

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MICHAEL'S CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bartley Green

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103418

Headteacher: Mrs P Bowden

Reporting inspector: Mr A Shield
3569

Dates of inspection: 10th – 13th June 2002

Inspection number: 195988

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 aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Nantmel Grove
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr P Bowden

Date of previous inspection: 30 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3569	Mr A Shield	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9115	Dr T Clarke	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1696	Mr R Sharman	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Mathematics Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23610	Ms J Denton	Team inspector	Special educational needs Information and communication technology Geography Music	
15678	Ms J Radford	Team inspector	English as an additional language English History	
17693	Ms E Digby	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Michael's C of E Primary School is a voluntary aided school for boys and girls aged three to eleven. There are 342 pupils on roll, including 16.5 full time equivalent in the nursery. Numbers on roll have been falling, although numbers in reception are now picking up again. The area around the school is socio-economically disadvantaged, and local housing is a mix of private and social housing. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at 26.9 per cent is above the national average. The percentage of pupils on the register of special educational needs is also above average at 28.8 per cent. Six of these have statements of special educational need. Most of these are for speech and learning difficulties, although some have emotional and behavioural problems. The majority of pupils are of white UK heritage, with relatively few pupils from minority ethnic groups. Just one pupil has English as an additional language, but is not at an early stage. The school has above average rates of pupil mobility, and around one in three pupils in the current Year 6 has joined the school since Year 3. Although there is a full spread of ability in all years, attainment on entry is below average. The pupils' language and literacy development in particular is often very low on entry. The school was given a school achievement award in 2000/1 by the Department for Education and Skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school, providing a sound education for its pupils. Standards in English and mathematics in Year 6 are broadly in line with the national average, and most pupils are achieving at least satisfactorily given their attainment on entry. In Year 2, standards are also average. In the nursery and reception classes, pupils' achievements are good as a result of good teaching. Teaching overall is satisfactory, and in some classes the teaching is good. The good leadership provided by the headteacher and governors is strongly promoting improvement. The school offers satisfactory value for money, despite the longstanding budget deficit the school faces.

What the school does well

- The effective leadership of the headteacher ensures a strong focus on the school's Christian values and a commitment to improve.
- The quality of teaching in the nursery and in Year 6 is good.
- Children make a good start and achieve well in the nursery and reception classes.
- The committed and caring approach of all staff, including support staff, ensures pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school.
- Very good relationships encourage positive attitudes to learning amongst the pupils and a strong sense of community.
- Pupils' personal development is supported through the good provision for their spiritual, moral and social education.
- Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress in English and mathematics because of the good support and provision for them.

What could be improved

- The deployment of teachers to ensure a rationale for the use of specialist and team teaching.
- The quality of teaching to ensure it is more consistently good.
- Attainment in information and communication technology and in aspects of art and design is below average.
- The management of assessment.
- The attendance of some pupils
- A reduction in the budget deficit which is hindering the school's ability to plan ahead.

The strengths of the school outweigh its weaknesses. The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in July 1997. However, for two years immediately following the last inspection, the school made little or no progress, and only since the arrival of the current headteacher in September 1999 has the school begun to move forward

with confidence. Performance in national tests and tasks in Year 2 has shown a marked improvement in reading, writing and mathematics since 1997. Improvements in performance in Year 6 tests are not so evident except more recently. However, this improving trend looks set to continue. The quality of teaching has improved, with considerably less unsatisfactory teaching and more good or better teaching observed during this inspection. The quality of leadership and management by both headteacher and governors is significantly better. Progress on key issues identified at the time of the last inspection has been good in most cases. Management roles have been clarified, there is now a much more productive relationship between the headteacher and governors, and planning in all subjects is more coherent.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by eleven-year-olds (Year 6) based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

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

Standards in national tests in English and mathematics in 2001 taken at the end of Year 6 were below the national average. In science they were average. When compared with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, their performance was average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. Results have varied considerably over the last few years. They have been improving more recently, but since 1997, not as fast as the rising national trend. Although girls do better than boys, relative to the performance of boys and girls nationally, the difference is not marked. The school sets challenging targets for Year 6 test results. These were met in 2001 in both English and mathematics.

Standards in national tests and tasks taken at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were above average in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. Higher attaining pupils did particularly well in reading and writing. In comparison with similar schools, the results are well above average. Both boys and girls have done consistently well. Since 1997 there has been a strongly rising trend in the results.

In work seen during the inspection, attainment overall in English, mathematics and science and most other subjects is broadly in line with the national average at the end of the reception year, Year 2 and Year 6. This is lower than recent test results in Year 2 and higher than recent results in Year 6. In the case of Year 2, this is because the current Year 2 is a less able group than previous years. Their achievements, given their attainment on entry, are nevertheless satisfactory. Year 6 attainment is higher because of the improving quality of teaching, particularly in Year 6 itself. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress through Years 3 to 6. Standards in history in Year 6 are above average. In information and communication technology throughout the school and in art and design in Year 6 they are below average.

Standards in the nursery and reception classes are improving and children are making a good start. Most children are now reaching the early learning goals expected for their age by the time they leave the reception class.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic about school overall and learning in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are polite and courteous. Many examples of thoughtful and sensitive behaviour both in and out of classrooms were witnessed during the inspection.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships amongst the whole school community contribute strongly to pupils' personal development and the school's values.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory and below average, largely because of the poor attendance of pupils from a small number of families.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 - 2	Years 3 - 6
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and good during the nursery and reception classes. Much good and better teaching was observed elsewhere, particularly in Year 6. Strengths of the teaching include the very good relationships between staff and pupils, the good quality of support offered by classroom assistants and effective classroom and behaviour management which encourage pupils to respond positively. Planning is detailed and thorough.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Teaching is not always well planned to meet the needs of all pupils, and the school does not identify its gifted and talented pupils. Assessment in the nursery class is excellent and particularly effective in planning appropriate activities for each child. However, assessment of work in lessons elsewhere is not consistently good. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in the vast majority of lessons. Their learning is characterised by a keen and lively interest in their work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Good in the nursery and reception. The breadth of the curriculum is satisfactory, although the time available for some subjects is limited and affects the overall balance. The good range of extra-curricular activities contributes strongly to the range of opportunities for learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good quality provision and effective support ensure pupils make good progress against their targets in individual education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils' social development is very good and makes a strong contribution to pupils' good personal development through the school. Provision for moral and spiritual development is good while cultural development is satisfactory, where opportunities to promote multicultural understanding are missed. Christian values are reflected in the school's caring and sympathetic working atmosphere and ethos.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Teachers know their pupils well and standards of pastoral care are good. Procedures for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic progress are unsatisfactory.
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The school works hard to involve parents and to work in partnership to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The good leadership of the headteacher is providing clear educational direction and inspires the trust of the whole school community. Her senior management team offers good support although the deputy headteacher is less effective in her role. Subject co-ordinators are beginning to understand their role in monitoring standards in their subject.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are committed and hardworking. There are good procedures for monitoring the school's work, and through their regular visits and meetings, governors have a good insight into the school's work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school's procedures for self-evaluation are increasingly effective.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school applies the principles of best value to its spending decisions whenever possible, but the school's expenditure still exceeds its income.

The school is adequately staffed but the match of staff to the curriculum is not always satisfactory. Classroom assistants provide effective support for individual pupils. Resources are just adequate in most subjects, although the recently installed computer suite is well used. The accommodation is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the school expects their children to work hard and achieve his or her best • That there is good teaching and that as a result their children are making good progress • That their children like coming to school and that the school is helping them to become mature and responsible • The approachability of all the staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quantity of homework • Some parents feel that information provided about their children's progress is inadequate and that the school does not work closely enough with parents

Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by parents and the strengths identified are confirmed by inspection evidence. Inspectors, however, found that homework is increasingly effectively being used to support learning in a number of different ways. In most cases, the quality and quantity set is appropriate. The school offers regular opportunities for parents to consult with teachers about their children's progress and the annual report is detailed and satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. On entry to the nursery, tests indicate that attainment is below average and lower in terms of children's language and literacy development. Although children of all abilities are represented in school there are fewer children of above average attainment on entry. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (29 per cent) is above average. Most of these pupils are identified as having learning difficulties, many with speech or communication problems. Some pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties. A number of pupils join the school at times other than the usual time of admission. In most cases, this has the effect of lowering further both the ability profile of pupils in the junior years, and of standards in tests at the end of Year 6.
2. Standards in national tests and tasks taken at the end of Year 2 in 2001 show standards to be above average in reading, mathematics and science and to be well above average in writing. Comparison with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals indicates standards to be well above average in all subjects. Analysis of the levels reached by pupils indicates that higher attaining pupils do as well or better than might be expected. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 3 in reading (44 per cent) and writing (18 per cent) was well above the national average, while the percentage reaching this level in mathematics (29 per cent) was close to the national average. The school ensures that able pupils achieve their potential. However, pupils of all abilities made good progress, including those with special educational needs. Results in each subject have been rising strongly since 1997. Both boys and girls have done consistently well and, over the last three years, boys have done better relative to the national performance of boys than girls, although the difference is not significant.
3. At the end of Year 6, standards in national tests in English and mathematics in 2001 were below the national average, but in line with the performance of similar schools. In science, results were close to the national average, and well above average in comparison with similar schools. In relation to prior attainment at Key Stage 1, performance in English and mathematics was also in line with the average, and that in science was well above average. However, one in three pupils taking Year 6 tests in 2001 joined the school after the start of Year 3 and did not take their Year 2 national tests at St Michael's. The impact of these new, often low attaining pupils, joining the school during Years 3 to 6 is considerable. Of those pupils on roll throughout Years 3 to 6, most make at least satisfactory progress through the junior years and progress through at least two National Curriculum levels. For example, pupils who reached Level 2 in Year 2 reached Level 4, and those who were at Level 1 reached Level 3. High attaining pupils achieve their potential and reach higher levels, at least in mathematics and science. In mathematics 23 per cent reached Level 5 and in science 35 per cent reached this level. In English, however, only 15 per cent reached Level 5. Results dipped in 2001 following two improving years, except in science where they continued to improve. Overall, results have varied over the last few years; a good year in 1997 was followed by a poor year in 1998. Since then there has been an improving trend, but not as fast as the rising national trend. In all three subjects, girls have done better than boys but relative to the national performance of boys and girls, the difference is not marked.

4. Year 6 targets set by the school for 2001 were met in both English and mathematics. Accurate target setting is difficult to achieve given the extent of pupil mobility. Nevertheless the targets set for 2002 and beyond are challenging.
5. Standards in the nursery and reception classes are improving rapidly and children are making good progress, from their often very low starting point. The provision and quality of teaching at this level are strengths of the school. Progress is such that most children are now reaching the early learning goals in all six recommended areas by the time they leave the reception class. The children's progress in language development is particularly marked, but above all children learn to enjoy school and to approach work in Year 1 with good attitudes and commitment.
6. In Year 2, the standards of work seen were average overall. This is lower than recent test and task results suggest. However, this is a less able year group and their performance is in line with the school's predictions. Most pupils are achieving satisfactorily in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In addition, this group of pupils did not benefit from the good provision currently being offered in the Foundation Stage. Inspectors are confident that standards in Year 2 should shortly return to the levels reached in 2001.
7. Standards in Years 3 to 6 are improving, and in work seen during the inspection standards were average in English, mathematics, science and most other subjects. This is higher than the 2001 results suggest, but more in line with results in 1999 and 2000. Pupils' achievements given their attainment at the start of Year 3 are satisfactory. Progress in Year 6 is good, but this good progress is not consistent throughout the Years 3 to 6. This is because the teaching of the older pupils is more effective and better planned to address the pupils' strengths and weaknesses.
8. The above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, particularly those joining later than Year 3, has a major impact on the school's results overall. These pupils actually make good progress relative to the targets set for them in literacy and numeracy. Well-trained teaching assistants are attached to most classes and offer effective and sensitive support to pupils both during whole class and group activities. Progress in other subjects, where the support is less well targeted, is satisfactory.
9. The school has not formally identified its gifted and talented pupils, although it recognises and plans for a number of pupils who are more able. However, the level of challenge is not always sufficient, and while high attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily and generally make similar progress to other pupils in the school, teachers do not always ensure that planning in lessons consistently takes account of their particular needs.
10. No significant variations in the progress of boys and girls or of any minority ethnic groups in the school were noted. There is currently just one pupil with English as an additional language. Although not at an early stage, progress is similar to that of other pupils.
11. In English, standards are average in work seen at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Pupils' achievements are good throughout given their prior attainment on entry. Most pupils are confident readers and enjoy both fiction and non-fiction texts. By age seven most read simple texts fluently and accurately and show understanding of the plot, while at age eleven, many pupils are reading more demanding texts. Speaking and listening skills are also average. Many pupils are articulate and enjoy talking about

their work and interests. Standards of writing are also average. Many pupils throughout the school write interestingly and imaginatively, and are confident in writing notes and factual reports. Handwriting is usually satisfactory and most pupils take care with their presentation. Given the poor levels of language and literacy development of many pupils on entry to the school, their progress in literacy is particularly good.

12. In mathematics, standards are average at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout the school. Most pupils are able to use and apply numerical skills satisfactorily. Other aspects, including pupils' knowledge of shape, space and their ability to handle data, are generally satisfactory, although pupils are less confident in their ability to solve problems.
13. Standards in science are also average at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactorily throughout Years 3 to 6. Pupils' knowledge across the range of science is reasonable and they understand the principles of a fair test. Most are able to make predictions and record observations accurately. They are less confident in drawing conclusions from the evidence.
14. In most other subjects, pupils' attainment is average and their achievements satisfactory, except in information and communication technology (ICT) where attainment remains below average, despite the recent introduction of new computers. However, inspectors share the school's view that as the use of the new computers becomes more embedded in everyday teaching, pupils should gain in confidence and skills, and standards should rise. Standards are also below average in art and design in Year 6, because skills are not being taught in a sufficiently systematic way. In history however, attainment is above average in Year 6 because of some very effective teaching.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Pupils' attitudes to the school are good. Most pupils are eager to come to school, a fact confirmed by parents in their answers to the questionnaire. Once they arrive in the morning, pupils quickly settle down to work. They speak positively about the school and are proud to be members of it. Hands go up quickly when asked a question in lessons and pupils soon learn to wait to take their turn. They are not afraid to answer questions, even if the answer they give is wrong, because teachers usually compliment them for trying. An example of the good attitudes, which pupils display, was observed in the playground, where they are prepared to walk across the large play area to put a piece of waste paper or empty crisp packets in the rubbish bin.
16. Behaviour across the school is, overall, good. Pupils are polite and courteous. They hold doors open for each other and adults and say 'please' and 'thank you'. Around the school, in the playground, in the corridors and in the dining hall the behaviour seen was almost invariably good, albeit sometimes a bit boisterous in the playground. One parent told inspectors that she accompanied a group of pupils on a school trip when people from outside the school community congratulated them on the pupils' good behaviour. In the classroom, behaviour is good most of the time. However, some pupils can demonstrate challenging behaviour, particularly when not managed well in lessons. There were seven fixed-term exclusions during 2000/1, usually for one day only and for such things as violence, including fighting, stealing or disobedience. During the last three years just two pupils have been permanently excluded.
17. While parents expressed concern about one or two individual incidents, no bullying was observed during the inspection and the great majority of pupils did not perceive it

as a problem and told inspectors that it is dealt with promptly and effectively by the school. Pupils will also raise bullying issues at school council meetings. No sexism or racism was observed. When parents were asked if there were any racist incidents, the mother of a pupil of an Afro-Caribbean ethnic background, present at the parents' meeting, said that it was not a problem at the school and she remarked how happy her daughter was at the school.

18. Pupils understand the impact of their actions on others and they talk about these matters in assemblies. During the week of inspection, the theme was about working as a team and in one assembly pupils clearly understood how they could help each other by doing so. They also show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. They listen well to each other both in the classroom and on other occasions, such as meetings of the school council. This ability develops well as pupils grow up through the school, as they take an increasing amount of responsibility. For example, the younger pupils learn to return the registers to reception, usually in pairs, and are given small tasks to do like helping to tidy up at the end of lessons. Older pupils show initiative and take a greater amount of responsibility. After one Year 5 lesson, at the end of the afternoon, while the teacher was reading the rest of the class a story, as a reward for good work, two pupils were meticulously sweeping up bits of paper with a dustpan and brush. In Year 6, pupils have the opportunity to become house captains, which gives them more responsibility. Pupil representatives from Year 3 upwards take part in the school council.
19. Relationships within the school community are a strength. Both between pupils and between adults and pupils, relationships are very good. In the classroom, pupils work well together in pairs and in groups and outside the classroom they play well together in the playground and chat happily at lunchtime in the dining hall. In a Year 2 registration period, pupils were seen coming into the classroom and sharing books with each other. Pupils in Year 3 said that they like the way teachers help them and in other years they said that they are happy to talk to any member of staff if they have a problem.
20. Attendance is below the national average and is unsatisfactory. In spite of the school's efforts, attendance remains stubbornly at the level it was at the time of the last inspection. The impact of a small number of families with poor attendance is significant. Punctuality is also unsatisfactory for a number of pupils, and the level of attendance and the late arrival of some pupils have an adverse impact on their progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. The quality of teaching varies but is satisfactory overall in Years 1 to 6 and good in the nursery and reception classes. However, much good or better teaching was observed in all years, particularly in Year 6. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the time of the previous inspection. Teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory in over 95 per cent of lessons observed during the inspection. Around one in six lessons was very good or excellent. Teaching was unsatisfactory in just three lessons observed (under five per cent). No unsatisfactory teaching was observed in the nursery or reception classes. Examples of excellent teaching were observed in a Years 3/4 class and a Year 6 class in history.
22. Pupils are making satisfactory progress overall through Years 1 to 6, and good progress in the nursery and reception classes. Good progress is also being made in

Year 6, where the overall quality of teaching is more consistently effective than in other years.

23. The quality of teaching is good in English throughout the school and in science in Years 1 and 2. It is satisfactory throughout in mathematics and in science in Years 3 to 6. Teaching is good in history and very good in the junior years, where good use of evidence and artefacts is developing in the pupils a confident sense of historical enquiry. Teaching in all other subjects varies from class to class but is satisfactory overall. There is a very close link between the quality of teaching and the quality of learning, and pupils' progress in lessons is directly related to the quality of teaching.
24. The teaching of literacy is good. The structure of the National Literacy Strategy is used well to set clear objectives for learning, to plan interesting and involving activities and to consolidate learning through review and evaluation. Opportunities to reinforce literacy skills are taken in all subjects. Teachers emphasise correct spelling and grammar and good presentation in all subjects. Good use of questions ensures pupils explain their answers carefully. Many good examples of writing for different purposes and audiences were observed during the inspection. A particular strength is the emphasis given to the learning of specialist subject vocabulary. As a result, pupils in Year 6 talk convincingly on a good range of different subjects.
25. In mathematics, numeracy skills are given satisfactory emphasis in lessons, but apart from in science, insufficient attention is given to developing these skills. In science, good attention is paid to the accurate reading and recording of results, and to presenting these in the form of bar charts and line graphs. However in other subjects, such as geography, physical education and design and technology, teachers do not always emphasise the teaching of numeracy skills in unfamiliar contexts.
26. Characteristic of the good teaching in the nursery and reception classes is the careful planning to ensure that children are involved in purposeful and active learning, which makes effective links across the six different areas of learning. The good involvement of the classroom assistant and of other adults, including parents, ensures that the children make good progress. Indeed the active participation of parents in the classroom through the 'Inspire' scheme is proving very valuable in giving them an understanding of how to support their children's learning at home. The teacher's skilful and confident approach to the management of learning in the nursery is very effective, and ensures that the children make a good start to their school life.
27. It is the expectations that teachers have of what pupils can achieve that distinguishes the best teaching from the less effective. Where expectations are high, pupils are challenged, the pace of lessons is brisk and the pupils' learning is at least good. This takes place within a well-planned and well-ordered lesson that meets the needs of all pupils, taking account of their different starting points. For example, in an outstanding Year 6 history lesson, pupils of all prior attainment made very good progress in understanding local history through the study of local buildings. Pupils were guided to an understanding of historical enquiry and of using evidence to support opinions through the excellent use of local resources. The topic fascinated the pupils because it was relevant and because it was introduced in an imaginative and inspiring way. Well-planned activities challenged the pupils to work at their own level. The needs of special educational needs pupils were well met by the very effective support of the classroom assistants. Very good relationships and very positive attitudes led to very good learning. The teacher's effective use of praise ensured that pupils were encouraged and that their learning was reinforced at regular points in the lesson. A fully inclusive summary, in which all pupils were keen to participate, further

consolidated the learning. A Year 1 science lesson observed provides another example of very high expectations leading to very good learning. In this lesson the pupils were investigating the properties of different objects and recording their observations. The lesson was very well planned and the teacher confidently used a good range of teaching strategies to involve and engage the pupils in the learning at every step. They responded with high levels of interest and motivation. Well-established routines and clear explanations led to some good quality work. All pupils achieved very well.

28. Effective use of questions encourages the active involvement and a positive response from pupils. In a very good Year 6 design and technology lesson, in which pupils were preparing a design brief for a pair of slippers, the teacher's probing questions ensured that pupils were made to think carefully about the design process and enabled them to develop their ideas themselves more fully, rather than merely giving them the instructions.
29. Learning is constantly reinforced through discussion, by the teacher writing a summary on the flip chart and in answering pupils' questions. A good science lesson in Year 2 was characterised by this consolidation of learning. As a result pupils made good progress in distinguishing between different habitats.
30. Whilst these lessons illustrate some of the very best teaching, many other lessons incorporate some of these characteristics: tasks set on the basis of prior learning; varied activities; challenge; and active learning. Less successful teaching lacks some of these qualities, often involving pupils in routine work that fails to stimulate their interest and their thinking. Sometimes the teacher fails to explain clearly or to model correct procedures. In an unsatisfactory mathematics lesson with a Year 4 class, there was an emphasis on the consolidation and understanding of subtraction, but no effective questions were asked to enable the pupils to explain their thinking or talk about their misunderstandings. As a result, pupils made little headway and continued to make the same mistakes.
31. In most lessons the objective for learning is defined clearly and shared with the pupils. At the end of the lesson pupils are often asked whether they have met this target, and pupils are being guided to an understanding of their progress in this way. Marking of pupils' work often comments on whether the learning objective has been met. On some occasions, however, not enough time is left at the end of lessons to consolidate learning in this way. On other occasions, the planned objective is merely an activity. In one Years 3/4 lesson the objective shared with the pupils was 'to practise handwriting'. This lack of precision is reducing the impact of the school's policy in this area.
32. Characteristic of much of the teaching are the very good relationships established between staff and pupils. Many teachers have established trusting and productive relationships with their pupils. As a consequence good learning takes place in a friendly atmosphere, and pupils are given the confidence to answer even if wrong. This was exemplified in a Year 5 history lesson on the Tudors where the consistently encouraging response from the teacher ensured pupils were actively involved at all times. Overall classroom management and discipline are also strengths of the teaching. On rare occasions, however, the teacher's unsatisfactory control of some pupils' challenging behaviour leads to some indiscipline and lack of progress.
33. In general, the teaching is inclusive and well adapted to suit the needs of the sometimes wide range of abilities of pupils in the class. This is usually because the teachers know individual pupils well and are able to respond well to their individual

learning needs. The quality of the well-directed support provided by classroom assistants and other adults is particularly effective with lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. The grouping of pupils by prior attainment works successfully in most cases, and enables teachers to plan work with a more sharply defined focus for all pupils. However, this is not consistently so, and not all teaching stretches all pupils. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson for example, the task set was broadly the same for all pupils, and although lower attaining pupils had additional support, higher attaining pupils in particular were not challenged enough. The planning in this lesson was additionally complicated by the fact that a small group of Year 1 pupils were also present and not properly catered for within the planning of the lesson. Opportunities are sometimes missed to extend higher attaining pupils with suitable tasks for homework. However in general, inspectors do not agree with parents in their comments about homework. They found that homework is increasingly being used to support learning in a number of different ways, and in most cases, the quality and quantity set is appropriate.

34. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards reaching the literacy and numeracy targets in their individual education plans. Support in classrooms is sensitive and effective, often anticipating problems before they arise. Teachers plan effectively for these pupils, enabling them to learn well. However the support is not as effective in lessons other than English and mathematics because the planning is not so well focused on individual needs. This is because the assessment and monitoring of progress in these subjects is not so frequent. Some good examples were observed. Pupils in a Year 5 geography lesson were given a simplified worksheet enabling them to work more independently. However, this is the exception rather than the rule.
35. The other major factor in limiting pupils' progress is the effectiveness of marking. Much good practice exists, particularly in Year 6, but this good quality is not consistent throughout all classes. In science, some marking is regular and supportive with detailed guidance on how to improve, but not all is of this quality. In some subjects, marking is very patchy. This means that teachers do not always plan work to follow on logically from what pupils already know and can do. In addition, pupils themselves are unsure of their progress and how they might reach higher levels of attainment. A number of subjects make use of target setting to challenge and motivate pupils. However, these are not always expressed in a language which pupils themselves can understand. Where teachers set targets, there is little consistency of approach. Some sharing of good practice would lever up standards in this area. A more consistent approach to marking and target setting across the school would ensure planning was more focused, help pupils evaluate their own progress better and ensure that they are more aware of how they might improve.

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

36. The school provides a satisfactory range of opportunities for learning, and the requirements of both the National Curriculum and the Foundation Stage are met. The curriculum overall is broad and reasonably balanced. Priority is given to developing pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. This extra emphasis on English and mathematics affects the overall balance of the curriculum and places pressure on the time available for other subjects. This partly accounts for the below average standards, for example in art and design in Years 3 to 6. Literacy is taught successfully in other subjects but few opportunities are provided for the development

of mathematics in other subjects except in science. Despite a useful start following the recent installation of the ICT suite, computers are not used enough in other subjects.

37. Improvements to the curriculum have been satisfactory since the last inspection. In particular the curriculum for the Foundation Stage has been successfully implemented, a key issue at the time of the last inspection. There is now better continuity between the nursery and reception classes, and plans are in hand to improve the transition between the reception classes and Year 1. The amount of teaching time has been increased so that the nationally recommended time is now met. Improvement in planning the curriculum has been good. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented successfully together with the adoption of national guidance in the other subjects. The effect of this is seen in teachers' good planning.
38. The school's curriculum is inclusive and all pupils are valued in line with the school's ethos. The school seeks to ensure that all girls as well as boys have equal access to the curriculum. In addition there is no discrimination against pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds who also have equal access. The school's race equality policy is due to be discussed with the governors before the end of the term, and this takes due account of recent guidance from the Commission for Race Equality. A weakness is the lack of planning in the curriculum to meet the needs of gifted and talented pupils.
39. Complex arrangements have been developed for the organisation of the classes, especially in Years 3 to 6. For example in Years 5 and 6, specialist teaching has been developed for English, mathematics, design and technology and art and design. In Years 3 and 4, pupils are allocated to classes by their attainment, and there is specialist teaching in design and technology, music, history, geography, ICT and religious education. Also pupils throughout Years 3 to 6 are taught English and mathematics in classes according to their prior attainment – 'setting'. Whilst some of these arrangements enhance learning, for example the specialist teaching in design and technology and history, overall there is a lack of rationale and coherence and this hampers pupils' progress.
40. The school's provision for PSHE is satisfactory and fulfils statutory requirements. Each class has half an hour's PSHE a week and Year 6 receive instruction in drugs and sex education. The co-ordinator is taking steps to consult staff and the governing body with a view to extending sex education to Year 5. At the moment other classes learn aspects of this through their science lessons. The school makes good use of outside agencies, such as the school nursing service and local businesses, which will be involved in the citizenship week planned for later this term. The school also uses assemblies to promote citizenship. Most classes have a period of circle time each week, when pupils discuss personal issues within the class.
41. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The new Code of Practice has been adopted and all appropriate procedures are in place. Individual education plans are specific and give guidance and activities on how to achieve the targets. Plans are reviewed termly and new guidelines set where appropriate. Pupils are given a good level of support to achieve specific targets set for them, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Equal access to learning across the curriculum is ensured for pupils with special educational needs but planning to allow them to undertake more independent work is not so consistently developed.
42. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good and makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning and personal development. There is a wide range of activities

including sports, such as football, basketball and badminton, as well as music, dance and a gardening club. Most parents are supportive of the range and amount of these activities.

43. Good links have been established with the local community and the education business partnership and these add significantly to the curriculum and pupils' learning. Older pupils visit places of work to find out about job skills. A citizenship week is planned in collaboration with the business partnership which involves a wide range of activities including visits by the police and fire services as well as representatives from charities and other local organisations. The school has good links with a local childcare organisation that uses its facilities. Useful visits are made to local places of educational interest.
44. Links with partner institutions are good and benefit the pupils. Of note are the links with a local technology college where the mathematics co-ordinators are working on a joint assessment and planning project. Pupils in Year 6 use the facilities of the technology college in the systems and control aspects of design and technology. Older pupils have made contributions to the Birmingham young people's parliament. Useful meetings are held between teachers in the school and those in local secondary schools that enable most pupils to make a smooth transition to their secondary schools.
45. The school offers good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This provision has improved since the last inspection and is now a strength of the school. The attitudes and values which the school promotes are well reflected in pupils' good behaviour and thought for others, and also in the positive personal relationships which exist between pupils and staff.
46. The provision for spiritual development is good. Pupils of all ages are able to grow in the understanding of the Christian way of life through the opportunities offered for prayer, praise and reflection within the ordered pattern of the school day. For example, pupils know prayers and hymns by heart and respond readily in school assemblies. Grace is said before lunch and pupils join together in the school prayer at the end of the day's activities. Pupils also benefit from the strong links with St. Michael's parish church, where they take an active part in services throughout the year, and from the support of the rector who leads school worship on a regular basis. Different subjects play an important role in helping pupils to explore the spiritual aspects of life. In their English lessons, for example, pupils are encouraged to explore the significance of personal experiences in poems, stories and discussions and in their original writing, while history lessons provide pupils with good opportunities to appreciate the way in which people expressed their spiritual awareness in the past.
47. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral development. It gives pupils a firm understanding of right and wrong. In assemblies, circle time and lessons, pupils have good opportunities to discuss moral issues such as acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and ways of looking after the environment. Classroom codes give clear guidance on behaviour in and around the school and staff set very good examples of positive attitudes and concern for the welfare of all members of the school's family. Pupils are encouraged to attain high standards in work and behaviour through the incentive of awards and praise, and achievement in all areas of school life is regularly celebrated in assemblies and in displays around the school.
48. Opportunities for social development are very good, and pupils of all ages enjoy taking part in discussions and are confident in meeting and welcoming visitors. Both inside

and outside the classroom, pupils are encouraged to work together co-operatively, for example in group discussions, research for projects, musical and sporting activities and work on computers. In subjects such as English and history, homework is well used to promote independent learning. The school also encourages pupils to take on responsibility in different areas of school life. Younger pupils act as class register monitors, and older pupils can also become members of the school council. Year 6 pupils take on a range of responsibilities, such as helping with dinner-time support for younger pupils, looking after the library, and becoming a leader of the school as a house captain. Pupils have very good opportunities to develop a sense of citizenship through activities within the community, such as carol singing, concerts, citizenship week, and supporting the local and national charities.

49. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The school offers good opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions. Pupils gain a clear understanding of their local and national heritage through visits to the local parish church and the Bartley Green locality, and trips to places of historical interest such as Boscobel House and Harvington Hall. Pupils also benefit from the visits of professional artists such as the artist in residence and theatre workshop groups. They listen to music by a wide range of composers, and older pupils take instrumental lessons and sing in the school choir. Younger pupils enjoy visiting Ashend House Farm. Opportunities for pupils to develop an appreciation of non-western cultures are more limited, although in English, they write poems in the style of Japanese haikus, and in geography they learn about the way of life in India and the contribution which Indian exports make to this country.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

50. The school's procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good and the educational and personal guidance for pupils is satisfactory. However, the monitoring of pupils' academic performance, because of the ineffective management of assessment, is unsatisfactory. Overall, pupils are able to receive their education in a warm and caring environment.
51. There are good procedures for child protection with the Key Stage 1 co-ordinator and the headteacher being the designated adults. Both have undergone full training in child protection procedures. The school's policy is in line with that of the local authority. All staff, including learning support assistants and lunchtime supervisors, have received training. The school has a good relationship with Birmingham's social services department. Child protection matters are reported annually to the governing body.
52. Other procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy, which is in the process of being updated, for ratification by the governing body. The school caretaker is vigilant and deals with any health and safety problems when they arise. The school's procedures for dealing with injuries and illness are very good. Two learning support assistants, both fully trained in first-aid procedures, are responsible for this aspect of pupils' care. A number of minor accidents and injuries were observed being well managed during the inspection. The two members of staff dealt efficiently and sympathetically with the injured pupils, involved parents, where necessary, and recorded the incidents meticulously. Proper procedures are also in place for administering medication. The school's personal, social and health education policy adds value to the care provided for pupils.

53. There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. The school stresses to parents the importance of good attendance and issues regular reminders. Registration takes place promptly and the use of computer software enables the school to closely analyse patterns of attendance across the school. Pupils can gain awards for 100 per cent as well as good (95 per cent) attendance. The education welfare officer visits the school regularly to follow up those pupils with poor attendance records, a number from the same families. However, in spite of the school's efforts, the attendance level remains unsatisfactory and the level of unauthorised absence has increased this year, largely due to the school applying stricter criteria for its authorisation.
54. The school monitors and promotes good behaviour well. The behaviour policy includes a range of rewards and sanctions with a greater emphasis on rewards. While a significant minority of parents, nearly one in five, did not believe the pupils' behaviour to be good, during the inspection it was usually managed well in the classroom and across the school. The local education authority supports the school well with its behaviour management service. Pupils can be awarded house points for both academic achievement and good behaviour. Most parents respect the school's behaviour policy. Some pupils have individual behaviour plans and pupils are involved in setting their own targets.
55. The procedures for monitoring and eliminating bullying are satisfactory. The school's anti-bullying policy emphasises that pupils should be encouraged to tell someone if they are bullied. A bullying box is situated in the main corridor just outside the library and pupils can write the name of a bully down on a piece of paper and post it into the box. When bullying takes place, the school involves the parents of those bullied and of the bullies. Mostly pupils say that the school deals with incidents well, although some parents and some of the Year 5 pupils reported that the school takes longer than necessary to sort out problems.
56. Unless particular problems arise, the procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are largely informal. Because of the relatively large number of learning support assistants, the school gets to know its pupils well. Regular informal meetings take place between teachers and support assistants and they discuss individual pupils and incidents which may have arisen. Those pupils with known behavioural or other problems have records, which are passed on to the next class teacher at the end of the school year. In this way, personal development is monitored and, where necessary, support given.
57. The school has introduced a good range of assessment and monitoring procedures since the last inspection. However the management of assessment within the school is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that agreed procedures are used consistently by all teachers. As a result assessment is still an unsatisfactory aspect of the school's provision.
58. The school has information about each pupil's performance in each year, starting with assessment on entry to the nursery and reception classes. Each year teachers assess pupils' attainment in English and mathematics using standardised tests. Some of this information is beginning to be used to analyse performance and monitor pupils' progress, particularly by the English and mathematics co-ordinators. Information is used to identify pupils who require extra support and to group pupils by prior attainment. It is not used to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils. Teachers set targets for pupils' expected levels of attainment at the end of each year and targets are broken down into three steps within each level to make them a useful

monitoring tool. Pupils' learning targets for the year in English and mathematics are displayed in the front of their workbooks but these are very generalised, and are not written in language which all pupils understand. Teachers rarely refer to them and pupils have little knowledge of what they need to do to achieve the targets. The assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, using the agreed format, is very inconsistent. Pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to evaluate their own progress or given guidance as to how they can improve. Where pupil evaluation sheets are used, the developmental feedback from teachers is often too limited to be useful. The marking policy provides insufficient guidance and not all aspects of the marking code are consistently implemented by teachers.

59. The assessment co-ordinator currently maintains extensive records and documentation relating to assessment which are not sufficiently well organised to enable teachers to make good use of the information. The proposed use of a computer-based system might help to address this issue by rationalising the data and making them more accessible to all teachers. The school has not implemented clear enough expectations for teachers on the use of assessment procedures and the monitoring of pupils' progress and there is no coherent whole school approach for support and monitoring of this aspect.
60. Assessment procedures for those pupils with special educational needs are good. Targets in individual education plans are assessed termly but also at interim points as they are achieved. Where possible pupils are involved in reviewing their progress and in helping to set new targets.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

61. Parents' views of the school, as indicated by the small number present at the parents' meeting, returns from the questionnaires and individual interviews held informally outside the school, are mixed. Most parents believe their children like the school and make good progress. They also believe that the school expects their children to work hard and they feel comfortable approaching the school. The main perceived areas of concern are that a significant number of parents do not feel that the school works closely with parents, that they are not well informed about how well their children are getting on, and think their children are given too much or too little homework. In addition, some do not feel that the school is well led and managed, and a significant number do not feel that behaviour in the school is good. Some of the letters received emphasise these adverse views but those expressing positive views outnumbered them. Parents of pupils in those classes where there was a history of teachers being on long-term sick leave and of those in classes where there were mixed years expressed most concern.
62. The school's links with parents are, overall, satisfactory with some good aspects. The school issues a range of helpful information, which includes the school prospectus and the annual report of the governing body, both of which contain relevant statutory information. The school sends out regular newsletters covering a wide range of information.
63. The quality of pupils' annual reports on their progress is satisfactory. However while all reports contain information about how well pupils have been doing during the school year, only a small number inform parents what pupils should be doing next. Parents are kept informed about pupils' progress through termly parents' evenings. With the

help of funding from the local education authority, the school is setting up very good links with parents through the 'Inspire' groups. Parents come into the classroom to work alongside their children on projects that can be continued at home. For example, Year 2 made games, which parents and children could play at home. During the inspection parents of children in the nursery came in to work alongside their children. These sessions are well supported by parents and carers.

64. Parents are fully consulted about their child's entry onto the special educational needs register. They attend reviews and are involved in setting new targets. They may have a copy of the individual educational plan if they so wish.
65. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to children's learning at school and at home. A number of parents work as volunteers in the classroom. They also help with their children's education through their homework, which is set regularly. A number of pupils said that their parents help them by listening to them read. The school has plans to reinstate the Parents, Teachers and Friends Association, which used to help raise funds for the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

66. The headteacher is providing good leadership. She promotes a strong and clear vision for the school, has the respect and trust of staff, governors and parents and is steering the school confidently towards improvement. She has a good understanding of standards and the quality of provision through her regular observation of teaching and learning in lessons. The deputy headteacher offers support but rarely shows the leadership to initiate, promote and implement ideas of her own. This weakness is slowing the otherwise strong impetus for school improvement. The senior management team includes the deputy and assistant headteachers, who work alongside the co-ordinators for special educational needs, Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage. This team is effective in providing a strategic view of school improvement. It also acts as a useful sounding board for ideas, provides good lines of communication with the whole staff, and is a forum for raising and discussing ideas for development.
67. Overall management by key staff is satisfactory. The open door approach to management and the concern shown to take all views into account are highly valued. Informal communication is good, and all staff are committed to improvement and share the school's values and ideals. However, the quality of management at deputy head level is unsatisfactory and that at subject level is not consistently good. As a consequence the impact of action taken to bring about improvements has not been consistently effective.
68. Most subject co-ordinators are providing effective leadership of their subject, working hard to secure improvements in teaching and learning, and giving a clear lead based on a careful evaluation of standards and provision. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics in particular are models of good practice in the school, although they have insufficient opportunity to improve teaching practice through working alongside their colleagues. In some subjects, however, changes of co-ordinator or long-term absences have led to less good practice. Monitoring in particular has been less consistent. This is true for example, in both art and design and geography.
69. Management of special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator has undertaken specialist training and is knowledgeable about her role. She trains staff in new areas

of expertise and keeps them up to date with changes such as the new Code of Practice. She is fully involved with teachers and support staff in setting new targets and liaises with other professionals as needed. She keeps governors informed about the current work and developments and liaises with the governor for special educational needs who is also well informed about the work in school.

70. Governors are committed and hardworking, and they are making a good contribution to the school's governance. They are knowledgeable about the school and have good procedures to monitor its effectiveness. The chair of governors works hard in co-operation with the headteacher with whom he shares the vision of the school's direction. Governors are much more confident than at the time of the last inspection, in monitoring the school's work, in asking probing questions and in intervening when necessary. They are involved in drawing up the school development plan and monitoring progress towards the implementation of its targets through their committee structure. Statutory requirements are met.
71. This is a reflective and self-critical school in which staff and governors are involved in monitoring and reviewing practice and seeking ways to improve. The school is increasingly effective as a self-evaluative institution. The school development plan provides a good framework for improvement. Priorities identified are appropriate, and the plan is securely based on an audit of current standards and provision. Not all the success criteria however are specific or measurable. Governors and the whole school community are involved in drawing up the agreed priorities.
72. The school suffers from a budget deficit, which the headteacher inherited, and which is hindering its capacity to move forward as rapidly as it would like. Financial control and administration are now both satisfactory and the most recent audit confirms this judgement. However, falling pupil numbers in recent years, which has meant less money coming into the school, have had a devastating impact on the school's ability to provide a good level of resources and support for teaching. Governors are rightly committed to preserving adequate staffing. However unforeseen circumstances, such as long-term absences of staff, have impacted on standards. During the inspection for example, the absence of a Year 1 teacher meant that pupils from her class were split between reception and Year 2 classes. This has led to unsatisfactory provision for this small number of Year 1 pupils, albeit only in the short term.
73. In a number of other ways, the lack of finance has inhibited development. Subject co-ordinators have been unable to monitor and support teaching in classrooms. Resources in mathematics are unsatisfactory and in science are only just adequate. Staff development needs are not always met because of a lack of funding. Spending is, wherever possible, linked to educational priorities, but governors' room for manoeuvre is very limited. Although governors have already taken some difficult staffing decisions to alleviate the problem, some challenging decisions remain. The appointment of an assistant headteacher and the subsequent increase in size of the senior management team were carefully considered and, in the circumstances, wise decisions. However, this large team is a drain on resources which at the moment the school can ill afford.
74. Spending is checked regularly to ensure it is in line with the agreed priorities. Specific grants, such as those for special educational needs, classes to boost performance in national tests, and inclusion, are used very effectively for their designated purposes. The governors are aware of the principles of best value and scrutinise spending decisions rigorously to ensure their effectiveness. The school is working with the local

education authority to reduce its budget deficit, and pupil numbers have already started to increase.

75. The headteacher has a good understanding of issues related to social and educational inclusion. Considerable emphasis is placed on ensuring that pupils have equality of opportunity. The school has a positive ethos drawn from its Christian heritage that is reflected in its work. Equality of opportunity is taken seriously and any form of prejudice is not tolerated. This is seen in the way pupils work and play together and in the firm rejection by older pupils of racial discrimination. Racism is taken seriously and the five incidents in the past two years have been dealt with firmly and properly recorded. Satisfactory action has been taken to establish a policy to deal with racial discrimination and a draft document is due to be considered shortly by the governors. At the moment detailed analysis is not undertaken of national tests and tests set by the school to see how well pupils from minority ethnic origins are achieving.
76. Teachers are suitably qualified and have the necessary knowledge and experience to meet the needs of the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum. They have sound expertise in the teaching of English and mathematics and this is seen in the gradual improvement in standards in these subjects. The problem that confronts the school is that of long-term staff absence which, as in the case of the Year 1 teacher, does impact detrimentally on standards. In general this problem has been managed well, but attention to resolving short-term problems has sometimes meant that longer-term issues of school improvement have been put on the back burner. Good use is made of teachers' specialisms but the lack of a coherent rationale lessens the effectiveness of this to improve standards. The good number of teaching assistants is well deployed and they make a considerable contribution to pupils' learning.
77. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are satisfactory and take account of teachers' personal needs as well as the priorities identified in the school development plan. However, staff development is somewhat hampered by the large budget deficit. Aspects for development are discussed during the performance management process that has been satisfactorily established. Sound arrangements are in place for the induction of staff new to the school.
78. Overall the school's accommodation is adequate. There are a number of good features, particularly the new nursery, opened only recently, which provides a very good facility. The dedicated play area for the reception classes is also a good feature. However, the open-plan nature of some classrooms, particularly those in Year 2, constrains the teaching possibilities in both rooms. The premises are kept clean by the caretaker and his cleaning staff.
79. Resources are satisfactory overall. However in some subjects, such as science and geography, resources are only just satisfactory, and in mathematics they are unsatisfactory. Although the recent installation of computers in the suite has considerably enhanced ICT provision, there are still insufficient programs, sensing equipment or robot toys to teach control elements to the correct level. While books for literacy work have improved since the last inspection, some reading books need replacing. Otherwise the library is adequate. Resources in the nursery and reception classes however are good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

80. In order to improve further the educational standards and quality of provision in the school, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- 1) Improve the overall quality of teaching to ensure more consistently good teaching by:
 - sharing good practice which already exists in the school;
 - ensuring pupils' numeracy skills are taught effectively in all subjects;
 - ensuring explanations are clear and that pupils are questioned to explain their thinking;
 - reviewing and consolidating what has been learnt in the lesson through discussion at the end;
 - challenging all pupils, and particularly those of higher attainment;
 - ensuring that marking makes clear how pupils might improve;
 - setting personal learning targets which pupils can understand.(paragraphs 25, 30,31,33 and 35)

- 2) Rationalise the deployment of teachers to ensure a more coherent use of specialist and team teaching.
(paragraph 39)

- 3) Improve attainment in information and communication technology and in aspects of art and design by:
 - ensuring that timetable arrangements allow pupils to have more frequent use of the computer suite at the point of learning a new skill;
 - acquiring suitable programs to teach control technology at the correct level;
 - ensuring opportunities are improved to use ICT across the curriculum;
 - improving the arrangements for co-ordination of art and design;
 - ensuring that art and design skills and techniques are taught in a progressive way.(paragraphs 128,131,132,133,153,154,155 and 156)

- 4) Improve the management of assessment to ensure greater consistency in the use of data to monitor pupils' progress and set individual pupil targets by:
 - ensuring the implementation of a whole school approach to assessment in the foundation subjects;
 - improving the marking policy and monitoring its consistent implementation;
 - ensuring that the wide range of assessment information is accessible to all teachers to enable them to make best use of the data available to monitor pupils' progress and inform their teaching;
 - informing pupils how well they are doing and set short-term targets for what they need to do to improve further which are understood by pupils and referred to in lessons;
 - clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the assessment co-ordinator and other staff with management responsibilities that involve assessment.(paragraphs 57, 58 and 59)

- 5) Improve the attendance of some pupils by:
- continuing to work closely with parents, the local authority and education welfare officer.
- (paragraphs 20 and 53)
- 6) Reduce the budget deficit by:
- improving the image and confidence in the school of the local community to ensure the number of pupils on roll increases;
 - reviewing the management structure to ensure cost effectiveness.
- (paragraphs 72, 73 and 74)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	65
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	9	29	22	3	0	0
Percentage	3.1	13.8	44.6	33.8	4.6	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	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	16.5	326
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	88

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	94

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	37
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.7
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
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	27	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	25	26
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	40	43	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (89)	96 (93)	98 (98)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	25	26
	Girls	18	18	17
	Total	41	43	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (93)	96 (98)	96 (98)
	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	28	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	17	26
	Girls	17	12	20
	Total	33	29	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (75)	60 (67)	96 (90)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	20	23
	Girls	18	18	19
	Total	34	38	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (74)	79 (79)	88 (92)
	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	14
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	232
Any other minority ethnic group	29

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	6	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	63.3

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	38.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	845,732
Total expenditure	870,867
Expenditure per pupil	2,426
Balance brought forward from previous year	-79,753
Balance carried forward to next year	-104,888

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
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)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	360
Number of questionnaires returned	144

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	42	4	1	3
My child is making good progress in school.	44	45	8	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	47	10	9	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	42	22	8	6
The teaching is good.	37	47	12	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	19	49	22	8	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	38	48	7	5	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	40	53	3	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	25	35	29	6	4
The school is well led and managed.	31	34	17	6	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32	51	10	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	34	8	3	17

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

81. The arrangements for children in the Foundation Stage are good and children make good progress. The provision of a new nursery building on the school site and changes to staffing in the nursery and reception years has resulted in significant improvements since the last inspection.
82. The nursery admits children for the year before they enter the reception classes. Children currently attend for a morning or afternoon each day with some children also staying for two full days each week when numbers permit. Some, but not all, of these children move into the reception classes in the school at the beginning of the year in which they have their fifth birthday. Others leave to attend different local primary schools.
83. Assessment tests of children indicate below average attainment overall on entry to the nursery, and well below average attainment in relation to language and literacy development. During their time in the nursery and in the reception classes children make good progress in all areas of learning so that, by the end of the reception year, the majority reach the early learning goals expected for their age. Procedures for assessment have improved since the last inspection and are now very good. All teachers and support staff in the Foundation Stage classes make informal notes recording children's responses and contributions. These notes plus other checklists covering specific learning objectives are then retained in a file covering all the areas of learning. Very good use is made of this information in the nursery to plan the next steps in learning and this aspect is also developing well in the reception classes.
84. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is better than at the time of the last inspection. Teaching is usually good and is often very good in the nursery. Teachers ensure that learning is purposeful throughout. They work hard to make classrooms attractive with displays that promote learning and celebrate children's work. Displays are changed regularly and children find work from a recent activity or class visit is put up very quickly while the event is still fresh in their minds. Teachers talk about the displays and use them to reinforce and extend learning. Teachers' planning effectively addresses all the areas of learning and makes good use of the outside learning environment. The range of activities is well balanced between adult led tasks and those that children can work at independently. Opportunities for children to explore and investigate are good. The best teaching in the nursery and reception classes is characterised by teachers maximising every incidental learning opportunity and making links across the areas of learning. The needs of children of different ability are addressed well with good support for those with special learning needs and appropriate challenge for higher attainers. Each class has a dedicated nursery support assistant, as well as other adults, including parents, who come in and help. These work very well as a team and provide valuable support in small groups and at an individual level.
85. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator, who is the nursery teacher, has made a very positive impact in a relatively short time. She provides good leadership and has developed liaison with the reception teachers to ensure that the Foundation Stage is planned as a whole from nursery to reception. As a result, the reception year curriculum now fully meets the national guidelines for children of that age; a significant improvement from the time of the last inspection. She is also developing an effective partnership with parents through informal contacts on a daily basis and special events

such as the 'Inspire' day. For this event, the nursery teacher provided a friendly and welcoming session in which parents saw what their children were learning and were advised of the school's approach to the teaching of numeracy. Parents shared in their children's activities and were able to make learning resources for use at home. Parents are very appreciative of these days and made many favourable comments on the evaluation sheet that the teacher provided. Induction procedures are good. Parents are provided with an information pack and both parents and children have good opportunities to become familiar with the school.

Personal, social and emotional development

86. Provision for personal, social and emotional development is good and children achieve well, as a result of good, sensitive teaching. They settle quickly into the nursery and reception classes. They develop a sense of self-worth, independence and the ability to co-operate very well with each other. They share equipment willingly and can take turns. When working independently, children are able to select and organise their activities and remain on task for a good amount of time.
87. Children have very positive attitudes to learning and join in activities with enthusiasm. They form very good relationships with adults and with each other. Children work collaboratively. Most are sensitive to one another's needs and have a good understanding of right and wrong. Adults provide good role models, treating each other and the children with respect and care. Children throughout the Foundation Stage take responsibility for tidying up. Some are given additional jobs for the week, such as giving out drinks and snacks, which they carry out very responsibly.

Communication, language and literacy

88. By the end of the reception year, most children will have made very good progress and achieve the standards expected for their age. The teaching of language and literacy skills is good and particularly effective. Teachers have high expectations and they value the children's efforts. Children listen attentively to adults and enjoy stories, songs and rhymes. They are developing confidence in speaking in front of their peers to talk about their work or what they have done at home. Children enter the school with fairly low levels of language acquisition but during the Foundation Stage they are encouraged and supported to acquire a good range of vocabulary and to become more confident speakers.
89. Children enjoy sharing books with each other and with adults. Children in the nursery take home books to share with their parents. They handle books carefully, turning the pages in sequence and using pictures to tell the story. Many of these young children can identify the author, illustrator and title of a book. In the reception classes, children take home a reading book. Most of these children can read a simple sentence, recognising familiar words and using initial sounds and picture clues to help them identify unknown words.
90. Many of the children in the nursery can identify their name and can write it using magnetic letters. Some can form letters sufficiently well to copy write their name. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children can write a simple sentence, spelling short familiar words correctly and making a good phonetic attempt at more difficult words such as 'banana'. They know that names begin with a capital letter and that sentences end with a full stop. Higher attaining children can use picture dictionaries to find out the meaning of specific words. Children are able to sequence a story by putting pictures in the correct order. Higher attaining children can write a simple

sentence to accompany each picture. The designated writing area and other special activity corners which are provided by teachers give children good opportunities to experiment with different writing implements and materials and to develop their understanding of writing for a purpose.

Mathematical development

91. Children make good progress in this area and achieve the expected early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage, as a consequence of the good teaching. By the age of four, nursery children are confident in recognising and counting numbers to five. Most can order and count numbers to ten and a few are working within 20. Number stories and rhymes are used well to reinforce number recognition and match numbers to objects. Good progress is maintained in the reception classes where most children can count forwards and backwards to 20 and count on from a given number within that range. Children are able to form numerals correctly. They are developing a good knowledge of measurement and shape through practical activities. Higher attaining children can carry out simple addition and subtraction operations. They understand the concept of doubling a number and can make patterns based on two. Children are developing good knowledge of mathematical language to compare, using vocabulary such as 'longer' and 'shorter' and 'more' and 'less'.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

92. Children are developing a good understanding of the world in which they live. They have the opportunity to recall what they have done during the weekend or holidays. Teaching is good and captures the children's imagination. For example, teachers use a puppet very effectively to support this aspect. Children take the puppet home for weekends and holidays and then write a diary with parents or just recall orally what 'adventures' the puppet has had whilst staying with them. The teachers actively participate in this activity by sometimes looking after the puppet themselves and recording events in writing and photographs. Children in the nursery are gaining knowledge of mini beasts. They are keeping caterpillars in the classroom and developing understanding of their life cycle. They are making good use of the school grounds to look for other mini beasts. Children in the reception classes have recently visited a farm and are developing a good knowledge of farm animals and different aspects of farming. There is less evidence of work related to development of an understanding of the past. Much of the work is linked to other areas of learning such as literacy and creative development.
93. Children throughout the Foundation Stage construct and make things with a growing awareness of different materials and tools. The youngest children help to make their own play dough, using literacy and numeracy skills to help them work out the recipe. Children use a variety of construction kits to build both inside and outside the classroom. In the reception classes the activity areas designated as a 'tourist office' and 'vets surgery' develop children's understanding of systems and offices as well as making a very good contribution to communication and social skills. Information and communication technology is used to support other areas of the curriculum and by the end of the reception year children are using the computer, entering their own password and using a mouse to control actions.
94. Children are given good opportunities to consider moral issues and beliefs within the context of a church school. Reception children participate in whole school assemblies and the class teacher develops their understanding of the issues through class

assembles which are pitched at an appropriate level for the younger children and provide them with good opportunities to ask questions and contribute.

Physical development

95. Standards in physical development are in line with those expected for the age of the children and they are working well towards achieving this early learning goal by the age of five. The quality of teaching is good and teachers in both the nursery and reception classes make good use of the outside area to develop children's co-ordination and motor skills. The nursery and the reception year each have a dedicated area for outside play and a wide range of resources. Children are given good opportunities to balance and to move in different ways, using their bodies, climbing equipment and large wheeled toys. The reception children use the hall for specific physical education activities. They are currently learning country dancing and are able to move in time to the music, to make up actions such as nodding or clapping and to sequence these to form a simple dance. They understand the concept of warming up before the main physical activity and why exercise is important.

Creative development

96. Children have many opportunities to develop their creative skills and they are making good progress in this area of learning. Younger children in the nursery can handle paint and crayons well to make a picture or design. A few children are aware of instances of symmetry such as in the wings of a butterfly. Children in the reception classes are able to use colours imaginatively and to draw and colour reasonably accurately for their age. Children are developing a good understanding of different materials and are able to cut, stick and join to make artefacts such as a model scarecrow. The quality of teaching is good and adults working with the children give good support whilst enabling children to make choices. This contributes to their good progress. These sessions are also used well to develop children's vocabulary and confidence in speaking.
97. Children enjoy singing. Nursery children sang to their parents showing a very good awareness of rhythm and an amazing level of dramatic expression when they performed 'The Three Bears Rap'. Children in the reception classes listen attentively to music tapes and join in with familiar songs. They showed a good awareness of timing and rhythm when creating dances to the taped music in their physical education lesson.

ENGLISH

98. In work seen during the inspection, pupils in Year 2 attain average standards. Although these standards are not as high as those indicated in national tests in 2001, pupils' achievement in relation to their attainment on entry to the school is good, and they have exceeded the targets set for them. Pupils in Year 6 also attain standards which are average. Pupils who have been in the school since Year 2 achieve well. Overall standards are affected by the fact that a considerable number of, often lower attaining, pupils entered the school between Years 3 and 6. Nevertheless, the National Literacy Strategy has been effectively implemented, and pupils make good progress because they respond to the good teaching in a positive way. Pupils with special educational needs make particularly good progress given their sometimes poor levels of language on entry to the school.

99. In the 2001 tests for pupils in Year 2, standards were above the national average in reading and well above in writing. They were well above average in comparison with similar schools. The number of pupils attaining the higher levels in both reading and writing was well above average, but several pupils failed to reach Level 2 in reading. Both boys and girls have done consistently well over the last three years and the trend has been a strongly rising one. The 2001 test results for pupils in Year 6 were below the national average but average in comparison with similar schools. Girls did better than boys, but in relation to the national performance of boys and girls, the difference was not significant. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels was well below the national average, and below average when compared with similar schools. There has been an improving trend since 1999, but improvement has been slower than that found nationally. However, the school's targets for improvement were met.
100. Work seen during the inspection shows that standards in speaking and listening are average in Year 2. Pupils enjoy talking about their own interests, and most pupils have a suitably wide range of vocabulary. Higher attaining pupils speak fluently, especially when talking about the books they are reading. Lower attainers sometimes need prompting to put forward their ideas, but they speak with reasonable clarity and usually listen carefully.
101. Pupils attain average standards in reading. Most pupils enjoy reading and read at home with their parents. Reading routines at school are well established, and pupils' reading records show that books are usually changed regularly. Higher and middle attainers read fluently, paying attention to punctuation, and usually correcting themselves when they make mistakes. Lower attainers read simple text with a reasonable degree of fluency. They know how to build up words through sounds and can give the gist of the story they are reading. Pupils with special educational needs tend to read slowly, and sometimes need assistance in reading aloud.
102. Standards of writing are average. Higher attainers write legibly using a joined style. They write confidently for a variety of purposes. In their original writing they use dialogue with speech marks, and they know how to sequence their stories and use connecting words. Most spelling of familiar words is correct. Middle attainers are developing joined handwriting and they use simple punctuation with reasonable accuracy. They are beginning to use interesting vocabulary and to be aware of different purposes in writing. Lower attainers convey information in simple sentences which usually contain capital letters and full stops. Their printed letters are clearly shaped and generally consistent in size.
103. Standards are average in Year 6. Most pupils talk confidently on a range of topics. They usually listen with concentration and adapt their talk to the purpose, as in discussing different genres of books, or in working together on projects. Higher attainers speak clearly and persuasively in discussion. However, although they read aloud with understanding, and give accurate explanations of unfamiliar words and phrases, they do not always read with sufficient expression. Most pupils can retrieve information effectively from a variety of sources, including the Internet. They show an appreciation of stylistic devices in the poetry they read and higher and middle attainers reproduce these effectively in their original writing. Lower attainers find this difficult to do without resources such as word banks and prompts.
104. Pupils enjoy writing dialogues and stories, but they are also adept at producing information in different ways as, for example, in factual reports, notes and annotated sketches. Higher and middle attainers know how to organise their information and ideas into paragraphs but some pupils are not sure how to set out dialogue. The

writing of lower attainers shows evidence of progress in organisation and logical development of ideas. Pupils with special educational needs use basic punctuation accurately and usually spell short familiar words correctly, although they have difficulty in the spelling of longer words. Their writing shows a reasonably clear link between ideas and events. Work is regularly marked with helpful suggestions for improvement, and pupils of all levels of attainment are encouraged to assess their own work critically.

105. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The strengths of the teaching are in the good knowledge and understanding of the subject, the methodical application of the National Literacy Strategy, and the good relationships within the classroom. In the most effective lessons, teachers have well-defined objectives which are clearly understood by their pupils. They have high expectations of work and behaviour, and they constantly challenge pupils to give of their best. For example, in a Year 4 poetry lesson, the assurance of the teaching and skilful help of the support assistant enabled pupils to reach above average standards in composing interesting and correctly structured poems in the form of a Japanese haiku. Pupils' enthusiastic response, together with their capacity for working on their own, also made a major contribution to their achievement. One of the strengths of the teaching was the efficient way in which time was used. The creative writing session was carefully timed and monitored, so that pupils were well aware of the deadline and consequently worked productively. As a result there was ample time in the final review for pupils not only to read out their poems, but also to make critical comments on the choice of vocabulary and overall effect.
106. Teachers also plan their lessons well, and manage their pupils successfully in the different activities of the literacy hour. In a Year 1 lesson, for instance, pupils showed a good knowledge of the information needed to send and reply to a party invitation. This was the direct result of good teaching. Pupils joined eagerly in the initial session because they were clear about its purpose: 'We need to know what we want to say before we write it down'. Although the teacher moved the discussion along briskly, she was careful to ensure that everyone had a chance to make suggestions. Resources and tasks were well matched to the different needs, so pupils settled quickly to their individual work and took pride in their achievement.
107. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, it is often because time is not used to maximum effect. Initial whole class discussions tend to overrun, and time targets for group tasks are not strictly observed. As a result, the summing up session is too rushed, so pupils lack the opportunity to discuss the strengths and weaknesses in the work they have done. In some lessons, pupils cannot make progress because they need more help. For example, individual tasks are not well tailored to pupils' requirements so they lose interest in the work. On other occasions pupils do not make enough headway because they do not have the necessary resources, such as word banks or prompts for research. However, there are many more strengths than weaknesses in the teaching.
108. Pupils' attitudes to their work are good overall and make a positive contribution to their learning. Most pupils listen attentively and are keen to make their views heard in class and group discussions. For example, in a literacy lesson focusing on humorous stories, pupils in Year 2 were happy to volunteer answers even though they risked making mistakes. Pupils usually settle down to work promptly and sustain concentration. They support each other well, showing appreciation of achievement and respecting each other's views. Behaviour is usually good, and it is only rarely that pupils speak out of turn, or are discourteous to others. Pupils of all ages have good

opportunities to become independent learners as, for example, in private reading, in researching information for homework, and in project work.

109. Teachers are well versed in the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy, and across the curriculum pupils have plenty of opportunities to make use of their skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing. They are quick to respond in assemblies, and are confident in discussing their favourite books with visitors. Writing is a strength, and in displays around the school there were many good examples of ways in which pupils adapt their writing for different purposes. These range from younger pupils' instructions on how to make a sandwich, and comparisons of old and new coins through annotated drawings by pupils in Years 3 and 4, to suggestions for slipper designs and brochures for holidays from Year 6 pupils.
110. Co-ordination of the subject is good, with clear educational direction. Arrangements for assessment are good. The analysis of test results, including tests on entry and reading scores, is effective in guiding the planning for pupils who need extra help, and for those with special educational needs. There is a good match of teachers and support assistants to the demands of the curriculum. Staff have a shared commitment to raising standards and they work together well. The grouping of pupils by prior attainment, together with the small group work and the team teaching in certain year groups, are successful in meeting pupils' different needs. Pupils in Year 6 benefit from the expertise of specialist teaching.
111. Learning resources are adequate. There are good quality resources for the teaching of the National Literacy Strategy, and the stock of books in the library can be supplemented by loans from the local schools' service. However, some of the reading books are in need of replacement. Pupils' use of ICT is still at an early stage. Response to the issues raised at the last inspection has been good. Pupils are making good progress in Years 3 to 6 and the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has resulted in a better range of reading books. The quality of writing has improved and there is more opportunity for original writing. However, there are still some areas in need of further improvement. Although the co-ordinator has provided support for staff by way of training and the monitoring of written work, there have been no opportunities for her to assess overall progress through the monitoring of lessons. Time is still not used to maximum effect in some lessons, and there are not enough writing resources for lower attaining pupils in group-work activities. English makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the wide range of literature which pupils encounter, and also through the opportunities for discussion, reading, research and original writing.

MATHEMATICS

112. The standards attained by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are average and similar to those reported at the last inspection. For pupils in Year 2, these standards are lower than the national test results in 2001 where standards were above average. The attainment of this group of seven-year-olds was lower on entry than that of the previous year. In the case of the eleven-year-olds these standards show an improvement from the test results in 2001, which were below average. Worthy of note is the amount of pupil mobility. Of the pupils who took the tests in 2001, approximately a third had joined the school during Years 3 to 6. Overall, pupils in all years are making sound progress and their achievement is satisfactory. Progress slows towards the end of Year 4, partly caused by the complex arrangements where pupils are often taught by more than one teacher in the year group. In Year 5 and Year 6, pupils make better progress, especially in Year 6 as a result of good teaching.

113. There are no marked differences in the performance of boys and girls in terms of those that attain average standards. However, considerably more girls than boys attain standards higher than those expected nationally for eleven-year-olds. The 'booster' classes in Years 5 and 6 provide timely and useful support for those pupils who experience difficulties in mathematics and their success is reflected in the steady rise in the number of pupils who reach average standards. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, as they are well supported, especially by the effective and conscientious teaching assistants. The achievement of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is similar to that of the majority of the pupils.
114. In Year 2, pupils have a reasonable understanding of the pairs of numbers that add up to 10 or 20 and correctly find the 'missing' number in addition and subtraction problems. They have made a sound start in knowing by heart their two and ten times tables. For example, they readily identify how many more tens are needed if 60 is to be made up to a 100. They are usually accurate as they add one and two digit numbers mentally and explain how they have gone about it. Most know some of the properties of common two- and three-dimensional shapes. They tell the time correctly using hours and half-hours accurately, with the higher attaining pupils confidently expressing the time in digital form as well as 'o'clock'. Pupils show the results of their surveys clearly using simple graphs, for example to show what they watched on television or the dates of their birthdays. The weakest aspect of their work is in solving problems, especially those related to real life.
115. In Year 6, pupils recall multiplication and division facts reasonably quickly and accurately. They calculate competently with whole numbers, fractions and decimal fractions. Pupils use calculators confidently, for example, as they use the memory function when they calculate the answer to a 'sum' that has a number of components. Most have a sound understanding of positive and negative numbers through the work teachers provide on co-ordinates. They have a sound knowledge of shapes and their properties and work out areas and perimeters of simple shapes accurately. Pupils are not as confident when working out the answer to real-life problems.
116. The quality of teaching varies, but is satisfactory overall in Years 1 to 6 and pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning. Approximately four lessons in ten observed were good, as well as one instance of teaching which was unsatisfactory. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is good and this is reflected in the good progress pupils make in these years. Teaching has improved since the last inspection, largely due to the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the placing of pupils into classes based on their attainment – 'setting'. This arrangement is particularly effective in Years 5 and 6. A considerable strength in the teaching across the school is the comprehensive way in which teachers plan their lessons and explain to the pupils what it is they are to learn. Emphasis is placed on teaching the correct mathematical vocabulary. Teaching assistants work effectively with the teachers and provide good support for pupils, which enhances their learning. Homework is set regularly and where it is completed it improves learning, especially in numeracy. Pupils in Year 6 found the booklet they were given for homework helpful in preparing for the national tests and it also provided a useful tool for parents to become involved with their children's learning. Pupils' work is regularly marked and teachers make reference to the learning intention for the lesson. In Year 6, very useful written comments are provided to help pupils to improve. Most comments in the other years are concerned with praise and do not give this extra support to the pupils.

117. Not enough use is made of ICT in the teaching of mathematics. Individual teachers plan opportunities to teach mathematics in other subjects. This happened in a study of tourism in Year 6 where pupils visited the 'travel shop' set up in the classroom and costed out their holidays. However, across the school insufficient attention is given to developing mathematics in other subjects, apart from science. In Years 1 and 2, pupils complete a considerable number of worksheets that require them to write answers in boxes and provide little space for their personal jottings. This usage reduces the opportunities for pupils to progress from mental to written methods of calculation.
118. A feature of the good teaching is the good balance teachers strike between direct teaching, giving explanations, and using pupils' ideas and responses. Such teaching captures pupils' interest and they concentrate and work hard. This happened in a good lesson in Year 6 where pupils were learning to use the memory function on their calculators. The teacher used an overhead projector effectively which meant that he could show the pupils the order in which the buttons were to be pressed. This enabled the pupils to explain how they were tackling the problem that had been set, and also to indicate clearly where they were having difficulties. Questions are used effectively to check the extent of pupils' understanding as well as to consolidate their learning. Questions such as 'What operation am I using?' 'How did you work it out?' and 'What did you find difficult?' are used regularly and effectively. In the one instance of unsatisfactory teaching, in Years 3/4, the teaching was more concerned with conveying a method rather than using effective questioning to enable pupils to explain their difficulties and allow the teacher to deal effectively with their misunderstandings.
119. Across the school there are three significant constraints on the teaching which hinders pupils' progress. Firstly, in Year 1 there is a long-term staff absence that has not been covered by a supply or temporary teacher. This has resulted in the two Year 1 classes recently being combined into one class with a number of pupils being taught in the Year 2 classes. Secondly, the teachers in Year 2 have found the open-plan design of their classrooms makes it very difficult to teach mathematics and English lessons at the same time. Consequently, they operate a 'team-teaching' system where they combine the two classes together for lessons. This makes it much more difficult to match the oral and mental work to the needs of the different groups of pupils and the pace of lessons slows. This is also the case in Year 3 where two teachers also 'team teach'. Finally, the organisation of the mixed-age Year 3 and Year 4 classes is complex which leads to pupils regularly being taught by a number of different teachers each day. The headteacher has recognised these issues and there are plans to deal with the organisational arrangements in Years 3 and 4.
120. The management of the subject is good and has contributed to the steadily improving standards over the past three years in which the co-ordinator has held the post. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. Arrangements for assessment are good. Good use is made of the detailed analysis of national tests and tests set by the school and the information is used effectively to set targets and to identify pupils who need extra support to reach the targets set for them. For example, extra emphasis is now being placed on improving pupils' abilities in solving everyday mathematical problems. Lessons are observed and the information is used satisfactorily to help teachers improve their teaching. Levels of resources are unsatisfactory overall. Whilst there is sufficient basic equipment in each class there is not enough specialist equipment, such as that needed to teach pupils how to tell the time accurately using both digital and analogue clocks. Consequently, teachers have to spend precious time making arrangements to share such equipment, adding to their workload. The deficit budget situation further exacerbates this situation.

SCIENCE

121. Results in the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 6 were broadly in line with the national average. Both the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 and the proportion of higher attaining pupils reaching Level 5 were around the average. Girls did better than boys but in recent years there has been no consistent pattern of the relative performance of boys and girls. In comparison with schools with a similar Year 2 points score in 1997, and with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, pupils' results were well above average. Results have kept pace with the rising trend nationally.
122. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2001 indicate above average attainment, with higher proportions of pupils reaching both Levels 2 and 3 than nationally. Unverified assessments for 2002 suggest lower standards, in line with predictions for this particular group of pupils.
123. In work seen during the inspection, standards are average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. However, given their attainment on entry, pupils' achievements are good through Years 1 and 2 and pupils of all prior attainment make good progress. During Years 3 to 6, pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall but progress is less consistently good. In general, pupils' progress improves as they move up through the school, and during Year 6, they make good progress. The rate of pupils' progress is dependent on the skills and confidence of individual teachers in each class. There is some good quality work produced by higher attaining pupils throughout the school. Pupils demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of all aspects of science which are well covered within the planned scheme of work. Pupils' understanding of scientific concepts, as demonstrated through their approach to investigative work, is less secure. In Year 2, pupils are able to distinguish between different habitats and where a range of domestic and wild animals might be found. Their understanding is enhanced by visits to local woodland. Pupils are also able to classify materials and use adjectives to describe them with some confidence. In Year 6, pupils are guided to a good understanding through an emphasis on investigative work and a proper scientific approach to the subject. In planning their investigation, pupils took good account of ensuring a fair test, recording results accurately and analysing the data against their predictions. Many average and lower attaining pupils are less confident in drawing conclusions from their results.
124. Throughout all years there is a careful attention to specialist vocabulary. This consistent approach is ensuring a confident use and understanding of scientific concepts, as well as making a positive contribution to pupils' language development. Year 3 pupils, for example, used words such as 'gravity', 'energy' and 'forces' with understanding. Year 5 pupils were able to explain the difference between volume and pitch with clarity. Science makes a satisfactory contribution to the development of pupils' numeracy skills. They use bar charts, pie charts and, in Year 6, line graphs to represent their findings. These are mostly recorded accurately. Pupils in Year 6 were observed making careful and accurate measurements of the stems of buttercups as part of their investigation. There is less use of computers than might be expected, although some examples of wordprocessed work was seen. There is no use for example, of sensing equipment to measure external events.
125. The quality of teaching and learning is good through Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6. However, much good teaching was observed during the inspection. The most effective teaching is focused sharply on clear learning targets which are clearly understood by the pupils, clear explanations and good classroom

management. Careful thought is given to the management of the learning. Effective questioning ensures pupils are challenged to think more deeply. In one good Year 3 lesson observed, the teacher constantly questioned the pupils to check understanding and to ensure all the pupils were actively involved. Many of the activities are imaginatively planned to ensure that pupils see the relevance of the learning and become attentive learners in the lesson. In one Year 6 lesson observed, the well-planned investigation captured the interest and imagination of the class, inspiring some committed and independent learning from all the pupils. Very good relationships and positive, co-operative work characterise these lessons. There is good support from other adults in classrooms. In a Year 1 lesson where pupils were investigating the properties of different materials and recording their observations, the sensitive support from classroom assistants ensured all pupils felt involved.

126. In less effective teaching, pupils are not always given work which matches their individual needs. As a consequence they are not consistently challenged to improve. Marking of pupils' work is sometimes detailed and thorough, particularly in Year 6. More often however, the assessment of pupils' progress is not sufficiently focused on what they need to do next. While some teachers set personal targets, these are not always expressed in the language which pupils find easy to understand. In some lessons a well-managed discussion at the end refers to the initial learning objective, asks the pupils to confirm what they have learnt and effectively consolidates the learning. This practice is not consistent however.
127. Leadership and management of the subject are good, and improvement since the last inspection has been good. Since the last inspection planning is now more coherent and the build up of skills and knowledge more systematic. The co-ordinator has a good overview of standards through her monitoring of teachers' planning and of pupils' work. She also has a good view of how the subject should develop. However, she has been unable to monitor and support teaching practice to help raise standards further, and opportunities to share good classroom practice have been limited.

ART AND DESIGN

128. Standards in art and design are below that expected nationally for pupils in Year 6. There have been some areas of improvement since the last inspection, particularly with pupils in Year 2 who attain average standards, but overall improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. The school places insufficient emphasis on the progressive teaching of skills and techniques. As a result pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory in Year 6 but satisfactory in Year 2.
129. In Year 2, pupils show a good awareness of the properties of different materials and are able to cut, fold and manipulate them to create designs. They can handle tools appropriately to carry out their design tasks. In Year 1, pupils used a variety of techniques, such as folding, curling and fringing, to change the appearance of a range of paper and create a three-dimensional design. The older pupils in Year 2 used string to create a design and were beginning to build up layers to develop a three-dimensional effect. Pupils of this age are able to draw natural objects from observation and to use paint and other media to create pictures. Some of the work of the younger pupils that was displayed around the school showed good attainment. A particularly imaginative example of this was the sculptures made from natural materials such as wood, stone and shells.
130. The work of pupils in Years 3 to 6 does not show enough systematic build up of skills and techniques. Pupils use a range of techniques, making collages, designing

geometric patterns and painting pictures, but much of the work is not of a high enough standard. They have not developed good enough techniques of mixing paint to create shades and tones. Pictures show little understanding of distance and perspective. Pupils' three-dimensional work using clay and textiles is immature. However, some observational drawing of sixteenth century ships, which linked well with Year 5's history work, showed reasonable attainment for the age of the pupils. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the work of famous artists. In a good lesson in Year 6, they used viewfinders to focus on a specific part of a picture. Their awareness of the style of the artist was satisfactory but, when they came to reproduce a small part of the picture, most of them did not have sufficient skills with pastels and paints to achieve the task. Pupils' skills in planning and evaluation are better developed now than at the time of the last inspection.

131. The teaching of art and design is satisfactory overall, although a number of good lessons were observed during the inspection. Throughout the school, teachers make the learning objective of each lesson explicit to pupils and explain the tasks clearly. Art and design lessons are used well to support language development, and positive encouragement is given to pupils to discuss, give opinions and improve their vocabulary. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 provide good opportunities for pupils to investigate and explore different materials. They provide clear teaching of skills, by showing pupils what to do and using pupils' own work as exemplars. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 focuses on knowledge rather than skills. For example, Year 5 pupils learnt about the range of designs, materials and functions of containers but were not given specific guidance to enable them to improve their observational drawing of the containers. In Year 6, the teacher provided a good range of artists' work and supported the development of pupils' knowledge of the style and techniques of famous painters through discussion and feedback. However, pupils were not given enough support to improve their painting and drawing skills when they attempted their own interpretation of the work. Pupils with special educational needs were given satisfactory support, often with another adult working in the class. Special events such as visiting artists and a designated arts week enhance the curriculum. Some interesting encaustic art work that the Year 6 pupils achieved with a visiting artist is on display in the school.
132. Pupils are given opportunities to evaluate their work, often using written evaluation sheets, but little use is made of this information by teachers. Work in sketchbooks is marked regularly but marking is uncritical. Praise and reward points are awarded for mediocre work and there is little developmental feedback to help pupils improve. The class portfolios of pupils' work show a range of two-dimensional and some three-dimensional work but do not provide evidence of reasonable progress from year to year.
133. The school is currently using national guidelines for its scheme of work. Units of work for art and design, and the individual lessons within them, are planned well but have not always been successfully implemented. The changes that teachers have made have resulted in a loss of consistency and whole school coherence. Teachers within each year group have made their own decisions about what they will teach without sufficient consideration of the build up of skills from year to year. This situation has been exacerbated by the long-term absence of the art co-ordinator, which leaves the school without clear leadership and educational direction for the subject. This lack of effective subject leadership and an agreed scheme of work, which clearly addresses the development of pupils' technical skills as well as subject knowledge and understanding, is limiting the school's capability to improve standards of teaching and learning in art and design.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

134. Pupils' achievement in design and technology is satisfactory and the attainment of pupils in Years 2 and 6 is in line with that expected for pupils of these ages. These standards show a considerable improvement since the last inspection when they were below average. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants and make satisfactory progress. A significant contribution to the rising standards is the specialist teaching from Years 2 to 6. Since the last inspection a policy has been drawn up and implemented effectively together with a nationally provided scheme of work. Resources have been improved and the subject is secure in the curriculum. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.
135. In Year 2, satisfactory teaching has enabled good foundations to be laid in the basic knowledge and skills needed for the subject. Pupils plan their work carefully and adapt these plans in the light of experience. For example, one pupil had decided that his finger puppet would be a rhinoceros. He had to make several changes to his original design, as he wanted the horn to stick up. Eventually after effective questioning by his teacher he solved the problem with a pipe cleaner. Pupils satisfactorily develop skills in joining materials, for example with glue or by sewing. They have begun to understand that certain materials have properties that make them suitable for specific tasks. This happened in a lesson in Year 2 where pupils carefully chose the materials to provide their finger 'insect' puppets with legs and antennae. Completed work showed how pupils had used materials such as feathers and sequins to enhance other puppets they had made. The pupils' puppets were then used effectively to further their skills in speaking and listening in a puppet theatre.
136. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to make satisfactory progress when they design and make more advanced projects as they are usually taught by teachers who specialise in the subject. Year 6 pupils have satisfactory construction skills and continue to design imaginatively. They competently design shelters that will withstand a specified weight and fulfil a designated purpose. Pupils select the materials to be used, for example corrugated plastic, with purpose firmly in mind. They evaluate their projects carefully using well-designed formats provided by the teacher. 'I would definitely take off the legs and replace them as they look as if they are falling off' wrote one eleven-year-old as part of an evaluation.
137. Overall, teaching is satisfactory throughout the school, although some good teaching was observed during the inspection. A scrutiny of completed work and teachers' planning confirms that teaching has improved since the last inspection and that pupils' learning is satisfactory. Teachers encourage pupils to work creatively and to evaluate their work regularly. On occasion, teaching is very good, as in a lesson in Year 6 when pupils were making a prototype of slippers they had designed earlier. Very good attention was paid to using the correct vocabulary such as 'component'. The teacher's very good questioning enabled the pupils to develop successfully their skills, rather than just following instructions. A feature of the lesson was the good attention paid to detail, for example demonstrating how to leave a 'seam allowance'.
138. In Years 3 to 6, a teaching assistant is particularly skilled in the subject and contributes a great deal to the teaching. In Years 1 and 2, teaching assistants and parents are deployed effectively to enhance pupils' learning. For example, in a lesson in Year 2, two parents sensitively helped pupils to sew materials together, carefully helping the pupils but not doing it for them. Good questioning by the teaching assistant

enabled pupils to make an appropriate choice as to the materials they were to use on the finger puppets. On occasion ICT is used effectively to research prior to designing. In Year 5, pupils researched the Internet for information about musical instruments from around the world before designing their own instruments. Pupils in a mixed Years 3/4 class used ICT to record information they had found from a survey of different switches as part of the design process for a torch.

139. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator developed the subject effectively after the last inspection but now does not have as much time due to his additional duties as assistant headteacher and mathematics co-ordinator. Teachers' planning is monitored carefully but little observation of teaching takes place. Plans have been made to have a focus on observing the teaching of design and technology as part of a school programme for monitoring the teaching of subjects other than English, mathematics and science. New arrangements have been drawn up for assessing pupils' work to replace the adequate but less informative systems currently being used. Resources are satisfactory and are well organised.

GEOGRAPHY

140. The attainment of pupils in geography is in line with that expected in both Years 2 and 6. This matches standards that were found at the last inspection. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory through Years 1 to 6 although pupils in Year 6 achieve well in relation to geographical enquiry.
141. By Year 2, pupils recognise physical features of the local environment and know the functions of buildings in the area, such as school, hospital and library. Higher attaining pupils give detailed descriptions of these functions. Through studying the map of the British Isles, they have identified major towns or cities and understand that to journey to them, they can use different forms of transport, according to distance or sea crossing. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how weather in different environmental conditions affects the choice of clothing needed for people, the homes they live in and the kind of animals that may be found. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Their learning of locations further afield has been enhanced by using an atlas to pinpoint journeys of a toy bear and pig to Cornwall or Essex. They recognise the need to travel from Birmingham to New York by air or in this country by forms of land transport.
142. Year 6 pupils have the expected understanding of environments in different parts of the world and how these affect the lifestyles of people. In recent work, they show a good understanding of the lifestyles due to environment and economic circumstances of people who live close to the beaches of Spain and are supported through the tourist industry and those who work and live in the mountainous farming areas. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate extensive research into aspects of life in the more mountainous regions of Spain, and when studying mountain ranges. All pupils demonstrate a satisfactory skill in using maps and in using a key to identify features on their own map drawings. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are able to achieve a similar standard because of the support received. In their choice of study of a mountain range, pupils demonstrate a good grasp of using a range of resources to find information through video, CD-Rom, books and particularly the Internet. As a result of their trip to Malvern, they have demonstrated the ability to present information in interesting ways, combining both first-hand and secondary sources of information. For example, they give comprehensive details of an area through writing a postcard home or advertising the geographical features of the area as publicity information for a tourist brochure.

143. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout Years 1 to 6. In the aspect of using a range of information in Year 6 it is good. Planning is clear and teachers show a good knowledge in balancing aspects of information for knowledge and teaching skills to develop understanding, such as the guided research methods used in Years 3 and 4 when studying India. This approach enables pupils to have a clear understanding of the location of settlements and how environmental conditions affect the growing of the crops or obtaining food. Higher attaining pupils are challenged further to give good accounts of the positive or negative effects of living in an Indian village. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well to achieve similar results to the rest of the class. Year 5 teachers show particular care in making questions or worksheets easily understandable for these pupils, whereas this is not consistent practice in all classes. The level of challenge and provision of resources for Year 6 in their studies of local environments and those further afield, enable them to work at a good pace with an eagerness to achieve and to use the information found to present their conclusions. Pupils present their researched information in interesting ways for different audiences, such as through postcards, posters and advertisements. Marking of pupils' work is minimal in many classes, but in Years 3 and 6, marking helps pupils understand how well they are doing their work and how to improve it. As a result of the interesting ways of planning geography, pupils are eager to learn and work together on topics co-operatively with concentration and perseverance. This diligence was well demonstrated in a good lesson in Year 6, when pupils were challenged with well-focused questions, using geographical language. A small group of Year 1 pupils in Year 2 are supported but not challenged to achieve more than lower attaining pupils in Year 2.
144. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The headteacher is currently acting as co-ordinator until a new teacher co-ordinator is appointed. The school has adopted and adapted a new scheme of work since the last inspection. The previously good resources now meet the needs of this scheme satisfactorily and it is intended to extend the quantity of these under the guidance of a new co-ordinator. The imbalance between content and development of skills found at the last inspection has been rectified by planning, based on the new scheme of work. Studies about India, Spain and Malvern have made positive contributions to pupils' social and cultural understanding. Monitoring of the subject is satisfactory. The headteacher sees teachers' planning and work in pupils' books formally and observes geography lessons and activities, or talks to pupils on an informal basis. Records of pupils' attainment at the end of a unit of work are kept, but the information is not systematically used to set targets for future challenge, or adapt the curriculum. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection.

HISTORY

145. Standards in history are better than they were at the time of the last inspection. By Year 6, pupils reach standards which are above average. This is an improvement on the average standards which they attained before, and is the result of very good teaching in Years 3 to 6.
146. Pupils attain average standards in Year 2. By then, pupils have started to recognise and describe some of the different ways in which the past can be represented. For example, they know that the diary of Samuel Pepys is a good source of information about the Great Fire of London in the reign of Charles II. Similarly, pupils in Year 1 appreciate the importance of photographs and old film reels in helping them to understand the differences between seaside holidays in Victorian times and those

which they enjoy in the twenty-first century. Pupils achieve well because teachers have a good grasp of the subject and know how to make it interesting. There is no difference in achievement between different groups of pupils.

147. Achievement continues to be good as pupils move up through the school. By Year 6, most pupils can identify distinctive features of past civilisations such as those of Greece and Rome, and they have a good understanding of what life was like in Britain during and after the Second World War. They have a sound knowledge of important events and social conditions in Tudor times, and are keenly aware of the impact of economic and social changes throughout modern Britain, and in their immediate neighbourhood. Most pupils are starting to evaluate information sources and select those relevant to specific questions. Pupils discuss their findings with enthusiasm. A strength of their achievement is the effective way in which they are able to use artefacts to answer questions about the past.
148. Teaching and learning are good overall, and very good in Years 3 to 6 where, in the lessons seen, there were two examples of excellent teaching. One of the strengths is the quality of the resources and the way in which they are used. For example, pupils of all levels of attainment, both boys and girls, are confident in examining artefacts and explaining how they have come to their conclusions. In a lesson which focused on the identification of Roman artefacts, the teacher made excellent use of facsimiles of Roman pottery and ornaments to prompt pupils into forming initial hypotheses on their use. Pupils responded with explanations which were ingenious and, on occasions, imaginative, as in the description of a torc as 'a bracelet for a princess, made of gold'. Later in the lesson, as they handled authentic pieces of Roman pottery, pupils pointed out differences and similarities in the various pieces, and made thoughtful suggestions about their origin. Similarly, in a Year 6 lesson, where pupils were writing up their findings after carrying out a survey of buildings in the locality, the teacher's forethought in providing photographs which showed the buildings from different angles, enabled pupils to test their original hypotheses and make well-informed comments on the distinctive features. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievement, and a feature of the most effective lessons is the way in which pupils are challenged through well-directed questioning to express their opinions clearly and to justify them using relevant evidence. Support staff make a significant contribution to the progress of pupils with special educational needs through their practical help in group work and in building up self-confidence in those who find it difficult to take an active part in lessons. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, it is mainly because resources are not used to maximum effect, and this restricts the amount of information which pupils can obtain.
149. Attitudes to the subject are good overall, with some very good attitudes shown in the most effective lessons. Pupils' interest and enjoyment are evident in the way they work productively in lessons and in the good relationships within the classroom. Most pupils present their work tidily with effective use of illustration. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 and pupils with special educational needs make good use of labelled drawings to show what they have learned during the lesson. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make accurate observations of artefacts from Roman and Victorian times and give clear answers to questions about age, nature and probable use. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 record their information in a variety of ways, such as timelines, bullet points, annotated drawings and photographs and extended writing. They are adept at using the writing techniques they have learnt in their literacy lessons, as was well illustrated in a key opening sentence to a paragraph: 'This house has a Victorian look to it.'

150. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator is a history specialist with a boundless enthusiasm for the subject which he passes on to his pupils. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Standards in Year 6 are above average. Pupils achieve well in Years 2 and 6 and the teaching has improved. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching and some teaching is of the highest quality. The arrangement whereby the co-ordinator teaches history to all pupils in Years 3 and 4 is very effective in ensuring high standards across the two year groups and is an excellent example of the value of deploying staff to teach to their strengths. The scheme of work provides a structure which is helpful to non-specialists. However, there are some aspects that are in need of further improvement. The fact that the co-ordinator is not involved in lesson observations means that his role as a manager is limited, and teachers are not able to benefit from his expertise in gaining a better understanding of lesson objectives and the ways of achieving them. Although resources continue to be very good, they are not always used to maximum effect because they are not now centrally managed. Assessment procedures are in place, but are not yet used in a consistent way throughout the school.
151. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development through the programmes of study, group work, good quality resources, and research projects carried out by older pupils. Pupils also benefit from visits and experiences during which they can deepen their understanding of the topics they are studying. For example, pupils in Year 2 visit Boscobel House to extend their knowledge of the Stuart period in England. However, budgetary constraints have recently reduced the number of trips on offer. Pupils of all ages use the Internet effectively to find out how life has changed over time.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

152. Standards in ICT are below that expected nationally for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Although these are similar judgements to those at the last inspection, the school has made good progress towards improving standards and resources in this subject. Pupils in Year 6 now have the capabilities expected of them in using text facilities and researching information on their own. Whilst pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory, in these aspects it has been good.
153. Pupils in Year 2 have the expected skills to produce short pieces of text and make labels in different letter sizes and styles for the classroom, but the majority cannot consistently save and retrieve their work. With support, most pupils understand how to gain access to computer programs with names and passwords and confidently use an adventure program to arrange numbers in the correct order on screen with good mouse control. The few higher attaining pupils are able to do this without help and also guide lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs in the correct procedures. Most pupils, however, have weak keyboard skills. They are aware of the requirement to collect information to present in tables, but have insufficient experience in this aspect. All pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how devices, such as microwaves, video recorders and playstations are controlled in the home and school, but they have too few opportunities to give instructions to control robots and toys or programs on the computer.
154. Pupils in Year 6 have a satisfactory knowledge of word processing techniques and are able to amend their work and present it neatly. These skills are demonstrated in a range of subjects, such as making advertising posters in geography and recording evaluations of a design and technology activity. They skilfully combine text and pictures for a geography project about mountainous regions. Almost all pupils

confidently log on to the Internet and find information about topics they wish to research and are aware that there are a number of 'search engines' to enable them to do this. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported to achieve similar goals to other pupils and those with experience of computers at home are encouraged to use that knowledge for more challenging work, or share information when working in pairs and groups. Whilst pupils have some experience of collecting information and presenting it in a range of graphs and charts, they are not confident in this aspect, nor in entering data into tables such as spreadsheets. Pupils understand the concept of the use of e-mail, but have insufficient experience of its use. The greatest weakness in pupils' knowledge at this level is in the aspect of controlling devices. The school is still under-resourced to provide the skills in this aspect. A visit to the Kingswood Activity Centre enabled pupils to have experience of using multimedia presentations and enhanced their use of a digital camera in school.

155. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. In teaching skills in using the Internet, teaching has been good, resulting in pupils learning at a brisk pace and achieving well. Throughout the school, teachers show satisfactory knowledge of the subject. However, timetabling of the computer suite is not always efficiently managed. One Years 3/4 class during the inspection had to wait too long to consolidate their learning on computers. This slows down the rate of progress. Teachers plan well and manage groups efficiently for maximum experience when using the computers. Lessons move at a brisk pace, so that pupils learn a skill and then have the opportunity to use it. This was observed in a good Year 5 lesson where pupils had clear teaching about language of cell, formula and formulae before entering the suite. Effective teaching in which the teacher demonstrated on screen enabled most pupils to meet and sometimes exceed the initial challenge and use their new-found skills. Good support for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs ensured they learned this skill and made satisfactory progress. Very good management skills in a Year 6 literacy lesson enabled pupils to use research methods on the Internet to find out about poets and poems. Teachers and support assistants work well together to promote pupils' learning and to provide an example to pupils, who themselves work co-operatively, and ensure that everyone is included in the learning, so that all have equal opportunity to use the computers. Teachers' ongoing assessment of pupils' skills ensures that each lesson is built on previous learning and within lessons, pupils are given help as it is needed.
156. Leadership and management of information and communication technology are good. In the absence of the current co-ordinator, the shadow co-ordinator is ably and knowledgeably taking the subject forward. Since the last inspection, there has been good progress towards targets set for this subject. A new scheme of work details what is to be taught to each year group and is well supported by pupil textbooks. A new computer suite, opened in January 2002, has brought about a much faster pace to the learning than hitherto, backed up by computers in the classroom, with matching programs to the suite. A technician has been employed to oversee computer problems. All teachers have undergone and almost completed computer training, which has greatly enhanced their knowledge and confidence in planning and teaching lessons. A start has been made in all subjects to use ICT to support learning, but this is as yet insufficiently developed, due to some lack of opportunity or insufficient software to match curricular needs, such as programs for experiencing and adapting music notation and tunes. An assessment procedure to measure pupils' progress is in the process of being introduced but has had insufficient time to have an impact on the curriculum. Monitoring of the subject is satisfactory with the shadow co-ordinator checking examples of work and ensuring that pupils are working at the correct level for their year.

MUSIC

157. Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is in line with that expected nationally and pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. Improvement since the last inspection overall is satisfactory. The curriculum is enhanced with a good range of extra-curricular music, including a well-supported choir.
158. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to demonstrate the expected skills for their age in performing short compositions, using untuned percussion instruments. They use picture cards to represent instruments and follow the beat. They recognise changing sounds, beats and build on work they have previously done in dynamics. When singing, they are able to follow a tuneful rhythmic pattern and mentally think through a pattern before joining in again vocally or rhythmically. No specific challenge is planned for higher attaining pupils, but pupils with special educational needs are supported to achieve in line with others in the same class. All pupils enjoy singing and do so enthusiastically in assembly and are able to recognise that songs are sung in different styles.
159. Year 6 pupils demonstrate a good understanding of singing songs, hymns and prayers with different moods and dynamics, such as the popular praise song 'Shine Jesus Shine' and then the 'Lord's Prayer'. Pupils from Years 4 to 6 sing with enjoyment and an awareness of different rhythms, phrasing and pitch in their preparation for presentation in the Jubilee concert. They ably change from prayer song, such as 'Day by Day' to 'Matchstick Men' and 'Locomotion'. Taped music demonstrates how pupils in Year 4 record their singing efforts, to listen to and improve their work. Year 5 pupils compose music with percussion for 'The Planets'. Pupils in Year 4 have a clear understanding of the merits and functions of a range of musical instruments, researched on the Internet. When experimenting with 'question and answer' rhythms, Year 6 pupils demonstrate an ability to improvise rhythmic phrases and build these into a composition, which will be used by the whole school. Higher attaining pupils write chords to these settings and lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported to make equal contributions to the group.
160. Too few lessons were observed to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning. However, pupils in Year 1 were observed being given satisfactory opportunities to understand and recognise different rhythms through clapping patterns of names, and all pupils contributed equally because of the support given to lower attaining pupils. Planning for music shows that all pupils are given balanced opportunities to cover a range of activities which include composing, performing and listening to music. Extra-curricular opportunities in learning to play the guitar and keyboard from professional musicians, and choir, keyboard and recorder from the staff contribute well to the teaching and enthusiastic response in pupil participation. A good lesson was seen in a Year 6 class. In this lesson the teacher had very clear objectives which were shared with the pupils. Good subject knowledge enabled the teacher to give clear direction in a sequential way. This allowed pupils to build up quickly new stages of their learning in composing a tune for a specific purpose. Good organisation of the instruments and resources enabled pupils to concentrate and work together well so that by the end of the lesson they were able to record which notes were to be used. Opportunities were given for higher attaining pupils to extend their work, and support for lower attaining pupils allowed them to have confidence to make a positive contribution in presenting their music to the group.

161. Leadership and management of music are satisfactory overall. The headteacher is co-ordinator and monitors by checking planning throughout the school, but also by participating in much of the singing aspect and through discussions with staff on other aspects, or through specific staff meetings. Since the last inspection, a new detailed scheme of work has been implemented on a two-year cycle. With support from a commercial teaching scheme teachers are confident in their knowledge and pupils receive a balanced programme. The implementation of an arts week, with contributions from different kinds of bands, ensembles, quartets and dancers and a visit by Year 6 to concerts at the Birmingham Symphony Hall provided a broad extension to pupils' first-hand experience of a range of music. Assessments of pupils' progress are made but do not inform future planning. Resources for music are adequate in quantity and quality to meet the needs of the curriculum. The school acknowledges that a weakness exists in the provision of non-western instruments and a lack of opportunities to use computers in music. It is planned to rectify this when budgetary restrictions allow.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

162. Standards in physical education are average throughout the school and in both Years 2 and 6, pupils achieve satisfactorily, based on the limited range of activities observed during the inspection. Lessons observed focused on athletics and ball games but analysis of the scheme of work indicates that it meets national requirements for all aspects of the physical education curriculum. Swimming is taught each term to one of the year groups in Years 3 to 6. The school is aware of the importance of learning to swim because of the proximity of the local reservoir and most pupils can swim by the time they leave the school. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory; in particular teachers' planning and the provision for extra-curricular activities has improved.
163. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show a good awareness of their bodies and of using the space around them when exercising. They are developing appropriate early games' skills controlling a bat reasonably effectively to bounce and hit a ball. In Year 2 most pupils are able to throw and catch a ball well. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are developing satisfactory understanding of the range of athletic activities. They use running, jumping and throwing skills in informal competition. They measure time and distance to evaluate and improve their performances. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, most have good co-ordination. Pupils in Year 6 can bowl, bat and field skilfully in informal small games. Pupils throughout the school understand the importance of warming up before the main physical activity, and the benefits of exercise and its effect on their bodies.
164. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but is less satisfactory when the teacher fails to control the pupils adequately. One very good lesson in Year 6 was observed in which the teacher had clear expectations of pupils' response and behaviour, which he reinforced effectively with praise and support. Pupils were encouraged to think for themselves. The lesson was clearly structured to enable pupils to develop team skills, working initially in pairs, then in threes and fours. The teacher used examples of pupils' performance to clarify teaching points, giving good feedback to help pupils improve. Significant progress in batting skills was observed in this lesson, particularly some of the girls who used a cricket bat well by the end of the lesson after initially using it like a tennis racquet. One lesson observed was unsatisfactory because the teacher lacked effective behaviour management strategies. Pupils did not listen to instructions and the pace of the lesson deteriorated because the teacher had to continually stop activities to reinstate order. Most teachers

are aware of the individual requirements of pupils with special educational needs in their class and modify instructions, expectations and support effectively. Health and safety is strongly promoted by teachers who insist on suitable clothing for physical education and provide a good example by dressing appropriately themselves. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and this is an area of improvement from the last inspection.

165. The school provides better opportunities for pupils to extend their skills in after-school sports clubs and dance activities than at the time of the last inspection. The street dancing club is particularly enthusiastically supported.
166. There have been changes to the leadership and management responsibilities for the subject since the last inspection. As a result, while overall management is satisfactory it is not dynamic. There is very little systematic monitoring and evaluation of planning and teaching, and the co-ordinator provides only informal support. Funding for staff development is very limited, and there is no consistent whole school approach to assessment.