithmetic sessions. However, few reminders are given by teachers, or challenges set, to encourage pupils to learn arithmetic facts. Older children still calculating using their fingers are not sufficiently reminded of better strategies or challenged to do without. Sometimes, opportunities are missed for children to co-operate with others, and the plenary part

of lessons is not always well used. The marking of exercise books is inconsistent and not always effective in helping pupils to understand how they can improve. Pupils are provided for well by support staff.

99. There is some use of mathematics in science, but little in other areas of the curriculum. Information technology is used satisfactorily to support the teaching of mathematics.
100. The school has introduced the National Numeracy Strategy effectively and this is already raising standards. There are effective assessment and record keeping procedures and these are working well in practice. They are starting to be used at whole school level to analyse overall weaknesses and trends and set targets for improvement, but not at an individual pupil level to help pupils to be aware of progress over time or to set targets. A little other monitoring and evaluation takes place.
101. The school has made improvements since the last inspection. Standards have risen and more challenging work is being provided, with some more opportunities for pupils to think for themselves. The subject now has a scheme of work in place and other documentation to help the subject. These are being used consistently throughout the school and pupils are beginning to review their work at the end of lessons.

SCIENCE

102. **Standards of attainment are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the school. Standards are not as high as those found at the time of the last inspection, but have risen since last year.**
103. There is no national test of science for seven-year-olds, but teachers' own assessments indicate that in 1999, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 was below the national average. The proportion attaining the higher Level 3 was in line with the national average. Overall, standards were in line with those in schools of similar background. Inspection evidence suggests that the standards of attainment of the current pupils are broadly in line with expectations.
104. By the age of seven, most pupils develop appropriate knowledge of some aspects of life processes and living things, of materials and their properties, and of experimental and investigative science. However, their knowledge of physical processes is generally below average because they are insufficiently challenged in this aspect of science. Pupils experience an appropriate range of practical investigations and record findings in various ways, using appropriate scientific language. Many develop a sound understanding that exercise and the right types of food are needed for health. They are able to investigate and identify some properties of a range of everyday materials. They investigate 'forces' and some develop a sound understanding of sliding, rolling and friction through practical investigations. Some understand that moveable objects behave differently on different surfaces, for example, objects do not slide on sandpaper.
105. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Skills, knowledge and understanding are consolidated and extended appropriately. Pupils make sound progress in their understanding of classifying living things into groups, of identifying materials used to keep warm or cool, and of the investigational aspects of science, through carrying out effective practical

experiments. However, progress is slower in aspects of physical processes, mainly because there is a lack of challenge for higher attainers.

106. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It varies from unsatisfactory to good, with forty per cent of teaching good, and ten per cent unsatisfactory. In a reception class lesson about 'plants as living things', the teacher's secure subject knowledge and good class management maintained children's interest, and they listened attentively and tried hard. Key Stage 1 teachers generally have appropriately high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and relationships are mostly constructive, so that pupils are well motivated, behave well, sustain concentration and have positive attitudes to learning. However, where class management is variable, a small minority of pupils are unable to sustain this level of behaviour and concentration, and this impedes their progress. Good group work enables pupils to collaborate and co-operate well with each other, as in a Year 2 lesson about 'healthy eating'. Teaching is less effective when lessons are split by timetabling arrangements, and the continuity of pupils' learning is interrupted. These have an adverse effect on pupils' attainment and progress.
107. Pupils' literacy skills are supported effectively in written recording of findings. Effective use of numeracy skills is made in presenting findings in simple charts, for example, about natural and man-made materials. Information technology is used appropriately; for instance, to record collected data on different foods in a variety of tables, charts and graphs.
108. Documentation provides helpful guidance for staff in planning, progression and continuity. Assessment procedures are good and assessment generally guides the planning of new work.
109. Science is co-ordinated by a part-time teacher, who is in school for only two days a week. This restricts opportunities for undertaking subject management responsibilities. She monitors teachers' plans, but the monitoring of teaching and learning is under-developed. Science resources are adequate, well organised and accessible to staff and pupils. The school grounds are used effectively as a learning resource for investigational activities and for environmental work. The curriculum is enriched by the good use made of visits, for example, to a farm, the park and the Lock Museum, where pupils experience practical experiments on how materials change.

ART

110. **Standards of attainment are in line with those normally found, and pupils make satisfactory progress. This is in line with the findings of the last inspection.**
111. By the end of the key stage, pupils are developing an awareness of colour, shape and texture and are able to use these elements in their own work. They are developing some sound knowledge of different techniques and effects using a good range of materials. Pupils' skills of painting, drawing and modelling are developing satisfactorily, but their skills of observational drawing are not satisfactory. Knowledge of famous artists is limited. Links with other subjects, such as science and religious education, are used extensively, and provide some good opportunities for pupils to record events and ideas. A good example of this at the time of the inspection was a connection with English, where pupils refined their painting skills by portraying their ideas for ball gowns for Cinderella.

112. Pupils show positive attitudes to art. They are keen to learn, and respond well to the challenges set. They mainly work with perseverance and patience, and take pride in their work. They share materials sensibly, and are able to evaluate and modify their own ideas when encouraged to do so. The subject contributes well to pupils' personal development by the overall provision and range of planned experiences.
113. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound, and lesson planning shows how art activities are sequenced to build on one another. Long-term planning does not include the nursery, nor does it indicate how pupils' knowledge of artists or the work of different cultures is part of the overall programme. Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to select their own materials, such as from a range of drawing implements, to achieve a desired effect, or encouraged to review their work and propose changes. Assessment of art and the recording of pupils' achievements are fully in place. Sketchbooks are well used in some Year 2 classes. There is a satisfactory range of resources and books, with a very good collection of post cards for pupils to study, but few larger reproductions of artists' work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114. **Standards of attainment are in line with those usually found, and pupils make satisfactory progress. This is in line with the findings of the last inspection.**
115. By the end of the key stage, pupils are able to design and make appropriate models, such as circus puppets and simple models of circus equipment. They can select and use a range of materials for their modelling and know how to use simple construction kits. In making their puppets and models, they display an appropriate range of cutting, joining and decorating skills. They are able to make models that move, such as a television that shows a sequence of scenes from a book, and make axles that will allow their vehicles to move. The quality of pupils' finished products is satisfactory.
116. Pupils' knowledge of design and evaluation is less secure, although in a Year 1 class, pupils designed, made and decorated bags from a range of different materials, and then evaluated their work in terms of the strength and durability of their finished product.
117. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are usually good, but are unsatisfactory on occasions when they are not sufficiently challenged by the tasks set. In most lessons, they behave well, concentrate on their work and are eager to complete it. They are able to work co-operatively and prepared to share resources. They enjoy their work and show pleasure in the completion of the task and their finished model or product. Pupils show respect for their work and the work of other pupils in class and around the school.
118. The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory. Teachers' planning and introductions to lessons are usually effective. They make good use of questions and teach pupils the skills of cutting, joining and decorating, but design and evaluation skills are not given enough emphasis. Lessons are usually well managed, but in some lessons the teaching is not brisk enough and the activities lack challenge for pupils, especially the higher attainers, and there is limited opportunity for pupil experimentation. This aspect of the teaching was a weakness in the last inspection and it has not been satisfactorily addressed.

119. The recently appointed co-ordinator has had little opportunity to monitor standards in the subject, or to plan an overall programme for the school that would give further guidance to teachers on how to provide opportunities for experimentation and further challenge higher attainers.

GEOGRAPHY

120. **At the end of Key Stage 1, standards in geography are in line with those usually found. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the school. This is similar to the last inspection.**
121. By the age of seven, pupils show a good awareness of places beyond their own locality. This has been developed through a good programme of visits and, in particular, a residential visit to a more rural area that contrasts with the urban setting of the school. Older pupils, some of whom had just returned from their residential visit at the time of the inspection, were able to talk knowledgeably about the differences between the two areas in terms of amenities ("They only had one shop in the village!") and physical features ("There were lots of woods there."). This enabled many pupils to attain the higher level (Level 3) in this aspect.
122. The pupils have good attitudes to geography and were very excited about their residential visit. It is clearly an experience they will remember for a long time to come. They behave well in lessons and are keen to get on with their work. They are curious about the world about them and keen to find out about it.
123. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Young children are given an effective start in reception classes looking at the school and using its familiar territory to distinguish different features and start elementary mapping. Year 1 pupils are introduced well to environmental issues through a topic looking at litter and pollution. The literacy hour is used well in one Year 1 class to look at the features of a river as it moved from the mountains to the sea. The residential visit in Year 2 is a very rich experience that greatly enhances pupils' learning.

HISTORY

124. There were only two history lessons seen during the inspection, so no overall judgements can be made. In the lessons seen, pupils demonstrated an appropriate understanding of the passing of time. In one lesson, they were able to sequence events in their own lives by identifying the clothes and toys they used when they were babies and those that they use now. In the other lesson, they could sequence events in the life of the composer Samuel Coleridge Taylor. Pupils in Year 2 know about Victorian times and can identify some of the differences between conditions in those times and the present day. Some higher attaining pupils in the Year 2 class showed good recall of historical facts and detailed knowledge.
125. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in the lessons seen. Teachers' planning had appropriate learning objectives and teachers made effective use of resources, such as babies' clothes and babies' toys, to hold pupils' interest and help them to develop historical skills. The skills and knowledge to be learnt were not always at the focus of the teaching, and in one lesson they were not introduced early enough. In the other lesson, resources were well matched to pupils' prior attainment, but the reliance on the teacher-prepared written resources slowed pupils' learning.

126. In the lessons observed, the response and behaviour of pupils were good. They listened well to teachers' introductions and instructions. They were eager to answer questions and join in discussions and they were happy to talk about their work and what they had found out.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

127. **Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations at the end of the key stage, and pupils make satisfactory progress. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection.**
128. By the age of seven, most pupils can use computers to generate and communicate their ideas using text to write in a variety of styles, including narrative writing, letter writing and descriptive writing. They can make simple colour pictures using drawing software, and they understand how to use a mouse to control a computer. They know that many common devices respond to commands and signals. Pupils can save and retrieve their work on a computer with help, and some pupils know how to use menus and print their work. They have only limited knowledge and skills of control devices and modelling.
129. Pupils in the reception classes can use the mouse to control the cursor with good precision and they are increasing in confidence in their use of the keyboard. They are learning to respond appropriately to instructions in software programs and demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge of computer terminology.
130. The attitude of pupils in information technology is good throughout the school. They listen attentively to teachers' instructions and they are prepared to concentrate on their tasks. When working on independent tasks, pupils are enthusiastic and prepared to persevere with their work without close supervision. When working in pairs or small groups, they usually share resources well, although the more confident or more proficient pupils tend to take control of the computer. In class lessons, in small groups or during individual work, the behaviour of pupils is usually good.
131. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Good planning with clear objectives helps pupils to learn effectively and this is enhanced by teacher instruction, demonstrations and teachers' questioning that checks pupils' understanding of their learning. Whole class teaching, group work and opportunities for individual learning are provided, but in some class lessons the teacher spends too much time revising work with pupils, new learning is delayed and pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their skills.
132. The current scheme of work is based on the National Curriculum Programme of Study and meets statutory requirements, but provides limited guidance for teachers' planning. The co-ordinator has implemented the action plan in response to the previous inspection and the school is now making greater use of its computers. However, more effective use could still be made of these resources. Monitoring of the subject is limited, but the co-ordinator has a clear view of the subject's areas for development and has drawn up an appropriate plan.

MUSIC

133. **The majority of pupils attain standards that are expected for their age, and make satisfactory progress. Standards of attainment are in line with those found at the time of the last inspection.**
134. Reception children are able to listen carefully to a variety of sounds. They sing a range of simple songs, recognise repeated sounds and create sounds with body parts with growing confidence and enjoyment.
135. At the end of the key stage, pupils sing a range of songs tunefully and confidently, with improving control of the musical elements. The quality of singing is good. Year 1 pupils were able to listen carefully to 'Mars, the Bringer of War' and 'Venus, the Bringer of Peace' by Gustav Holst, responding appropriately to the contrasting moods of these pieces. They made simple appraisals and some were able to talk about how the music made them feel. Year 2 pupils listen attentively to pieces of music and are able to discriminate between louder and quieter sounds, developing an appropriate understanding of dynamics. They begin to understand and use musical terms, such as 'pianissimo' and 'fortissimo'. Pupils who learn to play recorders begin to follow simple notation and play their instruments with limited, but developing, skill.
136. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in singing and in acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding. They gain confidence as they move through the key stage, effectively consolidating and extending their prior learning.
137. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, varying from satisfactory to good. Good class management promotes a brisk pace of learning and very positive attitudes. Effective questioning skills and teachers' appropriately high expectations encourage the development of musical skills, impacting positively on the sound progress that most pupils make in listening and making simple appraisals of pieces of music. These factors impact positively on pupils' behaviour, involvement and progress. Less effective teaching is when lesson time is reduced because of home preparations. This has an adverse effect on pupils' progress and limits time for learning.
138. Subject co-ordination is effective, and assessment and recording procedures are good. The curriculum is well supported by a peripatetic music teacher for recorder tuition. School events, for example, Christmas concerts, Year 2 choir performances to senior citizens, Harvest Festivals, and visiting brass and strings groups from the local authority Music Service, enrich the curriculum. Accommodation is good, with a separate music room that is used well for music lessons. Resources are adequate, appropriately organised and accessible.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

139. **Standards of attainment are in line with those normally found, and pupils make satisfactory progress. This is in line with the findings of the last inspection.**
140. Reception class pupils move confidently and imaginatively, with growing control and co-ordination. The majority develop a sound awareness of space and of others. They are developing an appropriate awareness of their own body movements and are able to copy the teacher's actions and practise a variety of arm and leg movements, with increasing skill. They handle balls with developing confidence and dexterity, enjoy lessons and behave well.
141. In gymnastics, Year 1 pupils perform the basic actions of curling and stretching, from both a seated and a standing position, with developing confidence and skill. Through

practising their skills, they improve their performance. They listen appropriately and follow the teacher's instructions willingly. They perform effective warming up exercises and also suitable cooling down activities. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the lessons observed. Effective practise of gymnastic skills consolidates and extends prior learning appropriately.

142. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Planning is effective, with clear aims. Class management is appropriate and keeps pupils on task. Clear instructions given to pupils ensure that they know what is expected of them, and promote their understanding. Expectations are appropriate, activities are suitably challenging and make a sound contribution to pupils' progress in developing their skills. Good features of teaching are when teachers demonstrate clearly what is expected, and raise pupils' awareness of safety issues. Although most pupils have positive attitudes and try hard, they are not always enthused by the lessons.
143. Subject co-ordination is effective, and documentation provides useful guidance. Hall accommodation and resources are good.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

144. **Standards of attainment of the majority of pupils meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards are generally in line with those at the time of the last inspection.**
145. Reception children learn about the diversity of family life. Although they relate this well to their own families, many talk about them with limited skill. They develop an appreciation of the wonders of the natural world and begin to understand some changes in the seasons over a year. They show an appropriate sense of wonder at the natural world; for instance, at their complexity and growth of flowers when looking closely at them.
146. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know about religious celebrations, such as Harvest Festivals, the Christian festivals of Easter and Christmas, and the Hindu festival of Diwali. They develop an appropriate understanding of the beliefs of other world religions through learning about Hinduism and Sikhism. They gain a satisfactory level of knowledge of Christianity, learning about the life of Jesus and his Disciples. Pupils write about Old Testament stories, such as 'Daniel in the lion's den'. They study the Creation and begin to understand the importance of caring for the environment, for animals and birds, and of the interdependency of animals and people. Year 1 pupils hear stories of the Saints, for example, St Patrick, as the patron saint of Ireland, and St. Francis, St. Isidore and St. Valentine in association with birds. Year 2 pupils become aware of the human life cycle. Most are able to discuss this theme with developing understanding.
147. Pupils use their literacy skills effectively in their written work. They enhance their speaking and listening skills, and extend their vocabulary, as when Year 1 pupils compose and say prayers about caring for birds. Numeracy skills are used, for example, when reception children count family members. Effective cross-curricular links are made with science in reception class work about the natural world, and in a Year 2 lesson about life cycles.
148. Pupils enjoy the subject, behave well and develop good attitudes, which impact positively on their learning and progress.

149. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, varying between satisfactory and very good. In a reception class lesson, as a result of the teacher's high expectations, good subject knowledge and questioning skills, children behaved well, sustained concentration, listened attentively and made good progress in their appreciation of the beauty of the natural world. Lesson planning is effective, with clear aims and lesson structure. Secure subject knowledge, good class management and effective use of resources, promote effective learning and impact appropriately on the efforts and sound progress made by most pupils, including those with special educational needs. Where relationships are constructive and teachers' interaction with pupils is effective, pupils develop confidence in discussing their ideas; for example, in a Year 1 lesson about the creation of birds. This enhances pupils' progress and their understanding. Teaching is less effective where learning time is not maximised and lessons finish early for home preparations. This impacts adversely on pupils' progress and limits their learning time.
150. There was some very good teaching in a Year 1 lesson about the Creation, with reference to birds. Pupils were valued by the teacher who respected their opinions and encouraged them to respect each other, motivating them very effectively to compose very sensitive and thoughtful prayers. In this lesson, some inspiring and spontaneous teaching deepened pupils' understanding of other cultures, and excited and enthused them by demonstrating writing in the Hindi language.
151. Co-ordination of the subject is appropriate. Teachers' plans are monitored regularly by the co-ordinator, but the monitoring of teaching and learning is generally under-developed. The scheme of work is based on the locally agreed syllabus and provides a good range of learning opportunities for the pupils. There are good procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress in the subject. Assessment is generally used to guide planning. Resources are adequate, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Good use is made of visits to the local church and to churches in Wolverhampton. However, no visit is made to places of worship of other world religions.