

## INSPECTION REPORT

**CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Wall Heath, Kingswinford

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103835

Headteacher: Mr Richard Green

Reporting inspector: Mr R S Moseley  
16886

Dates of inspection: 3-6 December 2001

Inspection number: 194929

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4.1/2 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	New Street Wall Heath Kingswinford West Midlands
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Benbow
Date of previous inspection:	19 May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16886	R S Moseley	Registered inspector	Science Equal Opportunities	Characteristics of the school. The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well the school is led and managed.
9770	J Baker	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well the school cares for its pupils. How the school works in partnership with parents.
23958	C Balson	Team inspector	English Information and Communication Technology Art and Design	How well the pupils are taught.
31838	M Williams	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Physical Education Religious Education	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils.
14997	V Emery	Team Inspector	Design and Technology Geography History The Foundation Stage Special Educational Needs	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Church of the Ascension Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary school is bigger than most primary schools, with 296 pupils, consisting of 150 boys and 146 girls. A well below average number of pupils, 2.7 per cent are entitled to free school meals. There are seven pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, including three pupils with English as an additional language but these do not require any extra support and are totally integrated into the school. Attainment on entry to the reception is above average. The numbers of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is 5.4 per cent, which is below average. There are no pupils who have statements of special educational needs.

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

This is an effective school with many good and very good features. The school has developed a challenging climate for learning within a strong Christian tradition. Pupils attain very good standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology by the time they leave the school. The quality of teaching is almost all good or better with a significant amount of very good teaching. Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good. There are very good relationships in the school. The school is very well led and managed and provides good value for money.

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

- Strong teaching, which is mainly good, with a significant amount of very good teaching, is having a positive effect on pupils' learning.
- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are well above average by the time pupils leave the school, due to the effective teaching.
- The school's provision for moral and social development is very good. This has ensured that pupils' behaviour is very good and they have developed very positive attitudes to their work. Their relationships are very good. They are very enthusiastic about school and interested and involved in all aspects of school life.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and a clear educational direction for the school. He has ensured that all staff have a strong commitment to maintain an effective school and strive for further improvements.

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

- Further enrichment and provision for the teaching of English.
- Pupils' written reports to give a clearer picture of the progress they are making.

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

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

The school was last inspected in May 1997. It has overcome all of the weaknesses noted in the last inspection and has improved in a number of other ways. With reference to the key issues in the last report, the school has introduced more effective systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment in order to better inform curriculum planning. It has also improved the layout and value of the School Development Plan. It now clearly identifies priorities, is accurately costed, names staff who have responsibilities for any action and identifies systems for monitoring their success.

In addition, the leadership has introduced other improvements. For example, the number of classroom assistants has increased. This has given greater support in the classroom and improved the quality of teaching and learning. The school is now providing greater provision for personal, social, health and citizen education, as well as setting up a school council in order that pupils may take a greater responsibility in running their own school. The school has made many improvements to the accommodation. For example, it has installed excellent facilities to support disabled pupils. The quality

of teaching has improved and the school has implemented the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy very well. The school is very well placed to maintain these and other improvements and has a very good capacity to make further improvements.

## STANDARDS

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

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

Key	
Very High	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The results in English, mathematics and science were well above average in the National Curriculum tests in 2001. Although the results over the last few years have been variable, depending on the differing abilities in each year, all the results have ranged from above average to very high and most have been well above average. This indicates that pupils are usually achieving well from an above average level of attainment into the school. When these results are compared to similar schools, they still show good results but slightly lower in science and in English. The school has recognised this and has targeted English as an area for further development and has strengthened the way it teaches experimental science.

The inspection findings indicate that for this year's pupils, in Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are again well above average and pupils are achieving well. In addition, school analysis indicates that there is a higher proportion of pupils this year likely to gain the higher levels of attainment. Also, the school has begun its booster classes, which are likely to raise standards even further.

In information and communication technology, attainment is also well above average and pupils are achieving well. In design and technology, standards are in line with those expected nationally for pupils' ages. Many developments in this subject are quite new and have not had time to raise standards further, however, pupils are now achieving soundly. In all other subjects, pupils are attaining standards above those expected for their ages and achieving soundly. In religious education, pupils are attaining standards above those expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus and achieving soundly. Standards in literacy and numeracy are well above average. The school has set appropriate targets over the last few years and has either met or exceeded almost all its targets.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are very eager to learn. They are responsive and show very positive attitudes in all they do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour by almost all the pupils in lessons and around the school is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good. Pupils' relationships are also very good.
Attendance	Attendance is excellent and well above the national average.

The whole attitude of pupils to their school is a major strength. They are proud of their school. They demonstrate very positive attitudes to all aspects of school life. They care about each other, respect each other's views and many are beginning to show a great deal of confidence by the time they leave the school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is almost all good or better with a significant amount of very good teaching. There is a very small amount of satisfactory teaching, hardly any unsatisfactory teaching and some excellent teaching. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. The present level of teaching ensures that learning is good in many areas as pupils successfully acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in all of the subjects they are studying. The quality of the provision for children starting school in the reception class is rich and carefully planned to meet their needs. Teaching is at least good with some very good teaching.

Particular strengths are the effectiveness of the methods and ideas teachers use. These interest pupils and motivate them to the end of the lesson. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are very good. Some teachers in upper Key Stage 2 have excellent knowledge of information and communication technology. This enables them to explain to pupils how to make advanced moves, such as minimising their work on the screen accessing other programs and to combine items from both onto one screen. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, which encourage and support them. All these strengths develop pupils' intellectual, physical and creative effort. Most teachers manage pupils very well and achieve high standards of discipline. Teachers know their pupils well and in most lessons provide them with appropriate work for their abilities. Homework is set appropriately. Pupils are encouraged to use books and computers to become independent learners.

On the very few occasions where the teaching is not as strong, the pace of the lesson is slower and this does not always motivate pupils to work hard to the end of the lesson. In almost all of the lessons, the skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good broad and balanced curriculum. It is well enhanced by extra curricular activities, visitors into school and visits out of school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Special support assistants make a good contribution and work closely with teachers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good, within the curriculum and within the ethos of a strong Christian tradition. The provision for moral and social development is very good. That for cultural development is good. Overall the provision for pupils' personal development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils very well.

Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. There are good links with parents and the contribution of parents to pupils' learning at school and at home is very good. The quality of information about pupils' progress is satisfactory overall but with weaknesses in the way this progress is explained in the pupils' annual reports.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Overall the school is well led and managed. Leadership and management by the headteacher are very good. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher. Some subject co-ordinators are fulfilling their roles very well. Others are in the process of developing their roles further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive. The chair of the governing body works very closely with the headteacher. The governors' role in helping to shape the direction of the school is very good.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, staff and governors are fully aware of the school's performance and have a very clear idea of what they want to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Resources are readily available and used well. All money available to the school is used wisely and carefully and the school applies the principle of getting best value for its pupils.

Staff are well qualified and well deployed. The accommodation is good and has been utilised well to create an effective learning environment. The headteacher has been very effective in identifying the school's priorities. For example, he identified the need to improve the provision for personal, social and health education. There is now a co-ordinator and a programme of work. This is linked to the promotion of health and the school has just received an award from the local authority in connection with this. The priorities that have been identified for future, both in this year and years ahead, are also very appropriate.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their child likes the school.</li> <li>• Their child is making good progress</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• They can approach the staff with any problems.</li> <li>• Their child is expected to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• The school is well managed.</li> <li>• The school helps their children to become more mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• Their child gets the right amount of work to do at home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents felt that they were not well informed about how their child is getting on.</li> <li>• A few parents felt that the school does not work closely with parents.</li> <li>• A significant minority of parents felt that the school did not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

All parents' views expressed at the parents' meeting and in the questionnaire were brought to the attention of the headteacher.

Inspectors support parents' positive views of the school. They also judged that the school does work closely with parents and that the provision of extra curricular activities is satisfactory with some good features. They agreed with parents that the pupils' annual reports do not give a clear picture of how their child is getting on.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In the National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2, in 2001, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was very high. Two pupils attained extremely high results, which contributed to the overall grade. Nevertheless, a high proportion of pupils achieved well.
2. In the National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6, in 2001, the results in English, mathematics and science were well above the national average. Although the results over the previous years in the tests at Key Stage 2 have been variable, nevertheless, since 1998 all have been good, very good or very high, depending mainly on the make up of the pupils in the group. When these 2001 results for pupils in Year 6 are compared to similar schools, they show similar results in mathematics but slightly lower results in English and science. They were judged to be good not very good. The school recognised this slight weakness and has identified English as an area for further development.
3. Children enter the reception class with above average attainment in most areas of learning but with only average levels in some areas, such as speaking, listening and in personal and social education. The curriculum and the work in the reception classes focuses successfully on these aspects, to bring children to above average levels by the end of the reception year. By the time the children are ready for Year 1, they have either maintained their above average attainment and some have attained even higher results. All children are achieving soundly and some are achieving well.
4. For this year's pupils in Year 2, attainment is well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. For this year's pupils in Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are again above average. All pupils, including the few children with English as an additional language and other ethnic minority backgrounds, are achieving well throughout the school in English, mathematics and science. Many of the improvements to these subjects introduced by the school, such as the improvement in the quality of the teaching, have not yet had time to bring about even higher results by the time pupils leave the school. Also, the school has recently begun booster classes in English and mathematics. This is expected to raise standards further for the pupils in Year 6.
5. In English, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening are well above average in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils speak clearly, ask questions very well and follow instructions. They express themselves very confidently when sharing ideas. In reading, standards are again well above average at the end of both key stages. For example, in Year 2 the most able readers are fluent and read the story of "the Large Family" with confidence. In Year 6, pupils read very fluently with good expression. In writing, standards are well above average at the end of both key stages. In Year 2, pupils form correct sentences and make a good use of all punctuation marks. Pupils in Year 6 use pens and join handwriting effectively. Spelling is usually correct and pupils often write for a variety of purposes and sometimes at length. However, opportunities to practise this type of writing is sometimes limited in other subjects, especially in Key Stage 1, where there is an overuse of work sheets on occasions. Standards in literacy are well above average at the end of both key stages. Pupils are now achieving well within Key Stage 1. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are still achieving well, even though improvements have not yet had time to raise attainment even further by the time the pupils leave the school.
6. In mathematics, standards in all areas are well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. By age seven, pupils work out solutions to realistic problems accurately, using mathematical symbols and language, such as "fraction" and "equal". Many pupils have a very good grasp of place value, readily sequencing numbers to 1000. Most pupils describe common two and three-dimensional shapes, higher attainers classifying them according to their properties. By the end of Year 6, most pupils are very good at explaining their reasoning when solving problems. For example, a pupil was able to explain how he had mentally calculated the length of a bus journey from information on a timetable. "I knew two hours was 120 minutes, so 100 had to be less, so I took away and got one hour 40." Most pupils use all four mathematical

operations in their calculations, to two decimal places and higher attaining pupils are coping with work more usually done in secondary schools. Standards in numeracy throughout the school are well above average and pupils in both key stages are achieving well. The improvements, such as target setting and a general improvement in the quality of the teaching, have not yet had time to raise standards even further by the time pupils leave the school.

7. In science, standards are well above average in Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils are achieving well, especially in investigative science. These improvements in investigational science, as well as a general improvement in the quality of the teaching, has not yet had time to bring even higher results by the time the pupils leave the school. Pupils have a very good knowledge of materials and their properties, physical processes and life processes and living things. Pupils have developed a very good approach to experiments, ensuring that their test is fair and making predictions based on sound previous knowledge.
8. In information and communication technology, attainment is above the national expectation in Year 2 and pupils are achieving soundly. By Year 6, pupils' attainment is well above average and pupils are achieving well. As pupils progress through the school, they demonstrate increasing confidence with all functions of the computer. Pupils use a variety of programs with great skill, including the Internet. By the time they leave the school, pupils have developed an understanding of the importance of technology in the modern world and how it affects their lives.
9. In religious education, pupils attain standards above those expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus and are achieving soundly. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good idea of the way in which belief affects behaviour and attitudes. Teachers provide good opportunities for reflection, created by challenging questions. These have a strong spiritual impact, making pupils consider their own thoughts and actions and whether they are good enough. They have a good understanding of Christianity and other faiths.
10. In design and technology, standards are satisfactory. The school has been focusing on introducing many improvements. These are beginning to raise standards; therefore pupils are now achieving soundly. In all the remaining subjects, attainment is above that expected for pupils' ages and pupils are achieving soundly.
11. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good gains in their learning, relative to their prior attainment. They make good progress towards their individual targets and in lessons, get good support from skilled teachers and teaching assistants. This also applies to a few pupils who are recognised as being able and talented. These pupils also have individual programmes, are well supported and make good progress. There are no pupils with statements of special educational need. The setting of pupils in numeracy and literacy provides good additional support.

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

12. Since the last inspection, pupils' attitudes to the school and their personal development have improved and are now very good. Also attendance has improved and is now excellent. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good overall, which is having a positive effect on their progress and attainment. The vast majority is interested, keen to contribute to lessons, undertakes tasks enthusiastically, works hard to complete them and enjoy lessons. For example, in Year 6, pupils thoroughly enjoyed the invigorating pace of their English lesson based on *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*.
13. Behaviour is very good in lessons and all other areas of the school. Pupils are aware of the high standards expected and respond well to discipline, which creates an orderly environment conducive to learning. All pupils play harmoniously together in the playgrounds and there were no signs of aggressive behaviour, even in the older pupils' favourite game of "Semi" which is played with great enthusiasm and vigour. There have been no exclusions over the past few years.
14. Pupils show consideration towards others and this is clearly demonstrated by the courtesy they show in holding doors open for others. They also respect the feeling, values and beliefs of

others, as is demonstrated in religious education lessons and English lessons when they were evaluating each other's work.

15. Pupils' personal development is very good; they mature as they progress through the school and willingly take on responsibilities appropriate to their age. These range from simple duties in reception, such as taking the register to the office to whole class duties in Year 4 such as getting out the right equipment. Year 6 take on a wide range of whole school responsibilities through their role as prefects, which includes running the tuck shop and house captain duties. In Key Stage 2 classes, all have a representative on the School Council through which they make a positive input to changes and improvements within the school.
16. Relationships between pupils are very good. They play together harmoniously, work very well together in the classroom when in pairs or groups. Relationships between pupils and staff are also very good and pupils are secure and confident in their relationships with other adults. Staff give a very positive lead in encouraging good relationships, for example, by giving praise and encouragement at every opportunity, as well as acting as good role models. Attendance is very high in comparison with other schools and this makes a positive contribution to pupils' attainment and progress.
17. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to their work and their behaviour is very good because they are very well integrated into all classes and participate in a fully inclusive curriculum.

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

18. Overall, teaching is good and a strength of the school. In approximately nine out of ten lessons, teaching is good or better with almost two out of five being very good or excellent. The rest of the teaching was almost all satisfactory with a tiny proportion being unsatisfactory.
19. Teachers work hard and have good support from classroom assistants especially in the literacy hour. The good quality of teaching results in good learning overall as pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in all the subjects they are studying and make progress.
20. Children in the foundation stage continue to benefit from good teaching identified in the last inspection. This means that the children learn well and their achievement over the time they are in the foundation stage is sound. Particular strengths in the teaching include very good support for mathematical development, speaking and listening and personal and social development.
21. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is a strength, and teachers deliver the basic skills very well. Planning for literacy and numeracy is good and includes appropriate work for the varying needs of the pupils. Teaching methods are good, ensuring pupils are well motivated, and maintain concentration well until the end of the lesson. For example in a literacy lesson in Year 1, pupils were learning to recognise "ar" sounds in words. The classroom assistant, through her approach, made the lesson enjoyable when pupils used their large letter cards and themselves to construct spellings. This maintained the interest of the pupils very well and motivated them to think of their own examples of spellings.
22. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are very good. There are schemes of work in place for all subjects and this enhances teachers' confidence. Teachers, especially in upper Key Stage 2 classes have excellent knowledge in information and communication technology. For example, they are able to teach pupils to minimise their work on the screen, go into another programme to select information and pictures and return to the original work. They then merge the two sets together to make a cohesive piece of work for a presentation they are preparing.
23. Teachers' short term planning is good. It is particularly strong in English and mathematics. In these subjects, it is written with very clear learning objectives and carefully thought out activities. On occasions in other lessons, teachers miss the opportunity to share the learning objectives with the pupils, or to return to them at the end of the lesson to celebrate how well they have achieved.

24. The management of pupils in lessons is very good and this ensures very good behaviour overall. The productivity and pace of learning are very good in the majority of lessons. In a very small minority of lessons the management of pupils was less effective and this leads to some time being wasted. Teachers have a good knowledge of all the pupils they teach and their day-to-day assessment of how well pupils are learning is usually correct. Longer-term assessment of pupils' progress is well developed and well organised to produce useful records. These are beginning to be used well to plan future work for individual pupils, or groups of pupils. The quality of marking is satisfactory overall with some good, helpful comments on occasions. The practice of giving pupils guidance for further development at the end of marked pieces of work is not always carried out and this does not ensure that all pupils have sufficient knowledge of their own learning. The amount and type of homework set is satisfactory for the age and ability of pupils.
25. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Work is well matched to pupils' specific needs as a result of clear targets in their individual education plans, which are reviewed regularly by the class teacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator. Teachers work very closely with their well trained teaching assistants and brief them well. This enables them to provide good support for pupils. As a result of good teamwork, pupils learn well and make good progress.

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

26. The school provides a well-balanced curriculum and a good range of learning opportunities that meet the needs and broaden the horizons of its pupils. It fulfils all the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Children in the foundation stage are provided with a good curriculum based on the nationally recommended areas of learning. The amount of lesson time each week for all subjects is sound. There are policies and appropriate schemes of work in place for all subjects, providing appropriate guidance to teachers. The very good curricular planning, based on these, ensures that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding develop well. The very good implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies contributes to the very high standards pupils attain in English and mathematics.
27. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities supporting pupils' studies. There is a good and varied programme of visitors and educational visits to enhance learning and broaden pupils' experiences. Only this term these have included two theatre group visits to enhance both personal, social and health education and English. Also, a Rainforest Road Show supporting a geography topic and visits from older residents to talk about their wartime experiences, helped to make history more vivid. For example, after school clubs include a choir and several sporting activities, including Hi-5 netball coaching with the help of the local Sports Association.
28. There is good equality of access and opportunity for both girls and boys and for pupils with special educational needs. The good use of appropriate teaching methods and materials and the good monitoring and support of pupils' academic and personal progress provide this. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and appropriate role models are provided within the school. Gifted and talented pupils receive appropriately challenging tasks to develop their skills to the full and have a special individual education plan.
29. Good provision is made for pupils' personal, social, and health education. There is a well-coordinated programme of discrete lessons in place. In each class a special time is set aside each week to discuss issues and to reflect on feelings and views. These activities make a good contribution to pupils' understanding of the responsibilities of being a member of the community. The governing body has ensured that sex education and drugs education should be part of the curriculum. An appropriate policy decided by staff and governors is in place, delivered largely through the science curriculum with support from the school nurse in Year 6. The school takes part in the Healthy Schools project, with an annual Good Health week. It has recently received a certificate from the local authority in a special assembly to acknowledge its strong commitment. The quality of collective worship does not form part of this inspection.

30. The school uses the local community well. The curriculum is enhanced by regularly using the local church, either for special celebrations, or to look at the church building and religious objects and practices. The church congregation used the school premises for services during recent renovations of the church building, reflecting the two-way benefits.
31. The school has good relationships with other primary schools, especially as part of local cluster arrangements to support physical education. This enables pupils to improve both their athletic and social skills through team games and sports competitions in a wider context. The school makes good use of the pool at a local secondary school, which helps pupils achieve well in swimming. Year 6 pupils are regularly invited to activities at the secondary schools which supports a smoother transition into Year 7.
32. Overall, the school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. During personal, social and health education lessons, pupils are encouraged to consider values and beliefs. Through the religious education syllabus and linked assembly themes, pupils gain knowledge and insight into issues affecting values and beliefs that enable them to reflect on their own experiences and feelings. Opportunities to support pupils' spiritual development occur frequently in various subjects. For example there were occasions during the inspection in science, mathematics and music where pupils were reflective and deeply moved.
33. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The principles distinguishing right from wrong are promoted well and consistently by all school staff, who offer good role models. Pupils draw up their own class and playground rules, showing that they can both understand and apply the principles they are taught. All pupils are well aware of the high expectations of the school's aims and behaviour code. Pupils in Year 6 share the role of prefects, which helps them to gain a very good understanding of the idea of responsibility, for example, acting as helpers in the reception class.
34. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Pupils often work collaboratively in pairs or larger groups in lessons. They are encouraged to work co-operatively and take responsibility for their work and for helping others. In consequence, pupils work very well together. Pupils are regularly given monitor roles for day-to-day classroom routines and answering the telephone at lunchtime. This helps them see how each can play a valued and useful part in the running of the school. The school council, chaired by a pupil, enables them to exercise responsibility more formally and increasingly maturely. Adults and children relate very well to each other. Residential visits, such as trips to France, give pupils opportunities to relate to each other and to adults in a less formal context. Regular fundraising for charity at home and abroad, for example in the sponsorship of a Filipino child, helps pupils to see that they have responsibilities towards a wider society.
35. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to learn about Western European traditions and they develop an understanding of the diversity of other cultures. They visit museums and places of interest. Multi-cultural development is promoted through literacy lessons, studies of contrasting communities in geography and the study of other religions in religious education. The few pupils from ethnic minorities are totally integrated into the school. The school has made links with a local mosque which pupils visit to learn more about Islam.
36. Good curriculum provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. All these pupils are totally included in all aspects of school life. They are given as many opportunities as other pupils to be involved in all areas of the curriculum and particularly in developing their skills in English and mathematics. As the pupils are setted for these subjects, this provides additional support and contributes effectively to their progress. Teachers plan well for these pupils and tasks are matched to targets in individual education plans.

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

37. This is a very caring school, which provides very good support for pupils' personal development, as well as very good provision overall to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety.



38. The very good personal support and guidance pupils receive make a significant contribution to their personal development. Looking after pupils' personal and emotional needs is the responsibility of class teachers who, together with support staff, know their pupils very well, are sensitive to their needs and thus able to provide good personal support and guidance. The very good relationships between pupils and staff encourage pupils to raise any concerns they may have knowing that they will be dealt with sympathetically.
39. Child protection procedures are excellent. All staff receive appropriate training and have copies of the policy and there is also a summary in the staff handbook. This ensures that they are fully aware of the child protection procedures and their importance. Also, there is good liaison with other agencies.
40. Procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating bullying are very good and are consistently applied by all staff including classroom assistants and lunchtime supervisors. The emphasis is on making pupils aware of the standards expected and reinforcing this by praising good behaviour. Also, very good behaviour is promoted by merit awards presented in assembly and through the award of house points. The pupils value these awards and there is considerable excitement in assembly when the house points totals are announced.
41. Procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance are good and the computerised registration system ensures that records of individual pupils' attendance are readily available. Parents are very diligent about reporting absences and the small amount of unauthorised absence is due to extended family holidays.
42. Health and Safety procedures are good and ensure a safe working environment. Checks of the premises are carried out termly and findings are reported to the governing body. First-aid arrangements are good with a good number of staff suitably trained. However, there is no medical room and pupils who are unwell have to be cared for in the library area. The school places great emphasis on caring for pupils with medical conditions. For example, staff are trained in treating anaphylactic reaction and parents have been alerted to the danger of sending nut products into the school. The school provides very good facilities for the physically disabled and the importance it places on this provision is clearly indicated by its stationery which carries the logo "Positive about Disability".
43. Pupils' personal safety, personal hygiene and general well being are covered very well through the Personal, Social and Health Education Curriculum which is well supported by outside speakers, such as the road safety officer and a representative from the Fire Service. The school also holds an annual Health Week and was presented with a Healthy Schools award during inspection week.
44. The school has a very good assessment policy that identifies procedures, assessment techniques, recording, reporting, planning, monitoring, review and evaluation. The school meets its statutory requirements at the end of each key stage. Comprehensive procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are in place throughout the school. Pupils are assessed in English, mathematics and science regularly and the data from these assessments is analysed and used well to track pupils' performance, and give them realistic targets for future attainment. The school has plans to extend these assessments to other curriculum areas. The data is held on a computer programme at the school, and shows how individual and groups of pupils are succeeding towards achieving their targets. A good deal of information is thus available about individual pupils, and is used well in monitoring their progress.
45. Assessment records are in place for all pupils throughout the school. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is very good. Analysis of the national tests is carried out and the information gained is used to identify any gaps in teaching or learning. The data available to class teachers about what pupils know and can do is used well to identify and effectively plan for the next stage of learning. All pupils have literacy and numeracy targets for improvement, and they know exactly what they must do to improve. For example, they can tell you that they need to join their handwriting and use ink, or that they must work hard to improve their spellings.

46. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are satisfactory overall. Teachers mark work but there is no consistency of approach and pupils do not always get a clear picture of what they have to do to improve. The school currently does not have a marking policy to support teachers when they evaluate pupil's work. Subject co-ordinators regularly carry out moderation and sampling of pupils' work. Some subject co-ordinators have begun to monitor teachers' planning and classroom practice to ensure curriculum coverage.
47. There are good procedures for early identification of pupils with special educational needs, placing them on the special educational needs register and providing suitable further help in accordance with the school's policy. The special educational needs co-ordinator and teachers are conscientious in maintaining and reviewing individual educational plans. The co-ordinator ensures that the school has very good relationships with external special educational needs support staff and agencies. These good assessment and support arrangements contribute to the good progress which is made by pupils with special educational needs.

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

48. Parents have very positive views about the school. Virtually all feel that their children are making good progress, the school expects their children to work hard and is helping their children to become mature and responsible. Also they feel that behaviour and teaching are good. They are satisfied with most other aspects of school life. A few parents are unhappy about the provision of activities outside lessons and information about their children's progress. The inspection team fully supports these positive views and agrees that parents are not well informed about their children's progress since the annual reports are unclear about identifying the progress pupils are making. However, it does not agree with their views on the provision of extra-curricular activities which it considers to be satisfactory.
49. The school seeks to develop a very good relationship with all its parents. Parents are very well informed about the school through the prospectus, the governors' annual report, weekly newsletters and other correspondence. Information to parents about the curriculum is good with a broad outline for each subject given in the prospectus and details of work to be covered given in termly class newsletters. Also when children start school their parents receive a very good induction pack involving "Chalky the Church Mouse". This pack helps children to settle in and gives parents guidance on how to help their child with reading, writing and numeracy.
50. Information to parents about their children's progress is satisfactory overall. Parents have the opportunity to discuss their children's progress at termly consultation evenings and staff are available for informal discussions at other times. Whilst this gives parents good opportunities to discuss progress the information given in annual reports is unsatisfactory. Reports are unnecessarily long and go into great detail about the curriculum covered and what pupils can do. However, there are only a few comments on children's progress, their level of attainment and what they need to do to improve. Consequently, parents have a weaker understanding of how their children are getting on and only a little guidance on where they can help them.
51. Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning at school and this has a very significant effect on attainment and progress. Nearly all classes receive regular help from parents, a parent runs the library and other parents share their skills with the pupils, for example bricklaying and Asian cooking. Parents also help on trips and visits and, through the Home School Association, raise substantial funds for the school. Virtually all parents help their children with homework and their excellent attendance at parents' evenings and other events demonstrates to their children the importance they place on education. This support helps to instil very good attitudes to learning.
52. The school actively involves parents of pupils with special educational needs to provide appropriate support. Parents are regularly invited to discuss their child's progress and needs.

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

53. Leadership and management overall is good. It was a similar picture in the last inspection. Within this, the headteacher gives effective leadership. He has provided a clear vision and a distinct educational direction for the school within a strong Christian tradition. He has been successful in developing an agreed sense of purpose amongst the staff. The headteacher is ably supported in all areas by the deputy headteacher. They work closely together. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching have a strong commitment to improve and a very good capacity to succeed. This has resulted in the creation of an effective school. The headteacher has also ensured that the school's priorities for development are very appropriate. For example, in spite of getting good and very good results in the National Curriculum tests over the last few years, he has maintained an urgency to still improve and raise standards further. The introduction of more useful assessment procedures in English and mathematics are successful examples of introductions which are effective.
54. The governing body is very supportive in many ways. The chair of the governors is fully committed to the school. She is involved in the life of the school, visits often and engages in professional dialogue with the headteacher on regular occasions. A number of other governors visit the school and support aspects of the curriculum. The support from the governors with a responsibility for special educational needs, literacy and numeracy, are particularly effective and they have worked closely with the co-ordinators. The chair of the governors' finance committee has been very successful in overseeing the school's finances and in raising extra money and seeking out grants to enable the school to introduce valuable educational developments. For example, money has been found to increase the number of classroom assistants. This has improved the quality of teaching and learning in many classrooms. All governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are closely involved in the production and evaluation of the yearly development plan. This plan effectively supports management. It is carefully costed and funding is linked to educational priorities very well. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. Governors also have a longer-term vision of the school. For example, they are aware that the present extra money used for various educational projects may not always be available and are constantly looking for other channels of funding. All the governors' statutory duties are fulfilled very well.
55. The headteacher has been involved in some of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, especially in the teaching of literacy. He and the deputy headteacher also inspect teachers' planning and are involved in the analysis of pupils' work.
56. The role of the curriculum co-ordinators is only partly developed. The school has focussed on some subjects and in these areas the roles have been developed very well. For example, the co-ordinators for literacy and numeracy have been closely involved in observing lessons in their subjects. There has been an agreed timetable of observations, set against an established range of criteria. Written feedback has been provided and the outcome of the observation is discussed with teachers. Many co-ordinators also support teachers by advising on the planning and some are involved in the analysis of pupils' work. Other co-ordinators have yet to develop their role fully. The headteacher is aware of this and has plans to bring further subjects to the forefront of development over the next few years.
57. The aims of the school, set out in its mission statement, its values and policies are implemented well. The leadership has developed a very good ethos in the school. For example, pupils have developed very good attitudes to learning, there are very good relationships throughout the school and a commitment by all to raise educational standards and to totally integrate all pupils, including the few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, in the school within a climate of harmony and equal opportunities.
58. There is a good number of suitably qualified teachers. They are deployed effectively to promote higher standards in a way that enables the considerable expertise of particular members of staff, for example in English, mathematics and science, to be shared effectively. There is a higher than average number of learning support staff who provide skilled, effective support for pupils' learning, especially those with special educational needs. The school is well supported at lunchtimes by the lunchtime assistants, who, as all other staff, provide good role models for pupils. The level of resources is good and used well to support pupils' learning. The library resources are sound, but the school has plans in place to improve the level of reading books.

59. Accommodation is good overall and allows the full curriculum to be delivered effectively. Classrooms are spacious and the good use of displays throughout the school creates a stimulating environment conducive to learning. The caretaker is very diligent in his duties and the premises are cleaned and maintained to a very high standard. There has been a considerable improvement in the accommodation since the last inspection, including providing new toilets and making the premises suitable for use by the physically disabled.
60. The special educational needs co-ordinator has ensured that the good provision for special educational needs has been maintained since the last inspection, so that pupils continue to make good progress. She provides good leadership and support for class teachers and liaises very well with outside support agencies. Staff are kept up to date with new initiatives and the co-ordinator ensures that teachers' plans are relevant to pupils' needs. The governor for special educational needs is appropriately involved and visits the school regularly. The governing body receives regular reports on the provision for pupils with special educational needs.
61. Very careful financial planning supports educational developments and the school spends the money at its disposal very well and in valuable ways. For example, carpeting throughout the school has reduced noise levels considerably, which has helped pupils to concentrate better. Spending on computers has been effective as high standards have been maintained despite the increasing complexity of equipment since the last inspection. The quality of financial control and school administration through the school secretary and headteacher is very good and both are very aware of the need to get best value for pupils in all transactions. The management systems now in place, including the effective leadership of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the dedicated team of teachers and support staff, together with the governors, will ensure the maintenance of this effective school and introduce further improvements.

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

62. To maintain the quality of education and promote further development, the governing body, headteacher and staff should address the following issues:-

(1) Continue to enrich the provision for English education by:

- Providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length and for specific purpose within all subjects, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Improving the quality and range of books and develop more opportunities to celebrate great literature.
- Providing more opportunities to use information and communication technology within the literacy lessons.
- Involving pupils more effectively in assessing and evaluating their own work.

(These are outlined in paragraphs 5, 58, 75, 76, 78, 81 and 82.)

(2) Improve pupils' annual reports by ensuring they give a clear picture of the attainment and progress pupils are making within the different subjects

(This is outlined in paragraph 50.)

### **ISSUE 1 HAS ALREADY BEEN IDENTIFIED BY THE SCHOOL AS AN AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT.**

In addition to the above issues, the following more minor issues could be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- The school does not possess a medical room at present.
- Marking of books with helpful comments is inconsistent.
- On a very few occasions, the pace of lessons is slower.

(These are outlined in paragraphs 24, 42 and 78.)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

63

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

28

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	19	33	5	1	0	0
Percentage	8	30	53	8	1	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	296
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	8

#### Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	16

#### English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3
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#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.7
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	21	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	21
	Girls	23	24	24
	Total	44	45	45
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	98 (98)	100 (100)	100 (98)
	National	84 (84)	86 (88)	91 (88)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	21
	Girls	23	23	24
	Total	44	44	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (98)	98 (95)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	18	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	15	17
	Girls	26	23	26
	Total	41	38	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (83)	86 (91)	98 (93)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	17
	Girls	25	24	25
	Total	42	41	42
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	95 (74)	93 (93)	95 (91)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	264
Any other minority ethnic group	2

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.2
Average class size	29.6

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	279

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Recruitment of teachers**

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

**Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	586,903
Total expenditure	587,145
Expenditure per pupil	1,876
Balance brought forward from previous year	14,063
Balance carried forward to next year	13,821



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	305
Number of questionnaires returned	152

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55.0	36.0	6.0	2.0	1.0
My child is making good progress in school.	50.0	44.0	5.0	0	1.0
Behaviour in the school is good.	41.0	55.0	2.0	0	2.0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30.0	52.0	12.0	3.0	2.0
The teaching is good.	51.0	45.0	1.0	1.0	2.0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23.0	56.0	14.0	7.0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	45.0	40.0	9.0	3.0	3.0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62.0	36.0	1.0	0	1.0
The school works closely with parents.	21.0	59.0	11.0	6.0	3.0
The school is well led and managed.	38.0	52.0	5.0	3.0	3.0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43.0	51.0	3.0	1.0	2.0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18.0	34.0	25.0	6.0	17.0

## **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**

63. Children in the reception class enjoy a rich and practical curriculum, which is carefully planned to meet the particular needs of its children and has been maintained since the last inspection. A good range of induction procedures results in the children and parents knowing the school and their teacher well and they are happy and confident to enter school full time.
64. Children in the foundation stage continue to benefit from the good teaching identified in the last inspection. During the inspection all teaching was at least good and some was very good. This means that the children learn well and their achievement over the time they are in the foundation stage is sound. Particular strengths in the teaching include the very good support for mathematical development, speaking and listening and personal and social development. Assessment procedures are also good and information from regular assessments is used well to plan the curriculum. Whilst the curriculum is closely planned to take account of the early learning goals and the stepping stones within it, it also takes account of the above average standards of the pupils on entry to school. It is because of this that the planning moves to the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum when it is appropriate. The teaching at all times is challenging. There are high expectations of children in all areas of learning. Good relationships and a strong working partnership between the class teacher and teaching assistant mean that children consistently benefit from good contacts with all adults, resulting in a good rate of learning.
65. Although there is a wide range of attainment on entry to the reception class, attainment overall is above average. There are particular strengths in mathematics, reading and writing. Attainment is lower in the areas of speaking and listening and personal and social development. It is because of this that the curriculum and the work in the reception classes focuses successfully on these aspects, to bring them to the above average levels of the rest of the curriculum by the end of the reception year. Children make good progress towards all the early learning goals as a result of the good teaching. By the time they are ready to start Year 1, they meet the expected goals and a good majority are well within the National Curriculum. Children make particularly good gains in reading and mathematics, where they are well above average.

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

66. A significant number of children enter the school with an average personal, social and emotional development. By the time they leave the reception class they have reached the early learning goals, are independent and mature for their age and have good attitudes towards learning. The teaching is very good in this area of learning and achievement is good. Children quickly learn school conventions from a firm but friendly approach from all adults. They put up their hands when they wish to speak and listen politely to each other. Through very good teaching, children learn independence in finding their own belongings, dressing and undressing and taking themselves to the toilet. The teaching promotes a caring attitude towards others and there are many planned opportunities for children to learn to play and work co-operatively with others. For example, when the children were looking at a range of exotic vegetables for use in the curry they were making, they were asked to discuss with a partner the smell and feel of them and then one child told the class what the other thought. Through a range of planned activities, children learn to make choices and select their own resources. They learn to choose their activities independently when it is appropriate and self register when they encounter a particular activity. For example, they rub off their names from a small board when they go to the role play Teddy Bear's Picnic area. It is because of the very good teaching in this area of learning that children are very well prepared to continue with the National Curriculum in Year 1.

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

67. A good majority of the children have reached the goals for this area of learning and are well within the National Curriculum by the time they leave the reception class. Standards are above average in reading and writing on entry to school and they are sustained at this level through the reception year, making their achievement sound. In speaking and listening, standards are not so high on entry to the school. Through well focused regular activities and very good teaching, children reach above average standards by the end of the reception year, resulting in good achievement. Regular speaking and listening activities are planned each day to talk and listen to each other about children's own news or classroom activities and great importance is attached to this. News of an announcement of mum expecting a baby, for example, is shared and celebrated by all adults and children. All adults use very clear speech to the children and often model back clearly what the child is saying. Children share and read books regularly with adults at school and at home and learn to think of themselves as readers and writers. Making lists of things that they would like on a Teddy Bear's Picnic is a good example of this.
68. Elements of the literacy framework are used, working towards the full hour in the summer term to prepare them for the National Curriculum. Children gain a good knowledge of sounds through a variety of well thought out games and activities and very quickly start using the knowledge to read and write independently. Although in only their first term at school, there were good attempts at writing words, using correct initial and final sounds. Reading skills are also quickly acquired and many are starting to read simple word and picture books before the end of their first term. The teaching challenges all children. They learn well and children reach above average levels by the end of the reception year.

### **Mathematical development.**

69. This area of learning is taught very well and is a particular strength of the teacher. It is because of this that the children learn well and the above average standards on entry are maintained. Children reach the required goals and are well into the National Curriculum by the end of the reception year, making their achievement sound. The teacher is particularly good at helping children to see mathematics all around them and encourage children to think of themselves as mathematicians. At the start of every day, for example, the children stand up and are counted by a chosen child, to see how many hot dinners are needed. They know that there are twenty five children in the class and a higher achieving child is asked to work out how many packed lunches there will be. Another particular strength of the teaching is the very good use of number fans and white boards in whole class sessions to reinforce basic counting and number recognition. Additionally, a wide range of interesting number games and questions, which are matched to children's ability, are other strengths. Partner work often features well in these activities, by children being asked to check each other's answers and help each other, linking well with their social development.

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

70. Children enter the reception with good basic knowledge. When the children leave the reception class they have reached an above average level because of the good teaching and good provision. This represents sound achievement for these children. Through a wide range of practical activities, children learn well and are helped to understand how things have changed over time. For example, they looked at how toys have changed over time and sorted them into oldest, old and new groups. They explore the local area and begin to use maps as they did when they described the route through '100 Acre Wood'. They listen to stories such as 'Bartimeus' and learn about 'Special Places' in terms of Christian worship. An early start is made to the development of computer skills and children regularly use 'Roamer' ( a programmable toy) to reinforce their directional language. A particularly impressive session took place during the inspection, when four-year-old children were learning to 'log on and off' through copying their names and putting numbers into the computer. Good attention is also paid to children learning about the cultures and beliefs of other people. For example, an adult from the Pakistani community was asked into the classroom to talk to the children and to make curry with them.

### **Physical development.**

71. Frequent use of both the outdoor play areas and the school hall add substantially to the good breadth of the curriculum for these young children. Of particular note is that these activities often happen first thing in the morning, making a very enjoyable start to both the week and other days. On these occasions, children have good access to a very good range of wheeled vehicles and other outdoor toys and during the inspection they also enjoyed a good number of well thought out and challenging parachute games. The teaching is good, resulting in good learning and sound achievement as children enter school with above average ability, By the time they leave the reception class they have met the early goals for this area and are well launched into the National Curriculum. Other challenging activities include children learning to join materials together safely by hammering nails through pieces of wood to make desired 'toys'. They have frequent opportunities to use large and small construction toys where they show good manual dexterity.

### **Creative development.**

72. At the end of the foundation year, children are above the expected levels for their age. This represents sound achievement. The teaching is good and children learn well. They respond in a range of creative ways and communicate their ideas and thoughts in imaginative ways. For example, they chose imaginatively from a range of materials to make a collage teddy bear and they played creatively together in the Teddy Bear's Picnic area. Children paint, draw and make puppets. They regularly sing songs with piano accompaniment. Very good teaching was observed when children were singing songs such as 'Away in a manger', which is their favourite. The teacher modelled the singing clearly and inspired such confidence in the children that a young girl sang a solo and was generously applauded by the class. Opportunities to play percussion instruments add further to the children's development and enjoyment. Very good learning took place in this lesson because of the high quality of the singing by the teacher and the good challenge and pace of the lesson.

## **ENGLISH**

73. Evidence during the inspection was obtained from the observation of ten literacy hours, hearing pupils read, analysis of pupils' work, displays throughout the school, an audit of resources, discussion with the co-ordinator, the literacy governor and a group of pupils. Overall, standards in English in Year 2 and Year 6 are well above the national average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well. This demonstrates good improvement since the last inspection in Key Stage 1 where it was above average.
74. The speaking and listening skills of most pupils are well above those of 7 and 11 year olds nationally. Pupils speak clearly, ask questions, follow instructions, sequence events and have a satisfactory vocabulary. Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers and each other and show interest in what is being said. They express themselves clearly and confidently when sharing their ideas. For example, several pupils in Year 1 were speaking in well-constructed sentences of a good length when forming instructions on "how to make a cheese sandwich." During a literacy lesson pupils in Year 2 used intonation well when reading aloud with the classroom assistant the big book "A Quiet Night In." Pupils in Year 3 confidently discussed with the teacher the use of rhyme before tapping out the rhythms of contrasting poems. In Years 5 and 6, most pupils communicate fluently, express their ideas very confidently and adapt their form of speech to their audience's needs. For example, Year 6 pupils were heard reading aloud from newspaper articles. They communicated their ideas clearly to each other and adults, demonstrating maturity of thought. Pupils use Standard English and grammar very well.
75. In Year 2 and Year 6, the majority of pupils attain standards in reading, which are well above those expected nationally for pupils' ages. Pupils in Year 2 are able to read with fluency and enjoyment. They were observed clearly enjoying the story of "the Large Family", which they read using very good expression. As pupils progress through the school, they improve their fluency and expression and talk confidently about books, authors and characters. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 could explain how to find a book in the library and research a topic. Pupils can also be uninspired at times by the limited range of books to be found in the classroom. This can limit their enjoyment and progress and makes it more difficult for pupils to celebrate great

literature. Some pupils rely heavily on books they have brought in from home, or books they have borrowed from friends. The school has recognised this weakness and has outlined plans on the development plan to buy in more books. This lack of books is also linked to the limited opportunities pupils have to celebrate the work of great writers. In Year 6, the most fluent readers pronounce complicated words correctly; compare books and authors; discuss plots and characters and express opinions about how the story influences the listener. Many pupils read fluently with very good expression. Most of these pupils give an accurate account of the story so far and describe plots of stories they have read before. A few older pupils have not yet developed the appropriate skills to draw reasons and conclusions from their reading, or look for meaning beyond the literal. Nevertheless, pupils often give considered reasons why they chose a book to read, some making reference to their favourite authors, recommendations of friends and, in the case of non-fiction books, the fact that they relate to a particular interest. Teachers keep good reading records for guided reading, and pupils have useful home school reading diaries. When these are used well, they enhance pupils' learning, however many are used as a record of what has been read, not how the pupil can improve. Where the literacy hour is well planned and taught, guided reading is used effectively to improve pupils reading skills. Higher attaining pupils use dictionary and thesaurus confidently. Pupils use their reading skills well across other subjects of the curriculum. For example, they spend time reading and researching the Egyptians in history, and the Tropical Rainforest for geography.

76. In all classes, pupils write for a wide variety of purposes and audiences, and overall, writing skills are well above national expectations. The recent improvements in writing in Key Stage 2 are a reflection of the practice of setting pupils by ability. This enables more appropriate tasks to be set. Most pupils in Year 1 form letters accurately, spell simple words correctly and express themselves clearly, however they do not as yet join their handwriting. They successfully use the verbs choose, take, butter, cut when writing instructions for making sandwiches. In Year 2, pupils know the correct formation and position of speech marks in writing direct speech in sentences. However, across other subjects there are fewer opportunities given for pupils to write at length and for specific purposes. This is mainly because there is an overuse of work sheets in some lessons. Pupils in Year 3 work with the class teacher and focus on the language of repetition that can be used in writing some poetry. They had previously written successful Limericks and Haiku poems. In Year 4, pupils are able to write scenes for a playscript after studying the text *Clever Cleo*. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 successfully analyse newspaper articles to develop their own journalistic style of writing. Higher attaining pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 use pens and join handwriting effectively. Pupils' spellings are largely correct and non-fiction is well structured and has a good range of vocabulary. Pupils are using the connective words very well, such as nevertheless, therefore, also, however and despite. When writing a summary of a playscript, pupils use interesting starts to sentences and use pauses and paragraphs very well. Pupils' skills in writing in Key Stage 2 are developing well across other subjects. Work in books and on display shows examples of pupils using literacy skills to support other subjects. For example in information and communication technology pupils in Year 5 wrote Greek menus using word processing, appropriate fonts, and graphics. In geography Year 6 used persuasive writing very well to explain why we should save the Rainforests. Standards in spelling and grammar are generally well above what is expected nationally. Overall, standards in literacy are very good by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
77. Overall, pupils' attitudes to their learning are very good and sometimes excellent. Their behaviour is good and they settle quickly to the tasks set, concentrate well, and value each other's efforts. Pupils have good relationships with their teachers. They enjoy the literacy hour, particularly the discussion with adults and other pupils.
78. The quality of teaching is mainly good in Key Stage 1, and often very good in Key Stage 2 with a very small amount of weaker teaching. The better teaching is leading to a good or very good improvement in pupils' learning. Teachers plan their lessons well in line with the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. Most teachers ensure the work is matched to the overall attainment levels of pupils in their class or set. In the introductions to lessons, teachers usually refer to the learning objectives, and frequently use skilful questioning techniques to revise and review work covered in previous lessons, before extending pupils' learning. They value the contributions made by their pupils. Most teachers give clear instructions and explanations for independent group work, so pupils know exactly what to do. Most manage any potential

unacceptable behaviour well and most lessons move at a good pace. Where the teaching is weaker, the lessons are less well organised and the pace slower. The quality of marking of pupils' writing is not always consistent, and does not always tell pupils what they have to do in order to improve. Teachers consistently give pupils positive encouragement. During the inspection there was no evidence to show that pupils are involved in the evaluation of their own work, or encouraged to indicate how well they believe they are achieving, or how they can improve their own written work. Classroom assistants are used well throughout the school to support the teachers during the literacy hour.

79. The school has a good policy statement for English, and this has recently been reviewed and updated. However there is no whole school scheme of work at present for English. Time allocation is sufficient to ensure that all the Programmes of Study will be covered by the end of the key stage. The co-ordinator and headteacher have undertaken some limited monitoring of the effects of the National Literacy Strategy on pupils' attainment through direct classroom observation, and this has led to improved teaching and learning.
80. The leadership and management of the subject is good overall. The co-ordinator is committed to raising standards further, even though standards are at well above overall, especially in guided reading and writing. She has implemented a comprehensive assessment programme. Targets are set for pupils' attainment and these are tracked throughout the year. The literacy governor is very committed to the development of English and works well with the co-ordinator.
81. Resources for English are satisfactory overall, however the range and quality of reading books in Key Stage 2 are unsatisfactory and sometimes fail to motivate pupils to read for enjoyment. Classrooms have collections of books but these are not used to celebrate literature or promote reading. The school has identified the need to purchase more appropriate reading books, and to develop classroom reading areas. There are insufficient packs of guided reading books throughout the school for teachers to use in guided reading. The range and quality of fiction books in Key Stage 1 are good. There is a good range of Big Books for Key Stage 1 but very few for Key Stage 2. The use of computers to support learning in the literacy hour is underdeveloped and pupils who would benefit from this approach miss these opportunities.
82. The library provision is good and well used. The quality and range of the non-fiction book stock is good. All books are classified and catalogued, and are entered onto a computer operated system. A qualified librarian works in school two afternoons each week on a voluntary basis, and has developed the computerised system. Every pupil has a bar coded library card that is compatible with the local authority library, and this encourages the pupils to use other libraries in the area. The school has identified the need to add more books to this already good provision.

## **MATHEMATICS**

83. Pupils enter the school with above average skills in number. They achieve well because by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 they attain standards that are well above average. This shows an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were above average by the end of Year 2 but did not rise to well above average until the end of Year 6. These findings were largely reflected in the National Curriculum tests for 7 and 11-year-olds in 2001. Since the last inspection, standards have risen at a rate broadly in line with the national trend. The school exceeded its challenging targets in 2001. The strategies in place to extend the performance of higher attaining pupils show the determination of the school to increase the numbers of pupils that attain the higher National Curriculum levels. The benefit of sustained good and often very good teaching has not yet worked its way through the school to have a full impact on national test results. Lesson observations and scrutiny of work suggest that high standards will be sustained in 2002. This is because the National Numeracy Strategy is taught well, being adapted appropriately to suit pupils' needs.
84. By the end of Year 2, pupils work out solutions to realistic problems, accurately using mathematical symbols and language such as "fraction" and "equal". The highest attainers have a good grasp of place value, readily sequencing numbers to 1000. Average attainers sequence numbers confidently to 100 but are less secure beyond this. The lowest attainers are confident in sequencing to 100, but in addition and subtractions are only secure to 20. They

easily identify odd and even numbers. They also grasp the principle of equivalence that two halves make one whole. Higher attaining pupils have a stronger understanding of fractions. Most pupils describe common two and three-dimensional shapes, higher attainers classifying them according to their properties. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to estimate as well as accurately measure distances. Pupils produce tables and interpret data from bar charts.

85. By the end of Year 6, most pupils are adept at explaining their reasoning when solving problems. A Year 4 pupil, for example, explained how he had mentally calculated the length of a bus journey from information on a timetable: "I knew two hours was 120 minutes so 100 minutes had to be less, so I took away and got 1 hour 40 minutes." Mental calculations are usually brisk because pupils know their tables well. The school offers competitions and awards that motivate pupils to practise hard. The lowest attainers use all four operations in their calculations, usually successfully to two decimal places. They recognise approximate proportions and are beginning to grasp the idea of probability. The highest attainers cope with work more usually tackled in the secondary school.
86. Teaching is good. Most lessons move at a brisk pace, so pupils learn a lot in the available time. A key strength is teachers' good planning, which enables pupils to develop their skills uniformly in all strands of the subject. Pupils work in groups of sets according to ability, which assists teachers to plan very well for pupils' varying stages of development. The system allows pupils with special educational needs to work in small groups to consolidate and extend their learning at a suitable pace. Pupils may also move between groups according to need. Plans describe clear learning objectives for different groups also within lessons so the focus of teaching and learning is refined even more precisely. Intentions are shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson and are reviewed at the end so pupils see where the work is leading and how well they are doing. Pupils' work is assessed carefully and the results are used well to adapt weekly planning for the next steps in learning and to highlight where pupils require extra support. Learning support assistants contribute well to lessons. They usually work with lower attaining pupils. They are all very well briefed by the teachers before the lessons and, as a result, are careful to use the same correct mathematical vocabulary as the teachers. They encourage the pupils to work independently whenever possible and rephrase questions if they have not been understood. In some classes, assistants alternate with teachers in taking higher attainers also, so expertise may be more equally shared and focused. Pupils are stimulated by this variety. Teachers ask challenging questions and pupils' responses show good gains in knowledge and understanding. When they are unsure, most pupils are comfortable about asking for clarification. During the written part of the lessons, pupils work well independently and rarely waste time. They discuss with each other how to tackle problems and use calculators appropriately to check answers. Throughout the school, pupils present neat work showing care in their presentation. Teachers are aware of pupils' differing needs and, together with learning support assistants, do their utmost to ensure pupils have positive learning experiences. The methods and resources employed make the subject challenging, but enjoyable for all boys and girls. Where teaching was less successful it was because the teacher talked for a little too long. As a consequence pupils' thoughts wandered and they lost concentration.
87. Mathematical skills are regularly supported in various areas across the curriculum, for example, in science experiments and geography data collection. Year 2 pupils made good use of time by counting in twos whilst waiting for classmates to change for physical education. Pupils make appropriate use of information and communication technology. They produce pie and bar charts and simple graphs. The use of computers to support and enhance teaching and learning during the numeracy hour is underdeveloped: on several occasions computers were available, switched on but unused.
88. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection. Assessment and record keeping procedures are now good, with plans to develop them further. The subject leader, who manages the subject effectively, works with the deputy headteacher to carry out useful analyses of tests taken. Staff are briefed with regard to areas of strength and areas to focus on to ensure progress.

## SCIENCE

89. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in science are well above those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is a good improvement since the last inspection, where standards were above those expected nationally. Taking into account the above average level of attainment on entry to the school, this indicates that pupils are achieving well in science. These improvements are largely due to an improvement in the quality of the teaching but also to a stronger focus on experimental and investigational science over the last few years. These improvements have not yet been in place long enough to bring even higher results at the end of Key Stage 2. However, the evidence also indicates that there are more pupils working at the higher Level 5's in this year's Year 6 class, which is likely to bring higher results in 2002.
90. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have a very good knowledge of all aspects of science. For example, most pupils have a very good understanding of materials and which will conduct electricity and which will not. Pupils in Year 2 were seen handling a range of objects made of different materials. They were able to set up a simple electrical circuit before placing each bit of material, in turn, into the circuit. Most could predict beforehand which would conduct electricity based on their previous knowledge of materials. Pupils study forces and are able to explain in simple terms what types of forces are acting on objects like a moving ball or a seesaw.
91. At the end of Year 6, pupils have a very good understanding of materials and their properties, physical processes and life processes and living things. For example, work seen in their books indicates that they have studied a wide range of living things, including micro-organisms. They are able to describe viruses and bacteria and link this to a study of human cells and diseases. Pupils' understanding of investigational and experimental science is particularly strong. Pupils have a very good approach to this type of work, always ensuring that their test is fair and making predictions based on previous knowledge. Literacy skills are developed well in science as pupils are encouraged to use an appropriate scientific language at all times. Presentation skills are sound and pupils are encouraged to set out the results of their investigation in a clear and logical manner.
92. The quality of teaching and learning is mainly good with some very good teaching. Particular strengths in the teaching are found in the way experimental and investigational science is taught. Planning for these lessons is particularly good. Teachers make instructions and objectives clear. They encourage pupils to predict what might happen, insist they make the test fair and ensure the pupils are given a good range of resources. Also, they do not over-prescribe to the pupils what to do but encourage them to make suggestions during the introduction and planning session. This ensures that pupils become totally involved and interested and work hard, often in small groups, to carry out the investigation with enthusiasm and enjoyment. This was seen to good effect in a lesson for pupils in Year 2. In their forces topic, pupils were investigating the effect of gravity on a toy car when placed on a sloping board. They made suggestions how to increase or lessen the angle of the slope and how to make the test fair by always releasing the car at the same place. Some were able to explain to the rest of the class that only one factor should change but that all other factors must stay the same. Teachers' planning for all aspects of science has many strengths, such as providing a range of well thought out ideas, with a good question and answer session at the beginning to consolidate previous knowledge. Plenary sessions summarise the work well. The planning does have one weakness however, and planned opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support learning in science is underdeveloped.
93. The co-ordinator leads the subject soundly. He monitors the pupils' work on occasions and observes lessons if requested. He also acts as a specialist teacher and is used to teach other classes in school in addition to his own. He is well qualified in science and is able to use his good knowledge to motivate pupils and make science relative to their own lives. The school is beginning to develop the school grounds as a resource for learning. There is a wood and leaf pile to study mini beasts and a selection of different habitats. However, there are only a very few visits out of school to places of scientific interest to enhance the science curriculum.

## **ART AND DESIGN**



94. During the inspection only one art lesson was seen. Judgements about attainment were made from an analysis of school documents, teachers' planning and pupils' work in books and on display.
95. At the end of Year 2, standards of attainment are above national expectations and pupils achieve soundly. At the end of Year 6, standards of attainment are also above national expectations. This shows an improvement since the last inspection. Throughout the school there is a systematic approach to the teaching of drawing and painting skills. For example, observational drawing using pencil, and the techniques of using pastels. These skills are developed well as pupils progress through the school. Work in art is nearly always linked to other areas of the curriculum and is used to good effect when studying geography and history. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 used wax resist crayons and a three-colour wash with good effect to create their skyline of the great fire of London. Pupils in Year 2 looked at hot and cold colours. Using Monet's painting Train In The Snow, pupils built up their own drawings, using cold colour pastel chalks, to create a background. They completed the pictures by adding landscape and foreground features. In Year 4 following the topic on Egypt, pupils used gold and silver felt tip pens to good effect when drawing Faience lotus flower cups. In response to the study of the Jarrow march, Year 5 pupils have made very expressive faces of the marchers using a combination of newspaper collage and black crayon. Year 6 pupils looked at light and tone to develop form. They developed dark and shadow to create contrast. They used these techniques together with the stimulus of the Cézanne painting Still Life In A Basket to create their own compositions of fruit and vegetables. These same pupils had also used William Tillyer's watercolour as a focus when painting pictures of the Rainforest.
96. Work of good quality displayed around the school demonstrates that pupils explore line, pattern and shape appropriately. Collage materials and paint are used sensitively, showing pupils' understanding of how to mix colours in order to gain the best effect. Computer generated art is also well developed and all age groups use appropriate software to paint pictures or create animated effect.
97. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good and contributes well to pupils' learning. In the lesson observed careful planning was in place and there was good organisation and use of resources. The use of accurate language related to art, the effects of light and dark, contrast, tone and texture, encourage pupils' to observe paintings critically, and relate this to their own work and how it might be improved. The activity chosen interested the pupils and motivated them to work with care and strive to produce their best work. Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good and they sustain concentration over a long period of time. During the lesson the classroom assistant gave good support to a group of less able pupils.
98. The school has adopted the national guidelines for art as the main focus for the curriculum. They have appropriately matched art to the topics being taught in other subjects for example history and geography. Resources to teach the subject are satisfactory overall but there is little use of computers to enhance learning. The art co-ordinator is at present absent from school because of illness. The headteacher is managing the art curriculum until her return.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' work in design and technology is at the expected standard, indicating that pupils' achievement is sound. Since the last inspection, when the same judgement was made, there have been considerable improvements to the subject. In particular, a co-ordinator has been appointed who has provided good leadership in the development of design and technology. A good number of teachers have undertaken extended in-service training and a school scheme of work has been written. Each year group has very good support from a well written resource file. All these improvements are starting to impact on the teaching, the pupils' learning and the standards attained. Examples of above average work were seen, but overall the improvements have not yet had time to raise standards further. In Years 1 and 2, pupils were observed learning well by making moving pictures, using simple lever mechanisms. High quality teaching in the one lesson observed indicated a challenging lesson which had very good pace and excellent links with information and communication technology. For example, pupils had the option of using 'Clip Art' to choose a picture for their design. The skills for this were quickly and expertly taught before the pupils started these tasks. Very good progression in activities over time was also planned by this teacher. The plan was progressive, involving sideways movement, disappearing, then rotational movement.
100. During work observed in the Year 3 class, pupils were gaining sound practical skills through a packaging project. They made nets of boxes with flaps and there were good links with information and communication technology. Pupils used 'Colour Magic' to make a design, which they were required to resize to fit their net. A theme of 'shelters' in Years 5 and 6 enabled pupils to design different shelters, using sketches with labels and took into consideration materials to be used. For example, if making a tepee, they would consider strength and climatic conditions before deciding on materials. Skills are taught well, for example 'jinks corners', to strengthen and in another class there was a good focus on using rolled newspapers to strengthen the paper and make it a suitable material for construction. Overall, the teaching of the older children is also good, resulting in good learning. In all lessons there are strong links with information and communication technology. A 'power point' presentation is another good example of this. Strong management of pupils helps lessons to run smoothly and independent research and practical work take place. This results in a good level of learning.

## GEOGRAPHY

101. Standards in geography are above the nationally expected level by the time pupils reach the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Children enter the school with above average knowledge and understanding of the world, so this means that the pupils are achieving soundly through the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
102. Although only one lesson was seen in Years 1 and 2, the school was able to provide a satisfactory range of evidence. Pupils' work and teachers' planning indicate that the subject has good coverage, with six topics over two years on a rolling programme and the basic geographical skills of mapping, planning and direction are covered regularly. The content of the good lesson seen for pupils in Year 2 was successfully aimed at improving their use of co-ordinates. The good teaching gave children opportunities to use their knowledge of co-ordinates and were able to locate such places as the Arctic, Antarctic and Equator on the globe. Pupils respond very well to the practical activities planned and their learning is good. Expectations by teachers of pupils completing individual research as homework were evident in the Year 2 classroom, indicating above average attainment. Relative weaknesses in the teaching are the lost opportunities for pupils' own writing, which is too often replaced by work sheets and the lack of any extra challenge for higher achieving pupils in class activities.
103. In both Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils compare contrasting areas with Wall Heath. Key Stage 1 study an area of Bridgnorth and Key Stage 2 study Bewdley and Trysull, making visits to these areas. Many other regular visits enhance the curriculum through the school such as the loop walk in Years 1 and 2, looking at different types of housing and the orienteering trip during Health Week for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Throughout the school there is good coverage of environmental issues, both local and world. For example, pupils discuss how the road behind

the school could be improved, the impact of traffic on Wall Heath and man's impact on the rainforests.

104. The teaching of geography is also good in Years 4, 5 and 6 and because of this, the pupils learn well. The management of pupils is a particular strength, enabling lessons to run smoothly without interruptions and good learning takes place. Because of this strength, such lessons as the excellent one in Year 6, where pupils were discussing the need to save the Rainforests or develop them, were enabled to run smoothly and each pupil's points of view were listened to sensibly. The level of challenge in lessons is appropriately high. For example, pupils in Year 5 were able to speak and write at an above average level about their views about environmental change. In both lessons observed, the good use of resources had a major impact on the learning for the lesson. The use of an outside 'expert' speaker in one lesson and a video made by the headteacher concerning Rainforest redevelopment, inspired a high level of interest and enthusiasm in pupils.
105. The co-ordinator has been in the post for one year and provides good leadership. Standards have risen since the last inspection and there are very good links with information and communication technology. Younger pupils use the Roamer to aid the development of direction skills and other programmes to aid mapping skills. Older pupils for example, regularly use the Internet for research, the computer program to create such things as Rainforest posters and spreadsheets to analyse the results of the rate of flow of local traffic.

## **HISTORY**

106. During the inspection it was only possible to observe one lesson. Therefore judgements are based on analysis of work, discussions with pupils and staff, displays and photographs of past work.
107. Inspection evidence indicates that by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils attain standards that are above the national expectation. This is similar to the judgement of the previous inspection report. Pupils enter the school with above average knowledge and understanding of the world, making their achievement sound during the time they are in the school. Evidence of Year 1 and 2 work shows a good depth to knowledge about their current study of London in past times. The pupils have good factual recall of the dates of major events such as the Plague and the Great Fire of London. In the lesson observed, pupils learned well and gained a good understanding of what an eye witness is and how history can be recorded in many ways. For example, through the diary of Samuel Pepys. A particular strength of the teaching in this lesson was a good level of planning with the objectives for the lesson laid out clearly. A challenging pace to the lesson and a very good level of interaction with the pupils, in terms of well considered questions, meant that the learning was very good. Resources such as videos and time-lines are also used to good advantage. An overall weakness to the teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is the too frequent use of worksheets. These above average pupils are capable of independent writing, using well developed literacy skills, thereby increasing their opportunities and their rate of learning.
108. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 show good factual knowledge of life in Ancient Egypt and are developing an understanding of chronology, being able to order events from then until present times. A particular strength of the history curriculum is the well designed and illustrated time-line in the corridor, which links the two buildings. This gives very good support to pupils' ability to be able to order events from 2500 BC to present times. Pupils use a range of resources well to identify and answer questions about reasons for and results of events. For example, they investigated what happened in ancient Egypt to peoples' bodies after they died. They read about the weighing of the heart against a feather and realised the significance of this in deciding where they would go after death. In Years 5 and 6, there is particularly good use of drama and re-enactment to help pupils to realise the full effect that World War Two had on the life of the people. Themes such as evacuation, rationing, bombing and air raid shelters are studied in good depth, giving good support pupils' learning and helping them to empathise with life at the time. Pupils have above average ability to ask and answer questions and to describe the characteristics of a period of time. The teaching of history in Years 3 to 6 is good overall and this results in a good rate of learning. Particularly good links are made with literacy in Years 5 and 6, resulting in research and some extensive and effective writing.

109. Co-ordination of history is good and the subject has detailed guidelines, which provide good support for teachers. Particularly good links are made with information and communication technology. The census work, linked to a study of Wall Heath in 1852, is a good example of this where pupils used the computer to make comparative graphs of where people were born and pie charts of the use of surnames.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

110. By the end of Year 2, standards in information and communication technology are above national averages and pupils achieve soundly. When pupils leave the school, standards are well above those found nationally, and pupils achieve well.
111. The school has adopted the National Guidance for its scheme of work and has linked it to the topic work studied by each year group every term. In this way information and communication technology permeates most of the school day and is used in most subjects. It is not used effectively in literacy lessons. This is ensuring that there is an appropriate balance between the different elements of the subject and that skills are developed systematically. As they progress through the school, pupils demonstrate increasing confidence with the functions of the computer. They learn to select appropriately from menus and to use the computer to support their learning. For example in Year 1, using the Clip Art programme and information about the great fire of London, pupils began to design and insert a picture into text. Pupils can save and retrieve their work and have a growing confidence and familiarity with information and communication technology. Pupils in Year 3 know how to size their Colour Magic pictures by using the rulers on the Word page. As they progress through the school pupils master increasingly complex tasks. They learn to improve the appearance of their work by selecting appropriate fonts, and can use spreadsheets to solve a problem. Pupils in Year 5 are able to present information gathered about different kinds of shelters they have researched using the Internet. Using PowerPoint they insert animation and sound effects to each slide in order to make a presentation to enhance other pupils learning. The school provides pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum that systematically develops their knowledge and understanding effectively. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. By the time they leave the school pupils have developed an understanding of the importance of technology in the modern world and how it affects their lives.
112. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and use computers and other equipment responsibly. They work well individually and in pairs, concentrating on their task and responding well to their partners. They readily take turns and willingly help each other. Attitudes to learning are good. These positive attitudes and relationships further contribute to the good progress pupils make. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is very good; they listen well and carry out the tasks with enthusiasm.
113. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Planning is also very good. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn from each activity and strike a good balance between the direct teaching of skills and allowing pupils to try out their new knowledge. However, the learning objectives are not always shared with the pupils at the beginning of lessons, or a review of what they have learned at the end. Teachers organise the lessons well, thinking carefully about pupil groupings and the use of learning support assistants.
114. The school has developed very good links with a "Local Action in Partnership" group. Students from a local college have joined with Year 6 pupils and have used the Dudley grid for learning to create a very appropriate web site. The web site includes very good examples of the pupils' work on "Rainforests."
115. The subject is very well led and resourced. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and effective. She has produced a very good portfolio of exemplar work that pupils have done, and has begun to implement a series of assessments across the subject. She has a clear vision for the future development of the subject, based on a thorough appraisal of the school's current strengths and weaknesses.

## **MUSIC**

116. It was not possible to observe enough music lessons to make secure judgements on standards in all strands of the curriculum. Teachers' plans indicate that the National Curriculum is covered. Pupils' work in lessons indicates that standards are above average and that they are achieving soundly. This is a similar picture to that found at the last inspection.
117. By the end of Year 2, pupils sing in tune and with expression. They maintain the rhythm of the song, undistracted by variations in the accompaniment. As they add layers of sound, first by clapping then by the use of untuned percussion instruments, they demonstrate an awareness of the combined effect. This was because the teacher rehearsed groups in turn in the different elements of the song, gradually bringing them together so pupils saw how each component fitted with each other. Good questioning enabled all pupils to think hard about improvements they could make so that the final performance of a Christmas hymn became a joyful and harmonious experience.
118. By the end of Year 6, pupils perform and refine musical patterns from notations. They improvise simple percussion routines in up to six parts. As they do this in mixed-ability groups, all pupils achieve soundly working together. In comparing the features of different styles of drumming, they discussed photographs and recordings of drummers from Burundi. This heightened their appreciation of the differences and similarities to be found in different cultures as well as helping them see how time, place and intention can influence both the creation and performance of music. Their appreciation was enhanced by the opportunity to hear and interview a classmate who is a trained and competent drummer. His live demonstration of a range of styles complemented the good recordings and made exercises in evaluation much more vivid.
119. Teaching is good, and promotes enthusiastic learning. Teachers challenge pupils in terms of musical skills and in use of correct language. They are skilled in asking questions to make pupils think how to do things better. They regularly achieve the balance between intervening enough to support improvement, without discouraging the pupils by stifling their creativity. Non-specialist teachers are supported by a good scheme of work that enables them to teach the requirements of the National Curriculum and also assess pupils' achievement effectively. A good range of resources and the skills of an experienced pianist enhance lessons because they allow pupils to identify and appreciate good quality music. There was no evidence of computers used to enhance learning.
120. Pupils enjoy music, and regularly sing with enthusiasm and good articulation in assemblies. The school offers many opportunities for instrumental tuition with good levels of attendance showing pupils' commitment. Choir practice is not currently taking place because of the illness of the subject co-ordinator, whose commitment and enthusiasm are sorely missed by colleagues and pupils. Performances in the community are similarly less prominent than they were. The school hopes that the musical skills of pupils will once again be more widely celebrated in the New Year.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

121. It was not possible to observe lessons in all aspects of physical education. However, teachers' plans indicate that the full range of activities takes place and the statutory Programmes of Study are taught. A broad and balanced programme has been devised that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' standards are above average which means that their achievement is sound. This is a similar picture to that found during the last inspection.
122. By the end of Year 2, pupils choose and use appropriate gymnastic skills involving balancing and travelling to perform a defined sequence. Teachers' probing questions make them think how to improve their work by varying or repeating movements, with particular attention given to an effective finish. Pauses to study individual performances mean that the whole class is drawn into constructive criticism. As a result, boys and girls improve their co-ordination and precision. By the end of one lesson for example, about three-quarters of the class introduced a shoulder balance fluently into their sequence. From Year 1 onwards, pupils demonstrate a good awareness of safety, making sure for example that they dress properly and that jewellery

is removed. When moving around the hall they exhibit a good awareness of the space available to them, maintaining an appropriate distance between themselves and classmates because teachers have instilled ideas of safety well. Pupils explain the importance of warm-up and cooling down exercises and are beginning to describe the effects of exercise on their bodies, such as increasing heart rate.

123. By the end of Year 6, pupils continue to achieve soundly. They can explain the importance of warming up and the effects of exercise on their bodies, talking particularly of the risks of strained muscles and cramp. Their evaluations of their own and classmates' gymnastic performances are now polishing rather than simply sharpening their techniques. Taking their lead from the teacher's good blend of appreciation and criticism, both boys and girls demonstrated and discussed performances, revealing an artistic perception that caused the borders between gymnastics and dance to become blurred. Precise, graceful movements are almost as common amongst boys as girls, although the distinct fluency of movement of one pair of girls owed much to ballet classes outside school. In a games lesson taken by a visiting coach, pupils responded well to instruction, increasing in speed and accuracy in netball skills. However, they commented on, rather than fully discussed techniques, showing that their evaluation of strategy and tactics in this area is less developed than in gymnastics.
124. Pupils attend swimming lessons at a local comprehensive school in Years 3 and 4. They regularly exceed the national expectation for 11-year-olds by swimming 25 metres or more. For example, 27 of the group of 30 Year 3 pupils who went to the pool during the inspection confidently swam four widths in succession in competent backstroke and crawl. Pupils enjoy their lessons and behave very well. They co-operate with each other in pairs and groups, showing good understanding of the frequent need for teamwork. The school competes regularly in a wide range of matches and competitions through cluster arrangements with the Dudley Sports Association, showing pupils' interest and commitment. There is a regular programme of extra-curricular sporting activities, evidence of pupils' willingness to undertake physical exercise.
125. Teaching is good, which is an improvement since the last inspection when there was some unsatisfactory teaching. The school makes good use of visiting instructors in various sports so pupils have the benefit of expert tuition. Teachers usually emphasise evaluation so pupils regularly analyse and discuss their skills and techniques to refine their performances, although this is less developed in dance. Most resources have been upgraded and are good overall, although there is a lack of good quality rounders equipment for older pupils.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

126. Due to the school's timetabling, it was not possible to observe any lessons in Years 1 and 2. The examination of pupils' work indicates that pupils achieve soundly and reach standards above the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of Year 2. An examination of pupils' work and observation of lessons in Years 3 to 6 show that pupils perform similarly by the end of Year 6. This shows that the above average standards found at the last inspection have been maintained.
127. By the end of Year 2, pupils retell Bible stories in their own words, showing that they recall details well. They reflect on the nature of what is sacred or special, seeing some of the aspects shared by Advent, the Hindu celebration of Divali, and the Jewish Hanukkah. They use appropriate symbols and correct language, citing for example "rangoli" and "mehendi" patterns. In devising rules for behaviour, they show that they can apply the Biblical principles they have learned to benefit practical situations. They are, hence, beginning to have insight into the way in which faith motivates action.
128. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good idea of the ways in which belief affects behaviour and attitudes. After studying the Ten Commandments, pupils in Year 5 devised and acted out playground scenes including examples of selfish behaviour, bullying and apathy. Their illustrations and explanations showed powerfully that they saw religious faith not as a set of rules to be followed by blind faith, but as offering solutions to the many problems that afflict daily life. Good Biblical recall of Matthew chapter 25 was complemented by the shrewd perception of pupils in year 6 that it is not always easy to distinguish the sheep from the goats:

“some people go to church, but they are simply nasty when they come out.” In a typical lesson observed, both boys and girls and pupils of all abilities contributed freely to discussion, because the teacher’s approach made it clear that all contributions were worth hearing. Moreover, the good opportunities for reflection created by challenging questions had a strong spiritual impact, making everyone consider their own thoughts and actions, and whether they were good enough.

129. It was not possible to make a secure judgement on teaching in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are well taught. Teachers use questions well to make pupils reflect on values and beliefs. They are as happy to answer questions about their personal faith, as to admit openly to uncertainties. This encourages a climate in which pupils see that doubts and questions are perfectly normal, so discussion is not inhibited and consequently becomes more fruitful. Whilst comparatively little written work is produced, with no evidence of the use of information and communication technology, its quality demonstrates that pupils have both learned about and learned from religious education. The school’s close links with the local church help extend pupils’ knowledge of Christian teaching, practice and outworking in life. This is reinforced in assemblies. Regular visits to a mosque extend pupils’ knowledge of Islam and its followers. The headteacher, as co-ordinator, is contemplating a change in the current study options by introducing Sikhism, to take advantage of the proximity of a gurdwara so that pupils’ horizons may be extended further.