

INSPECTION REPORT

TIBBERTON CE FIRST SCHOOL

Tibberton, Worcester

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116851

Headteacher: Mrs H. Gratland

Reporting inspector: Dr J.N.Thorp
6327

Dates of inspection: 27 - 30 November 2000

Inspection number: 224452

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Plough Road Tibberton Droitwich Worcester
Postcode	WR9 7NL
Telephone number:	01905 345284
Fax number:	01905 345284
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D.Errington
Date of previous inspection:	March 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Dr J.N.Thorp	Registered inspector	The Foundation Stage; English; information and communication technology; art and design; music; special educational needs; English as an additional language	What sort of a school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils? What should the school do to improve further?
Mrs J.Gallichan	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?
Mr R.W.Hardaker	Team inspector	mathematics; science; design and technology; history; geography; physical education; religious education; equal opportunities	How well is the school led and managed

The inspection contractor was:

Glenside Education
3, Middlefield Close
Weaverthorpe
Malton
North Yorkshire
YO17 8EJ

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The Registrar
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The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Tibberton CE First School is located in the village of Tibberton, midway between Worcester and Droitwich. It is smaller than average in size, with 58 pupils on roll organised into three classes. The school is entitled to admit 14 pupils each year; around two thirds of these come from a fairly wide catchment area with parents bringing their children to the school from as far away as Droitwich and Warndon on the outskirts of Worcester. The school is oversubscribed. The great majority of pupils are white; one pupil speaks English as an additional language. No pupils are eligible for a free school meal, which is below average. Standards of attainment on entry to the school are broadly average. Currently there are no pupils with a statement of special educational need; there are about nine per cent of pupils on the special needs register, which is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Tibberton CE First School is a very effective and successful school. The leadership and management of the school is very good, ensuring that pupils are provided with an environment for learning in which they can flourish. All staff effectively communicate their high expectations of learning and behaviour. Pupils respond most positively; their enthusiasm for school is excellent. Teaching is consistently good, enabling pupils to make good progress and achieve high standards throughout the school. The school's very considerable strengths far outweigh any weaknesses identified. It serves its pupils and the community very well indeed and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science are well above average; standards in reading are high
- Teaching is good overall; teachers are highly committed, very hard working and skilful
- Pupils' attitudes to school are very good - they are keen and try hard; their behaviour is very good
- The headteacher's leadership of the school is very good; she has a clear philosophy which informs all the school's work and possesses the skills to manage it most effectively
- Teachers are very good role models for their pupils; the quality of relationships in the school is excellent
- Provision for pupils' personal development is very good
- The information the school provides for parents is very good

What could be improved

- Pupils' progress in developing their skills in information and communication technology, particularly in Years 3 and 4, and the opportunities they have to work with the computers in all subjects
- The present distribution of teaching space, which restricts the provision made for the youngest children

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in March 1996. In most aspects there has been good improvement since then. Standards in English, mathematics and science have been consistently above average over the past three years and these high standards and good pupil progress are

now being sustained through Years 3 and 4. The overall quality of teaching has improved. It is now consistently good across the whole school, which is the result of the spread of good practice. There are now effective systems in place for monitoring the curriculum. Information gained is well used both to identify areas for further development in subjects and to track pupils' progress. There is also careful monitoring of the quality of teaching, with feedback provided to individual teachers. Following further training, teachers now effectively identify more able pupils and plan appropriately to meet their learning needs. The role and responsibilities of the governing body have been clearly established and this is now enabling governors to contribute more effectively to the management of the school. The school is well placed to continue improving. In one respect, however, there has been insufficient improvement. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 develop their skills in information and communication technology too slowly, because there is insufficient direct teaching of the skills they need.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
reading	A	A	A*	A
writing	A	A	A*	A
mathematics	B	A	A*	B

Key	
in the highest 5% nationally	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. By the end of Year 2 they achieve very high standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The school's performance in these subjects is among the highest five percent nationally. When compared to those of pupils in similar schools, standards are well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Attainment in the school has consistently been above the national average.. The findings of the inspection reflect the high standards attained in statutory tests in English, mathematics and science. By the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is broadly in line with that expected in information and communication technology and in religious education.

Pupils of all abilities make good progress in their learning in English mathematics and science throughout Years 3 and 4 and by the time they leave the school their attainment in these subjects is also well above average. Progress in information and communication technology is slower due the lack of opportunities pupils have to work with the computers and by the time they leave pupils' attainment is below what is expected of pupils their age. In religious education progress is good and by the time they leave the school pupils' attainment is above average. In all other subjects where a judgement could be made, pupils throughout the school are achieving appropriate standards, with some particular strengths noted during the inspection, in dance for example, and in history in Years 3 and 4.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good throughout the school. They have very positive attitudes to their work and to their teachers. They are interested in their lessons, keen to learn and confident to ask questions to extend their understanding.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. Pupils are friendly, sociable and polite. The atmosphere in lessons is calm, orderly and purposeful, which ensures good learning. Behaviour in the playground is generally very good.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. They work and play well together. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are excellent. Parents are right to be pleased with the attitudes and values the school promotes.
Attendance	The rate of attendance is very high compared with other schools.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is consistently good and a real strength of the school. In 95% lessons teaching is good or better; in around 30% of them teaching is very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen. The high quality of the teaching has a major impact on the progress pupils make and the standards they achieve. Teaching of pupils in Year 2 is consistently very good. Overall the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching during literacy and numeracy lessons throughout the school is consistently good; some lessons are of a very high quality, especially in numeracy. The skills of literacy and numeracy are also well taught and promoted in other subjects.

A particular strength in teaching throughout the school is the high expectation teachers have of their pupils and the way they communicate this right from the start. Teachers manage pupils' learning effectively, telling them what they are going to do and learn in the lesson. Teachers at the school work very hard and pupils benefit from the considerable effort they put into their teaching.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets statutory requirements. However, older pupils have insufficient opportunities to work with computers in all subjects. Young children have insufficient access to outside play and to large play apparatus.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision to meet pupils' special educational needs is good. Pupils' individual educational plans contain appropriate targets and their progress is tracked effectively. At the times when they are present, the school's teaching assistants provide good support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is a strong feature of the school. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good; pupils understand right from wrong. There are good routines to ensure that pupils share, play and work together well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are high levels of care, support and concern for the welfare of all pupils in the school. All pupils feel valued as individuals. The emphasis on positive reinforcement is most successful in promoting very good behaviour. Very good procedures have been developed to monitor and support pupils' academic progress.

The school works well in partnership with parents, contributing positively to the high standards achieved by pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head and other key staff	The school is most effectively managed. The headteacher's leadership is very good; she provides clear direction and purpose. There is a strong sense of teamwork and a firm commitment to the school and to raising standards of attainment.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities appropriately. Their individual roles are now more clearly defined than at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher keeps governors well informed about developments in the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is effective monitoring and evaluation of the success of aspects of the school development plan in raising standards. The headteacher and subject co-ordinators monitor pupils' progress effectively. This enables them to set appropriate and challenging targets for further improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of available resources. Financial planning is good and resources are used well to support the long-term development of the school. The careful use of available funds has secured significant improvements to both the school building and grounds and to the ability of the school to maintain three classes.

Staffing and resources for learning are adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum. The additional support available for part of the day is particularly valuable in the Reception and Year 1 class. There are some good features in the school's accommodation, like the gym, the library and the outside play facilities. There is a particular weakness in the space available for the reception children, which is insufficient to enable them to have appropriate experiences in learning through practical activity and play. There is no access to a secure outdoor play area.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school settles in new pupils very well. • Teachers work enormously hard. • It is a very traditional type of school - it teaches good values. • Pupils and teachers know each other well. • Standards are high - test results are good. • Parents are kept well informed about standards • Parental involvement is good • It is a well-ordered school - pupils are taught to be well-behaved at all times. • The staff respect the children - there is a strong focus on building their self-esteem. • Regular newsletters keep parents fully informed. • Problems are dealt with quickly and well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some pupils have spent time "cruising" - they could have been pushed more. • Children should read more to the teacher. • Homework tails off as pupils get older - they should get more. • There is a need for after school clubs.

Inspectors agree with the many positive comments made by parents about the school. However, they could find no evidence that pupils were "cruising". Teachers are demanding of pupils in lessons and this is contributing positively to the good progress they make and standards they achieve. Arrangements for teaching reading are effective in ensuring that pupils achieve high standards. The guidance provided for parents hearing children read is good. Inspectors are aware of the effect of the long-term absence of one teacher and the fact that homework may not have been set as regularly as previously. This appears to have now been rectified with the return of the class teacher concerned. There are few after school activities, but inspectors concluded that, given the ages of the children and the fact that so many of them have to travel home out of the village, those provided were appropriate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 When children start school in the reception class, the results of assessments carried out in the first few weeks of term indicate that most young children achieve standards typical for their age, while a small number reach higher levels in each area of their learning. By the time they are five, the majority have achieved the early learning goals for children of their age; a significant proportion have already begun work on the National Curriculum programmes of study for pupils in Key Stage 1.

2 The results of the most recent statutory assessment tests indicate that standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics are very high in comparison with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 3 in these subjects was well above average. Compared with all schools nationally, the school's results are among the best five percent. When pupils' achievements are compared to those in similar schools they are well above average in reading and writing and they are above average in mathematics.

3 The results of teacher assessment indicate that the proportion of pupils who achieved the level expected nationally of seven year olds in speaking and listening was very high in comparison with the national average. The proportion achieving the higher level 3 was well above average. Teacher assessment in science also indicates that standards are very high in comparison with the national average, with a well above average proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 3.

4 The school has maintained these high standards in reading, writing and mathematics over the four years between 1996 and 2000. Although there have been some fluctuations over time, in reading, writing and mathematics, standards have improved in line with the national trend. The headteacher, teachers and governors have made good use of the results of tests and other teacher assessments to set realistically ambitious targets for the results of the end of key stage tests. These targets are consistently being met.

5 The high standard of pupils' attainment is maintained through Years 3 and 4 and, when pupils leave the school at the age of nine, inspection evidence indicates that the standard of their attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above average.

6 The school has been particularly successful in teaching the basic skills. Young children make good progress in developing their skills of literacy and numeracy through the reception year, with many of them beginning work on the early stages of the National Curriculum. Progress is good through Key Stage 1 so that by the age of seven standards of literacy and numeracy are high. The successful implementation and adaptation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies has contributed to the achievement of these high standards. This good work continues into Key Stage 2 so that by the time pupils leave the school these standards have been maintained. Standards of reading are particularly good throughout the school.

7 Inspection evidence indicates that standards of attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 4 are above average in English and science and well above average in mathematics. Standards are particularly high in reading.

8 Inspection evidence also shows that by the end of Key Stage 1 the standard of pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is broadly in line with the standard expected. By the age of nine, however, progress has not been sustained and standards are below

those expected for pupils of their age. This is the result of the long term absence of the class teacher and insufficient direct teaching of computer skills. The lack of appropriate resources, which has only recently improved, has also inhibited opportunities for pupils to work with the computers in all subjects. Consequently, by the time pupils leave the school, standards are too low; pupils' achievements are below their capabilities.

9 Standards in religious education are broadly average in Key Stage 1 and above average by the end of Year 4. In art and physical education standards are in line with those expected at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4, with some particularly good standards noted in dance. In history, standards are above average in both key stages. There was insufficient evidence to support a judgement about standards in design and technology, geography and music in both key stages.

10 Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and make good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. They achieve standards in line with their ability due to the effective support provided by teachers and classroom assistants. The small number of pupils for whom English is not their first language also make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour throughout the school are very good. Pupils are keen to come to school and enthusiastically embrace all the learning opportunities that teachers offer. Parents are right to be pleased with the attitudes and values the school promotes. The high standards reported at the time of the last inspection have been maintained.

12 The under-fives are fully integrated into Class 1 and confidently join in all activities. They are keen to answer teachers' questions and join in discussions cheerfully. For example, during an art lesson they suggested words to describe the texture created by the artists' particular style. Pupils are kind to each other and appreciate one another's efforts by making remarks such as "that's brilliant", when looking at their friends' work. Behaviour is always very good in response to the teacher's high expectations and the excellent relationships established in this class.

13 The quality of pupils' learning in Key Stages 1 and 2 is enhanced considerably by their very positive attitudes. All lesson time is used for learning as no time is spent waiting for children's attention. Pupils listen to their teachers and to each other attentively and fully involve themselves in all activities. Pupils concentrate well during whole-class activities and when working independently. Lively and engaging teaching captures children's attention and retains it. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of their teachers both in terms of their behaviour and work rate. For example, in a dance lesson pupils were attentive, followed instructions carefully and showed good control of their movements. With the teachers' encouragement, they became more competent to experiment and try out different ways of moving in response to the music. Their response to the very good teaching ensured their good progress and they thoroughly enjoyed the lesson.

14 Behaviour is very good throughout the school. Pupils know school routines and move about the premises in an orderly fashion. They are extremely polite and courteous, holding doors open for adults as well as each other. Pupils respect their learning environment and treat books and resources with care. There have never been any exclusions from the school.

15 Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Pupils work and play co-operatively in pairs and small groups. When working together on computers they try to help one another. They care for one another if someone gets hurt in the playground and listen with interest to one another's viewpoint. Pupils willingly take on responsibility within their classes and around the school. For example, pupils clear away after activities and act as monitors to take things to the office or hand out resources for their teachers. In Class 1, 'helpers' quickly handed out library

books and tickets in readiness for their session in the library. The oldest pupils help organise the hall for assemblies and act as librarians.

16 Pupils enjoy coming to school and the school has maintained the very high attendance rates reported at the time of the last inspection. Pupils arrive in school on time keen to start the day's activities. There were no unauthorised absences in the last year, and none prior to that.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17 The quality of teaching throughout the school is consistently good; in around nine out of ten lessons seen during the inspection teaching was good or very good. All the teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory or better. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching of pupils in Year 2 was consistently high. Teachers are skilful, purposeful and determined to improve the standards of pupils' attainment.

18 Teachers know their pupils very well indeed and have appropriate expectations of them, which they communicate successfully right from the start. They draw effectively on a range of strategies to promote pupils' learning. All the teachers at the school work very hard and pupils benefit from the considerable effort they put into their teaching.

19 The teacher of reception age children has a clear understanding of the needs of these youngest children and gives careful attention and proper emphasis to extending their personal and social development.

20 There are particular problems with the layout of the classrooms used by pupils in reception and Key Stage 1, encountered when endeavouring to provide appropriate learning activities in such a confined space. Many of the resources needed for pupils to work with practical apparatus or in structured play have to be kept stored away. The teacher has to be responsible for getting these things out and putting them away, so opportunities are missed to encourage pupils' individual responsibilities for their own learning and the making of appropriate choices. The teacher's planning indicates that she provides some opportunities for young children to work in a variety of contexts: on their own, with other children or supported by an adult. In the main insufficient opportunities to learn through practical activity or structured play are included in the programme of learning activities provided.

21 Teaching in Key Stage 1 is consistently good or very good. The teachers are able to draw on a range of strategies to manage pupils' behaviour and motivate their learning. They plan their lessons carefully and provide an appropriate variety of activities to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. The best lessons in this key stage contain many strengths. For example, in one numeracy lesson, the teacher made clear the learning objectives to all the pupils so they understood what they were going to do from the start. Lively and purposeful in her approach she moved the lesson on with good pace, particularly in the mental mathematics activities at the start of the lesson, yet pupils were challenged with the individual questions she was able to pose at an appropriate level. This ensured that all pupils' learning was good and that they made good progress. This clear differentiation was also apparent in the individual tasks set later in the lesson and in the good use of direct teaching to help and support individual pupils as they worked.

22 In a science lesson observed with this class, the teacher very successfully built on what pupils had learned earlier, to extend their understanding of human variation. There were relevant activities planned to enable pupils to collect and compare different data on humans. The teacher made sure that all levels of ability were catered for. She injected appropriate pace into the management of the lesson through the effectiveness of her group organisational skills. She used questions very well to focus individual pupils' attention, to prompt their ideas and to extend their

thinking. She was able to provide good direct teaching for pupils working with a computer database as they presented and interpreted their data. Such skilful teaching has a most positive impact on the good progress pupils make.

23 Teaching in Key Stage 2 is never less than good; at times it is very good. The teacher has a good knowledge of the subjects she teaches; this has a positive effect on the work she is able to do with her pupils. Teaching in literacy sessions is good. In one such lesson observed, for example, the teacher was able to use the selected text to lead into a discussion of punctuation. She was very purposeful and direct in her approach, pushing individual pupils hard over the identification of appropriate punctuation which she knew they were able to do. There was very good reinforcement of the main ideas of the lesson at different points as it proceeded, with the teacher providing very good questions to ensure that all pupils understood. The follow up individual work was very well prepared. There was also good injection of pace and purpose as pupils worked individually ; the teacher managed their learning in this lesson most effectively ensuring that progress was good.

24 Throughout the school, teachers are conscientious in their marking of pupils' work. Verbally they respond very warmly and positively to pupils' efforts and they are frequently enthusiastic in recognising the particular achievements of individuals. This serves to motivate and encourage pupils. At Key Stage 2 the quality of teachers' written comments on pupils work is good and at their best they give a clear indication of how they might improve or develop what they have done. This is contributing positively to the quality of pupils' learning and to the progress they make.

25 Pupils with special educational needs are well taught. They receive very good support from their teachers and other classroom assistants.

26 The quality of teaching in the school has improved since the previous inspection and is having a most positive effect on pupils' learning and the standards they achieve as they move through the school.

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

27 The curriculum provided for pupils in Key Stages 1 and Year 3-4 meets statutory requirements. It has appropriate breadth; it includes all the core and foundation subjects and religious education. There is appropriate provision of health education. The previous inspection report indicated concern about the depth of the work undertaken in information and communication technology, but the evidence of this inspection confirms that this has been addressed in Key Stage 1, although not in Y3-4. The curriculum is now appropriately balanced in the main, although pupils have insufficient time to develop their skills in information and communication technology, particularly in Year 3-4.

28 The curriculum provided for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. There is an appropriate awareness of the learning needs of the youngest children in the reception and Year 1 class and, where there is additional classroom support available, these needs are catered for well through the curriculum. At other times, when there is no additional support provided, the limited space available makes the provision of play or practical learning experiences more difficult to provide and on these occasions young children are sometimes inappropriately expected to sit and work at tables. This restricts the provision made for their physical and creative development.

29 Appropriate curriculum policies are now in place for all subjects: they include subject specific aims and objectives and an approach to teaching and learning. Very useful guidelines are available for some subjects. Good use is made of both published schemes of work and those

issued by the national authority; they provide a good framework for planning and ensure there is appropriate continuity and progression in pupils' learning. The school has successfully implemented the national literacy and numeracy strategies.

30 Long term curriculum planning provides indication of what will be covered over the current two year planning cycle. Teachers' individual planning is good. There is a common format to this stage of planning, with all teachers clearly identifying specific learning objectives and frequently communicating these to pupils.

31 The concern expressed in the previous report about the lack of provision for the more able pupils in Year 3-4 have been addressed. More careful planning of specific activities and tasks are helping to meet their needs, as are the workshops organised among the local pyramid of schools for their more able pupils.

32 The curriculum is effectively enriched by visits out of school into the community or to museums, for example the Black Country Museum, and by visits from various experts to support their learning, as in their work on the Greeks.

33 All pupils are provided with equal opportunities; a clear policy underpins practice in the school. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and make very sensitive adjustments to the curriculum to enable all pupils to participate fully and for them to learn at an appropriate pace. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The policy follows the statutory code of practice and useful guidance is also provided for parents. Good support is provided for pupils with special educational need, although there is a below average proportion of these pupils in the school.

34 Baseline assessment provides a secure foundation for understanding individual learning needs, after which teachers provide effective support and appropriate work for individuals and groups. Continuous monitoring of progress is effective in providing teachers with information on which to base their further planning. There is good use of target setting, which is communicated very effectively to parents.

35 Assessment of pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is good: the analysis of statutory and optional test data provides a clear indication of pupils' progress. The outcomes of teachers' day to day assessment are used to inform their planning, which ensures that learning activities are well matched to pupils' abilities, consolidate their learning and provide appropriate challenge. As yet there is no effective assessment of information and communication technology.

36 Monitoring of pupils' progress is now very good. A range of monitoring activities has been introduced, in particular for the headteacher who has a clear view of curriculum strengths and weaknesses. Subject co-ordinators also contribute and identify aspects for further development or inclusion in the school development plan. Governors are also becoming more involved in the monitoring process and there are plans to extend this.

37 The school provides good opportunities for all pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Traditional Christian values underpin all that happens within the 'family' of the school and this ethos is much appreciated by the parents. Central to the school's mission is the importance placed upon children valuing their own achievements and celebrating the successes of others. Self esteem, self reliance, consideration and kindness are all important aspects of the school's ethos. Pride in the school and a strong sense of belonging to it are actively promoted. Pupils' spirituality is heightened effectively through collective worship, religious education lessons and other aspects of the curriculum which nurture inner growth and self-knowledge. At times pupils are given good opportunities to think deeply about their feelings, emotions and personal

lives and to encounter amazement at fresh learning experiences.

38 The pupils are very effectively taught principles which enable them to distinguish right from wrong behaviour through the school's rules, personal and social education lessons and moral teaching in religious education and other lessons and assemblies. Pupils learn to care for one another, for others outside their immediate community and for the environment. They are actively encouraged to show kindness and consideration, to be helpful and truthful and to have integrity. The staff have high expectations regarding pupils' conduct and provide very good role models for the pupils by their own thoughtfulness, fairness, co-operation and shared vision for the school. The headteacher's reward scheme publicly recognises and celebrates pupils' care and consideration for others. Pupils are taught that they all have equal rights whatever their age, gender, ability or background and that the privacy of individuals is important.

39 Provision for social development is also very good. Pupils are actively encouraged to relate positively to one another, for example, by playing together purposefully in the playground. Pupils have good opportunities to make social contact with the wider community through educational visits, and through special occasions like end of year concerts, harvest services and open days. Good manners, politeness, respect for others and for property are expected and pupils are encouraged to apologise for their wrong doing.

40 The school fosters pupils' awareness of their own cultural heritage well through the humanities, music and art and through visits to local churches, museums and places of historical interest such as Droitwich town or a cathedral visit. Planned activities in the arts have successfully contributed to pupils' cultural development, like the work they did with an artist in residence on their millennium banners, the workshops with visiting musicians or theatre visits.

41 There are limited opportunities to provide extra curricular activities since many of the pupils travel some distance to school. Although there is very limited range of opportunities provided, they are satisfactory for the age pupils at the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42 Pupils' care, welfare and support is of the utmost importance to all members of the school community. The family atmosphere created by the staff ensures all pupils feel valued as individuals. This aspect of the school's provision was reported on favourably at the time of the last inspection. Further improvements have been made and clear, systematic procedures ensure this remains a strength of the school.

43 Very good attention is paid to matters of health and safety. Risk assessments are carried out regularly and all necessary checks are made to electrical, physical education and fire fighting equipment. Fire drills are carried out very regularly and much thought has gone into practising emergency evacuation under different circumstances. Documentation and records are meticulous. There are very good arrangements for first aid. Parents are notified promptly if children are unwell or have an accident. Lunchtime supervisors have received basic first aid training and the new secretary is already booked to attend a comprehensive course. Pupils are well supervised at all times. The headteacher is the designated teacher for child protection and has received appropriate training to support her in this role. The required procedures are followed but these have not been formalised into a written policy.

44 Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. The school has very high expectations for pupils' regular attendance and communicates this very clearly to parents. They are encouraged not to take holidays during term time unless absolutely necessary. Absence is carefully monitored and if parents do not give a reason immediately they are contacted. All registration requirements are met.

45 Good behaviour is achieved through the active promotion of self-discipline, mutual respect and the positive ethos of the school. A thorough behaviour management policy is in place which is consistently applied by all staff. The emphasis is on positive reinforcement of the right behaviour. Pupils enjoy working towards the many rewards and awards that can be achieved. Careful thought has been given to the range of rewards and these are slightly adjusted to match pupils' maturity. Pupils receive recognition for both academic and personal achievements. The school's procedures are most successful in promoting very good behaviour and eliminating any inappropriate behaviour.

46 Teachers' very good understanding of each pupil's needs ensures they receive appropriate support and guidance as they move through the school. The strong, supportive relationships between teachers and pupils means pupils are confident to seek any help they might need. Personal, social and health education is taught through curriculum areas such as religious education and science. Visitors, such as police and fire officers and the nurse, together with special events like the 'life caravan', enhance the school's programme. However, there is no written plan of the topics to be covered in each year group to ensure a consistent, progressive programme which is matched to pupils' maturity.

47 Very good procedures have been developed to monitor and support pupils' academic progress. A good policy is in place which outlines what assessments are made in each year group. Record keeping is systematic and up-to-date. When pupils join Class 1, baseline assessments are made and their next steps of learning are planned for each area. In each year group a good range of standardised tests are undertaken and these are used well to track pupils' progress and identify any underachievement. This information is used effectively in establishing targets for individuals as well as the whole year group. Samples of pupils' work in English are retained to illustrate pupils' progress in this area of their work. Teachers make assessments for all other subjects each term as they prepare information to share with parents at consultation evenings. Statutory assessment meets legal requirements in Key Stage 1. Analysis of data is good, for example the headteacher recently analysed mathematics test papers, question by question, to identify any gaps in pupils' understanding. The results of this type of analysis then impacts on the planning of future work. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is more informal. However, teachers know the pupils extremely well and provide parents with a very good summary of their child's personal development at the end of the year on written reports.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48 Links with the community and other schools have a positive impact on pupils' learning. The school involves itself in village events, for example pupils danced at the village fete and are involved in services celebrating harvest and Christmas at the village church. The vicar is a regular visitor to the school. The school welcomes the community to their events, such as the annual picnic held on the school playing field. Pupils join with children from other schools for activities such as gymnastics and football. Pupils join workshops for mathematics, science and design and technology organised by the local pyramid of schools. Some special events, such as the visit of the 'life caravan' is only possible because schools join together to finance the project.

49 Parents are overwhelming positive about the quality of the education the school provides for their children. They are very supportive of the staff and the school's leadership. Parents feel well informed and report that any problems which do occur are dealt with quickly and well. Parents recognise that the school is a well ordered place in which their child can make good progress. A few parents have concerns about the consistency of homework and a very small number of individual issues were raised in written comments to the inspection team, but there was no common theme.

50 Information provided for parents is excellent. Documentation is written in a friendly, informative manner. Regular newsletters keep parents informed of events and activities. The individual unit information and day-to-day organisation leaflet is invaluable in giving the most important information in a concise, useful format; curriculum information is also included. Quality presentation is a feature of all information provided. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents contains all that is statutorily required. Parents have many opportunities to find out about their child's progress. Comprehensive and informative reports give parents a very good overview of their child's work and progress over the last year. They outline pupils' achievements and sets targets for further improvements. Open days are held when parents can see pupils' work and regular parent/teacher consultations give formal opportunities for parents and teachers to discuss pupils' progress. A detailed summary sheet is prepared for these meetings so parents get an overview of progress in each area of learning or subject.

51 Parents involvement in the life of the school is good, although very few are able to come into school and help on a regular basis because of younger children at home, distance from the school or employment. The school does all it can to encourage parents to come in if they can. A good number of parents do help with out of school visits, swimming and cookery. Parents supporting these activities receive useful leaflets to guide them on how to best support children. These maximise their efforts to ensure a positive impact on children's learning. Very recently three parents have joined the governing body. Parents support the school in other ways, such as supporting events organised by the committed 'Friends' association. As well as organising social events to raise money they also give good support to school events like the annual governors' meeting by supplying refreshments.

52 Parents' involvement in their child's work at home is good, and particularly effective in supporting reading. There is good communication through the home/school book when children are very young and learning to read and their support in hearing their child read has a positive impact on standards achieved. Later many help with the learning of spellings and tables. Parents receive useful advise on how they can best help their child with basic skills in the unit information leaflets.

53 The school encourages parents to come into school and discuss any concerns before they become an issue and teachers make themselves available at the beginning and end of the school day. Parents' views were sought regarding the home/school agreement. At the parents' meeting held before the inspection, parents agreed that the school listens to and works well with them.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54 Leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher provides the school with very effective leadership and gives it very clear direction and purpose. She is very effectively supported by her teaching colleagues and is supported well by the governing body. All adults in the school work well as a team. With the governors they have a strong commitment to improving the school and raising standards. A clearly defined school development plan gives them a good focus for their endeavours. Effective monitoring and evaluating of the success of this plan in raising standards contributes to the good improvements made since the last inspection. Standards have improved steadily in English, mathematics and science. The overall quality of teaching has also improved.

55 The aims and values of the school are well focused and known to the children. They are encapsulated in a school prayer which the children know and recite in assembly. The school promotes them well. Pupils and staff respect each other, behaviour in the school is good and relations at all levels are very good. The school is a warm and caring school.

56 The governing body operates effectively. Some governors have close connections with the school and frequently keep in touch. There have been several recent changes to the governing body including the appointment of a new chairperson. Along with longer serving members these new governors are keen to be involved with the management of the school. The chairperson regularly visits the school and works closely in partnership with the headteacher. The headteacher keeps the governors very well informed about developments within the school and subject leaders review progress regularly and report to the governing body, This enables governors to keep a close eye on developments and to agree priorities with the staff. Governors are increasingly helping to shape the direction of the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

57 The schools' system for financial planning is good. The headteacher and the finance committee carefully consider the needs of the school for the coming year taking account of the aspirations detailed in the development plan. The budget is then set and submitted to the Governing Body for approval. At the beginning of the 1999 budgeting period the school was carrying a substantial surplus. However, governors felt it prudent to carry forward this amount as it would be needed to set a budget for 2000 / 2001 which would allow the school to continue to maintain a three class structure with some teacher assistant support and to supplement funding from the Standards Fund to further develop information technology resources.

58 The school uses funds designated for particular purposes well. For example, money from the Standards Fund allocated for the furtherance of the National Literacy Strategy has been used to maintain additional literacy support in the class containing pupils in Years 3 and 4. This is contributing to the improvement in standards of literacy. Similarly, money allocated for numeracy has been used for the purchase of additional equipment for use in numeracy lessons and to release teachers to observe good practice by watching leading mathematics teachers teaching. This has made a contribution towards raising the quality of teaching in numeracy.

59 The headteacher and finance committee regularly monitor the school's financial position and spending commitments. When spending decisions have to be made the headteacher will often provide alternatives for the governors to discuss so that due consideration can be given to getting the best value for the money that is spent. For example, the overall costs of services provided by several telecommunications companies were explored before a decision was taken on which the school should use.

60 A recent audit by the local authority finance officers found the systems of financial control to be good. They made some minor recommendations and these have all been addressed. Secure systems of financial administration are in place and up-to-date information is readily available as and when it is needed. Modern technology is used effectively to maintain the financial records and to maintain much pupil data such as the baseline assessment results.

61 In furtherance of the staff's commitment to improvement, good structures are in place to monitor standards in English, mathematics and science. The headteacher effectively monitors teaching in all classes. Teaching in literacy and numeracy has been monitored by the headteacher, teachers and by members of the local authority advisory service. Data from the results of national assessment tests is carefully analysed and challenging targets are set for improving standards. The school has been largely successful in meeting these targets to date. Subject co-ordinators manage their subjects well and monitor progress by examining pupils' work and teachers' planning. They have a clear idea of how to improve and develop their subjects.

62 The leadership, co-ordination and administration of special educational needs provision is good. Clear communication systems keep everyone informed so that they can offer well targeted support and monitoring for each pupil. All records are effective and up to date.

63 The school's strategy for teacher appraisal and performance management is satisfactory. The headteacher meets regularly with teachers both formally and informally and discusses their professional development. The effectiveness of this arrangement is evidenced in improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection and in the mutual support staff offer each other. The governing body has started to formally monitor the performance of the headteacher. She is set targets against which her performance will be measured in the future. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are in place and an informative staff handbook makes a good contribution to this process. The school participates in the initial training of teachers and a trained designated mentor looks after the needs of students working in the school.

64 There is a satisfactory range of suitably qualified and experienced teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. Effective teamwork is part of the school's culture. Support staff assigned to work with pupils with statements of educational need are skilled and effective. When additional classroom support is deployed, for example in the mornings in the Reception and Year 1 Class, it is very effective.

65 Overall, accommodation is adequate and for some purposes good. The school has a well-appointed purpose built gymnasium which provides excellent facilities for indoor aspects of the physical education programme. It contributes to the good standards achieved by pupils in movement, gymnastics and dance. The classroom presently housing Reception and Year 1 pupils is small and restricts activities for children under five. When additional support is available, for example on some mornings, groups of pupils from this class sometimes work and play in other areas of the school. This alleviates the cramped conditions that apply when the whole class is present in the room. When the whole class is together, the space available for the youngest pupils severely restricts the range of activities the teacher can provide for them. There is no possibility of access to a secure outside play area from the classroom currently used for the Reception and Year 1 class, which inhibits the range of opportunities for the physical and creative development of these young children. The library is well cared for and pupils enjoy using it. It is adequately stocked with a good range of reference books. There is a good range of play space on hard surface and grassed areas. Large outdoor play equipment is also available to help the physical development of the pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

66 The headteacher, staff and governors should continue to build on the many good and very good features of the school. To further improve the standards of pupils' attainment and the quality of education provided they should now:

- (1) Take steps to increase the rate of progress at which pupils extend their skills in information and communication technology, particularly in Years 3 and 4, and raise the standard of their attainment by the time they leave the school, by:**
 - (a) implementing in full the national scheme of work and guidelines to ensure progression in the development of pupils' skills in information and communication technology;
 - (b) ensuring teachers' lesson plans indicate how the computers might be used to support pupils' learning in each subject;
 - (c) providing more opportunities for pupils to use the computers in all areas of the curriculum;
 - (d) providing time for the information technology co-ordinator to work alongside teachers to support and improve their confidence and competence in using the computers in all subjects

Paragraphs: 8; 27; 126 - 130

(2) Develop the provision for children in the reception year, by:

- (a) auditing the space available for teaching and learning in the mixed reception and Year 1 class;
- (b) developing a wider range of organisational arrangements in the classroom and adopting a variety of teaching styles to address the needs of different groups in the class, particularly those of children in the reception year;
- (c) improving access to the resources available to support young children's learning through play and practical activity;
- (d) exploiting the space and resources available to provide more opportunities for young children to learn through practical activity and structured play;
- (e) reviewing and improving the provision and use of classroom assistance to support appropriate learning activities for children in the reception year;
- (f) providing children in the reception year with an appropriately secure outdoor play area

Paragraphs: 20; 28; 65; 68; 71; 76 - 78

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	23
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	30	65	4	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		58
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		5

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	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
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	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	7	4	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Note: Results are not included separately for boys and girls since there are fewer than ten of each.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	57
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y R – Y 4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	19.3

FTE means full-time equivalent

Education support staff: Y R – Y 4

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	31

Financial information

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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	£
Total income	154 786
Total expenditure	149 926
Expenditure per pupil	2 173
Balance brought forward from previous year	32 190
Balance carried forward to next year	37 050

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	58
Number of questionnaires returned	33

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	18	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	35	6	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	68	29	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	44	18	6	0
The teaching is good.	58	39	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	32	3	6	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	26	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	29	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	50	38	12	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	68	23	6	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	26	3	0	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	50	9	12	6

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

67 At the time of the inspection there were three children under five years of age attending the school. Children start school at the beginning of either the autumn or spring terms according to their age. They join an established class of mixed reception and Year 1 pupils. Although attainment on entry to the school varies considerably, many children have a good base of skills and understanding. The school makes good use of assessment information gained during the first few weeks in school to plan for the children's further learning. By the age of five, most children have made good progress and reached, and in many cases exceeded, the goals set for their early learning and are working on the early stages of the National Curriculum.

Personal and social development

68 Personal and social development is good overall. The teacher and the classroom assistant have a warm rapport with the children and give them appropriate encouragement and support. As a result young children settle quickly into school and classroom routines. They learn to work in groups and to use the various resources effectively; they co-operate well in their work and play and they understand the school's expectations about behaviour and attention to work. Young children have positive attitudes to school and most of them can concentrate on different tasks well. Overall, teaching is good in promoting young children's social and personal development, although the size and layout of the classroom restricts the range of activities which can be provided and the opportunities children have for working in groups. At times this inhibits their social development. Teachers of the reception age children helps them to learn to sit and listen, to take turns in class discussions and to understand that they are part of the class and part of the larger school community.

Communication, language and literacy

69 By the age of five, most children have good language and literacy skills. Their spoken language and their understanding and experience of books is above what is expected for the age group. They have developed the ability to listen well and they can converse with each other and with adults quite confidently. The teacher and classroom assistant talk effectively with the children; their discussions and questions encourage participation and provide encouragement to develop speaking and listening skills. Books are used extensively and children develop understanding of stories and characters; some children develop their own favourite stories and are able to re-tell them appropriately.

70 Teaching is good in the main. The day to day interactions between teachers and children successfully promote learning. The classroom assistant provides very good support during parts of the day and this has enabled the teacher to adapt the organisation of the daily literacy hour to meet the needs of these young children. Reception age children enjoy the sharing of a big book during the first part of literacy sessions, for example, and the classroom assistant then provides appropriate follow up activities separate to the other Year 1 pupils. As a result children make good progress in these aspects of their learning. Higher attaining children develop the ability to read key words well. All children learn to link words to pictures and recognise some whole words in the context of the book. Teaching is well planned, makes good use of the classroom support staff and pays attention to different levels of learning in the tasks set.

71 In one respect teaching is less successful. The need for active play to extend children's literacy skills in other contexts is well understood, but the available space restricts the opportunities to provide it. Opportunities for children to extend their vocabulary and sentence

structure in relevant and well planned role play activities are insufficiently developed. There is currently a very useful role play area set up as a travel agent, for example, but young children have too few opportunities to work in it.

Mathematical development

72 Children make good progress in this area because of the very good focused teaching they receive, which successfully extends their knowledge of number and their use of mathematical vocabulary. By the age of five most children add two numbers to 10 confidently and sometimes beyond. They understand how to add on 'one more' and some can work out 'one less'. Some young children have good ability in mental calculation and they enjoy the variety of activities provided. They develop a good understanding of the vocabulary of size and length, using 'shorter than' and 'longer than' appropriately in comparing objects. They can name some simple two-dimensional shapes and recognise some of their properties.

73 Teaching is good. Valuable assessment informs the planning for the groups, so that tasks set are well matched to children's learning needs and this ensures that they continue to make good progress.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74 By the age of five children have a good base of appropriate scientific knowledge and understanding. Children display different levels of curiosity but most of them enjoy the activities provided and tasks set, particularly where these involve them in practical work or exploration, like the 'feely bag' experiment, for example, to extend their understanding of their senses. Young children become familiar with the computer, manipulating programs with the mouse and the keyboard. They can use the mouse to select items on the screen, for example, or to move them. Children enjoy visits out of school; photographs of activities over a period of time show them enjoying walks. Some opportunities are provided to explore in the sand or water, or to use the construction equipment, although these practical activities are difficult to organise in this restricted classroom space. Overall the teaching is good however, with the teacher making the best use she can of the limited space.

Creative development

75 By the age of five, children use a variety of materials including paint brushes and crayons to represent their ideas satisfactorily. Children respond enthusiastically and thoughtfully to the creative activities provided and progress is satisfactory. They know colours and that some can be mixed from others. They can cut out shapes appropriately, manipulating scissors effectively. They learn to make sounds on musical instruments, in composing an accompaniment to the story 'We're all going on a bear hunt', for example. Overall teaching is satisfactory.

Physical development

76 Opportunities are provided for young children to cut, stick and paint and to use some construction toys but during such activities the classroom is very cramped and this inhibits what the children are able to do. They can thread beads competently in their work comparing long and short lengths. Children demonstrate control over both body and limb movements in skills which demand small controlled movements, like aiming, throwing, rolling, kicking, catching a ball for example. Provision for the development of children's large motor skills is unsatisfactory however. There is no access to an outside area for regular and more energetic play or to promote all areas of learning in a different context and consequently too few opportunities exist for young children to work with large toys or apparatus. The school has identified this as a shortcoming in the provision for the age group but so far has been unable to address it.

77 Overall provision for children under five is satisfactory. Young children generally make good progress, although there are aspects of the provision that are severely limiting or insufficiently developed to provide a curriculum which closely meets the needs of this age group. The space available for teaching young children is too small in size and consequently crowded. There are too many tables which make it difficult to move around the room, or to create a space where the children can all sit together. Although the classroom is equipped with some appropriate resources, for example, a sand tray and a role-play area, these areas of provision are not sufficiently exploited to promote children's development in the six areas of learning. There are also few opportunities for children to make independent choices of activities, tools or materials, because access to the resources is limited and they have to depend on the teacher to get things out for them.

78 Despite the shortcomings in provision, the quality of teaching is good. The strengths of the teaching are in the teacher's control of the children, her lively and enthusiastic manner and her high expectations for behaviour. Routines are well established and children are secure and happy. The imaginative use of a puppet in a literacy lesson helps the children to sustain their concentration. Story telling is effective and the children benefit from these sessions. The teacher's knowledge and understanding of the age group is good and the school has provided her with good support from a teaching assistant. The teacher is working hard to develop the appropriate use of practical activities and this is most successful where the classroom assistant is available to support her. However, the space available to organise the classroom to provide an appropriate range of practical and play activities for these young children currently severely limits what is possible. In other respects however, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

ENGLISH

79 The standards of pupils' attainment in English are well above average by the time they are seven. Their achievement is well above that of pupils in similar schools. By the time they are nine the good progress they make has been sustained enabling them to achieve standards which are also well above average. The standard of pupils' reading is consistently high throughout the school and better than the standard of their writing.

80 The attainment of seven-year-olds in speaking and listening is well above average. Pupils are confident in talking, with many able to express themselves clearly when asked to share their ideas or communicate what they have learnt. Throughout the key stage pupils listen attentively to teachers' explanations or stories, demonstrating good levels of understanding in the answers they give to questions.

81 By the age of seven the standard of pupils' reading is high; the vast majority of the pupils currently in Year 2 read confidently and fluently. There is a strong emphasis in the teaching of reading on reading for meaning and this contributes positively to the progress pupils make in developing their skills. Pupils have a very good knowledge of basic vocabulary and they can use different strategies to decode more difficult or unfamiliar words. The reading of higher attaining pupils is consistently accurate, fluent and expressive. At this age pupils often have favourite stories and they can name their favourite authors. They can explain what is happening in a story clearly, and many can anticipate what might happen next. The arrangements for taking books home to read and the records kept are excellent and contribute most effectively to the standards of pupils' achievements.

82 Seven year olds achieve standards in writing that are well above average for their age. Pupils can write clearly structured accounts, stories or descriptions that contain varied vocabulary and interesting detail. Pupils understand sentence structure and can write in sentences. Their handwriting is clear, with appropriate opportunities to develop a joined up cursive style . By the end of Year 2, the presentation of pupils' work is very good, with high levels of accuracy in spelling and punctuation.

83 By the age of nine, when pupils leave the school, the standard of their attainment in speaking and listening is well above average. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Key Stage 2 and are able to talk confidently and to listen carefully and with good understanding in a range of situations. At this stage pupils often engage in lively discussion, very well supported and encouraged by their teachers. Most pupils listen with high levels of concentration and are readily able to follow ideas and explanations. These skills are also apparent in lessons in other subjects.

84 Nine year old pupils attain well above average standards in reading. The majority of them read fluently, expressively and with very good understanding, communicating the meaning in the text very well. At this stage most pupils have well developed research skills and can use the contents page and index appropriately to select information readily for their purpose. These research skills are sometimes used well in other subjects, like history for example, where pupils seek information about life during the war years in their work on Britain since 1930. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in their reading.

85 By the age of nine pupils' attainment in writing is well above average. They write imaginatively and frequently at length. They develop understanding of sequence in narrative and show they can use it to construct verses for a poem from ideas given to them. They have good opportunities for extended writing, in stories like *What made Tidderlik laugh?* And sometimes these are made into little books like *The nightmare*. Higher attaining pupils have a clear understanding of some of the stylistic features in different kinds of writing and they write

appropriately for a range of purposes and audiences. They understand the need to choose language appropriate to their audience, and they use this knowledge as they prepare newspaper reports for example. They can write vivid descriptions at times, as in this couplet from one pupils' poem *Volcanic eruption*,

" I watch how fiercely you explode,
Glinting sparks flying over the road."

86 Pupils experiment maturely with ideas and use these in their poems, like " A star is a hand, twinkling in the air." Higher attaining pupils can structure their writing appropriately and increase the interest of the reader by using varied vocabulary. There is some evidence of drafting in their work, although insufficiently often using the computer.

87 The quality of teaching is good overall and in the Year 2 class it is very good. The high quality of teaching is having a most positive impact on the standards of pupils' attainment. This good teaching is characterised by focused planning matched well to the levels of pupils' attainment, stimulating questioning and tasks, and good use of praise and encouragement. In these lessons pupils learn well and make good progress because they are interested and often excited with what they have to do. In the most effective lessons, teachers explain the purpose of the lesson clearly to their pupils, ensuring they understand what it is they are trying to learn and why. This contributes to the pupils' positive responses in these lessons. There is often good discussion, with teachers skilfully using questions at an appropriate level for each pupil, indicating how aware they are of individual learning needs, and enabling them to set appropriate individual tasks. In these lessons the quality of pupils' learning is often very good. Teaching has pace and rigour; teachers' enthusiasm is successful in engaging pupils attention and interest, which sustains their concentration and learning. In all lessons pupils are aware of what is expected of them.

88 Leadership and co-ordination of this subject are good. Further improvement since the last inspection has been good. There are clear guidelines for teaching and learning and good information is provided for parents about approaches and new developments. Assessment and recording systems are good, ensuring that the monitoring of pupils' progress is effective. The national literacy strategy has been well implemented across the school. Appropriate priorities for further development are identified and action taken, like the improvement to the work on non-fiction for example.

89 Teachers generally make good use of the opportunities that arise in other subjects to extend pupils' skills in reading and writing. In history, for example, they provide pupils with good opportunities to discuss and write accounts, as in their work on wartime artefacts for example, and to research information from books. Information and communication technology is not yet used effectively to extend pupils' literacy skills in Years 3 and 4.

MATHEMATICS

90 Pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 attain standards well above those expected for their ages in mathematics. This picture is reinforced for Year 2 pupils by the results of the 2000 national tests. In the tests standards are better than the average for similar schools. Standards have improved considerably since the last report in 1996 when they were judged to be satisfactory and sometimes better at seven and satisfactory at nine. As a result of good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy standards of numeracy have considerably improved throughout the school.

91 There are no marked differences between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. This level of support they receive and the

appropriate tasks they are set contribute to the good progress they make.

92 Discussions with pupils, observation of mathematics lessons and a careful study of pupils' previous work reflect the results of standardised tests. By the ages of seven and nine pupils are achieving standards of attainment that are well above average. The skills of seven olds in mental calculation are good. They count to a hundred in twos fives and tens with accuracy and speed, and they add on and take off numbers quickly. Knowledge of shape is good. They know the names for and properties of a number of two dimensional shapes. They also know that there are different kinds of triangles and they can identify a right-angle triangle. They handle coinage well and have a very good understanding of coin equivalence. The setting of work involving real-life problem solving is adding to their understanding. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to recognise negative numbers and they have a good understanding of all four number processes.

93 Year 4 pupils display good recall of tables. They can apply all four mathematical processes when dealing with quite large numbers. They use a range of strategies when calculating and applying these processes. They divide numbers including those that give rise to remainders working accurately and at a good pace. Above average attaining pupils can partition numbers using their good understanding of place value. They can estimate and measure accurately in metres and centimetres. They work in fractions and decimals and have a developing understanding of percentages.

94 Pupils of all attainment levels make good progress throughout both key stages. This is largely due to effective lesson preparation. Teachers prepare work which meets the learning needs of all pupils, challenging the high attaining pupils and meeting the requirements of pupils with special educational needs. Planning takes particular account of the needs of all pupils in mixed-age classes. Good classroom management is enabling teachers to plan and teach work that ensures pupils follow the requirements of the scheme of work for their respective year groups.

95 The pupils respond very positively to their work in mathematics and they are able to work independently. These two factors make a considerable contribution to good learning.

96 The teaching of mathematics is good overall and often very good. In the lessons observed all were at least good. Teachers have good knowledge of mathematics. They are familiar and secure with the National Numeracy Strategy which they apply effectively. Lesson plans clearly identify what is to be learnt in a lesson and this is usually shared with pupils when lessons begin. Pupils are encouraged to explain their mathematical thinking and an appropriate stress is placed on the development of mental mathematics. Ends of sessions are used well to consolidate and assess pupils' learning. Lessons are appropriately challenging and the pace of learning is good. Throughout the school, pupils' mathematical vocabulary is being systematically developed. Teachers have high expectations of pupils of all levels of attainment and these are clearly communicated.

97 Teachers generally use assessment, both formal and informal, effectively. They mark pupils' work regularly. All teachers keep good records in their monitoring of pupil progress.

98 Pupils use mathematics in other areas of the curriculum and this contributes towards learning. For example, in science Year 2 pupils measure each other using metres and centimetres. Older pupils also take measurements using thermometers and they count each other's heartbeats when studying the effect of vigorous exercise on the body.

99 There have been good improvements in the provision for mathematics since the last inspection. The school has successfully implemented the national numeracy strategy and this

has contributed to the pupils' good progress in numeracy. The co-ordinator is experienced and knowledgeable, gives good leadership. and she is maintaining a consistent drive to raise standards. Good assessment procedures are in place. Results from assessment are carefully examined and used to build up a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Learning resources are good and teachers use them effectively. Some use is made of information and communication technology to support learning, for example in data gathering, but teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to use computers in mathematics. There is need for further development in this area.

SCIENCE

100 Standards in science of both seven year olds and nine year olds are above average. Standards of seven year olds reflect the results of recent national tests. Standards are improving over time. This is largely the result of improved teaching, which is consistently good and often very good.

101 An aspect of improved teaching is an improvement in lesson planning. The concern expressed in the last report about the lack of challenge in work for higher attaining pupils has been addressed. These pupils now make good progress.

102 By the age of seven pupils have a good base of knowledge in science. They are aware that living things grow and change over time. They have good knowledge of the similarities and differences between humans. They explore human variation, making observations and comparisons. They study these similarities and differences and record their observations, often using simple diagrams and labels and compiling simple block graphs from their findings. They make use of information and communication technology to gather data and compile graphs.

103 By the age of nine, pupils extend their knowledge of science well. They carry out their own tests and investigations and most of them have an understanding of the conditions needed to make a fair test. For example, Year 4 pupils investigate the effect of vigorous exercise on heart rate, noticing the effect it has and recording the results of their investigations. Pupils then offer sensible reasons for changes they observe. They relate their findings to healthy patterns of living, recognising the benefits of regular exercise. They note other changes to the body that occur following vigorous activity.

104 Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, who receive good support from teachers in the classroom, make good progress.

105 Work in science is often linked well with other subjects such as mathematics, English and information and communication technology. Pupils are encouraged to make good use of mathematical skills, for example, in Year 2 when measuring hand spans and of other parts of the body. In information and communication technology, pupils use a range of software to collate results and produce graphical representations of their findings. Pupils use their literacy skills when writing up accounts of their investigations. Through their studies older pupils come to recognise the need for vigorous activity to be part of their work in physical education.

106 Teaching is good overall and often very good. Pupils are introduced to a range of scientific equipment. For example, they learn to measure accurately in metres and centimetres when measuring body parts; they use thermometers to measure temperature and use a stop clock to measure time. Before starting their investigations pupils are encouraged to predict " what will happen?" or "what will we find?" Good library resources are available and pupils are encouraged to use reference books to extend their studies independently. Teachers mount good stimulus displays in classrooms and display relevant and interesting books to encourage pupils to read further on topics studied in the classroom. Pupils respond well to the good teaching and their

enthusiasm contributes to successful learning. They co-operate well when investigating together in small groups. They enjoy answering teachers' questions and they talk enthusiastically about their observations and findings.

107 A good scheme of work ensures that pupils learn skills and develop their scientific understanding successfully over time. The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and able to move the subject forward and maintain the momentum for improvement.

ART AND DESIGN

108 Standards are about average in both Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4, although there is variation in the quality of work produced in the various areas of art: drawing, painting, printing, textiles and three dimensional work. However, standards are being maintained since the last inspection.

109 The enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator has been active since the last inspection working to retain the range of experiences provided in art and to raise the profile of the subject across the school. Particularly successful has been the opportunity for pupils to work with an artist in residence on some adventurous large scale pieces using pastels, paints and collage materials, the results of which have been excellent, with pupils in both key stages producing work of high quality.

110 In their other work there have generally been fewer opportunities for pupils to work in three dimensions and with fabrics, than in other aspects of art. Paintings are frequently bold and colourful indicating that pupils have made good progress in understanding colour mixing, illustrated in their bonfire night work for example. Pupils' work is well displayed around the school, at times alongside the works of other artists and this both indicates to pupils how much their work is valued and adds significantly to the attractiveness of the school as an environment for learning. Pupils are justifiably proud of some of their work on display.

111 Pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in developing their knowledge and skills in art. They learn to mix colours effectively and to apply this in their own paintings. Pupils make satisfactory progress in drawing. They produce pencil sketches from their observations and record these in their sketchbooks, which show how skills are built up over time. By the time pupils are nine, their work shows careful skills of observation. They produce strong lines in their drawings and know how to shade using a variety of techniques. Progress in printing, textiles and three-dimensional work is not so strong by comparison. For example, although introduced to printing techniques, printing on to material is not fully developed. Opportunities to work with clay are restricted. At times good use is made of the work of other artists to develop pupils' skills. For example, a study of David Hockney's *A bigger splash* helped develop pupils understanding of the bold use of colour, while a study of Andre Derain's *Boats in Collioure* introduced them to the technique of dabbing paint.

112 The quality of teaching in art is good. In one particularly good lesson with pupils in Years 3 and 4 the teacher effectively drew her pupils into a discussion about perspective and relationships as they considered the position of people in a small group. The teacher was able to point to important features with good questions, like *How is the mother holding the baby?* and with directions like *Look at the way the hands come together* and *Look at this curve*. This in depth discussion instils a real seriousness of purpose which contributes positively to the standards pupils achieve.

113 The co-ordinator has few opportunities to observe teaching throughout the school and this prevents her seeing exactly where teaching is strong and where standards need to be raised. However, she is aware of the priorities for development in art and has rightly identified the need to

develop three-dimensional work

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114 During the period of the inspection it was not possible to observe any lessons in design technology. Little completed pupils' work was available with which to make a judgement on standards of attainment of pupils. No major concerns were raised in the last report. No evidence was found of any significant improvement in design technology since the last report.

115 Some work of pupils' from Year 2 was available for inspection. This shows that pupils make models to a good standard. In constructing their models, in this case a model cart, pupils experience working with a range of tools and materials. In this particular project pupils experience both the designing and making process. This is followed up by testing models to see how well they will perform. They are encouraged to devise 'fair tests' to evaluate performance in a range of situations.

116 A scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussion with some Year 4 pupils shows that pupils are receiving teaching in design technology. Reception pupils make models, for example dinosaurs, with boxes and other materials. They make simple model houses out of different materials and test their strength with the help of the teacher in order to decide if the materials are suitable for the purpose. Year 1 pupils work with a variety of types of construction kits building models. They sometimes plan their ideas before making them. Year 2 pupils make vehicles with moveable wheels using a range of equipment. They also learn to sew. Year 3 and 4 pupils make moving Christmas cards which they both plan and then evaluate. They produce vehicles with moveable wheels attached to axles after first designing and planning them. Pupils throughout the school have experience in baking. However, the work done is not yet sufficient to meet the present requirements of Curriculum 2000. The main reason for this situation is the schools' recent commitment to the implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies and the demands this has made on the timetable. In view of the school's success in implementing these strategies it is timely that one of the present curriculum priorities is to further develop the curriculum in design and technology.

117 The subject co-ordinator works hard to encourage and support other colleagues. There is a scheme of work in place which is shortly due to be further developed to meet the requirements of Curriculum 2000. The school is adequately resourced with a good range of tools and materials to meet the requirements of a satisfactorily revised curriculum. In view of this level of resourcing and the good level of competence of the co-ordinator the school has a good capacity for improvement in design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY

118 There was insufficient evidence to support judgements about the standards of pupils' attainment and the quality of teaching in this subject, since it was not timetabled for this part of the term.

HISTORY

119 Attainment and progress are good in both Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4.

120 Pupils in Key Stage 1 gain a good understanding of events in the past from stories, like the Gunpowder Plot and about famous people, like Florence Nightingale and Grace Darling. As a result of their recent work on the Victorians, they understand some of the consequences of industrialisation. They can make comparisons of the present with the past after their work on education in Victorian times. Pupils begin to understand chronology through the use of timelines

of their own personal history, sequencing photographs for example.

121 Good use is made of visits to sites and museums, like the Black Country Museum for example, and visitors into school, to provide experiences which help pupils understand more about the past. Pupils continue to build on their understanding of chronology in a variety of activities, like ordering artefacts. They are aware of changes over time and they can make meaningful comparisons between past and present, for example in their discussions of similarities and differences in the 1930s and the present. In most study units, as in their earlier work on the Ancient Greeks, there is a strong focus on knowledge and pupils successfully extend what they know about the past. Good links are made with other subjects, like art and design and technology.

123 There were no opportunities to observe teaching in Key Stage 1; teaching in Years 3 and 4 is good. Lessons are well planned and prepared and activities are designed so that all pupils have full access to them. As a result, pupils' attitudes to history are good. They enjoy the opportunities created to participate in discussions and this contributes to their effective learning. Some of the methods used in lessons are very effective. In one lesson, Year 3 and 4 pupils were required to find investigate a number of artefacts relating to life during the war years. Ample time was made available for pupils to observe, handle and research these artefacts, while the teacher was able to provide very good support as pupils worked on the task. The effectiveness of this approach accelerated pupils' learning very well; the activities were made enjoyable and were very well organised. At this stage learning is good overall. Pupils build up their knowledge, skills and understanding effectively.

124 The curriculum is good and ensures continuity of learning throughout the school. Both literacy and numeracy are evident in history work. Timelines are used for example, and there are good opportunities provided for extended pieces of writing, ensuring that pupils apply what they have learned in literacy lessons. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to use their information and communication technology skills in support of their work in history. The subject makes a good contribution to social and cultural development through the study of different past cultures.

125 The co-ordination of history is good. This has contributed to the effective development of the subject since the last inspection. The curriculum is now well balanced, with good use made of the national scheme. The required study units in Key Stage 2 have been appropriately distributed following discussions with the local middle school and a clear new programme has been devised.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

126 Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with the standard expected nationally of pupils aged seven. By the end of Year 4, when pupils leave the school, they have generally made insufficient progress in developing their skills and the standard of their attainment is at a level below that expected of pupils their age.

127 In Key Stage 1 pupils use the computers confidently and make satisfactory progress in developing their information and communication technology skills. Pupils begin to develop their keyboard skills as soon as they start school. They develop appropriate control of the mouse and can manipulate it to drag and drop as they move things around the screen. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can name parts of the computer using the correct vocabulary, and most can manage a range of simple programs for themselves, which they use to promote and reinforce their counting and letter recognition skills for example. Pupils are interested and keen to complete their tasks as they work with the computers, like the pupils observed using the *Dazzle* program who persevered with manipulating shapes and colours in their pictures related to their work in history.

128 By the end of Year 4 pupils have made some progress in the development of their information technology skills. However, while pupils continually get better at using the computers, progress is slow. They improve their ability to communicate ideas using simple word processing programs and they can print their work. At times they can use the computers to support their learning in other subjects of the curriculum. Some pupils become proficient at accessing information from programs and in acquiring the skills to respond to them, using a CD ROM encyclopaedia for example. However, they make insufficient progress at this key stage in developing skills of handling information and in using the computers for control. They make satisfactory progress in using and controlling the mouse to point and click when using different programs, but many pupils lack confidence in using other keyboard functions. At this key stage pupils generally have too few opportunities to develop specific information and communication technology skills and too few opportunities to work with the computers in all areas of the curriculum. Similarly pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress in developing their skills of information and communication technology.

129 Attitudes to information and communication technology are positive. Pupils grow in confidence as they use the computers; many of them have access to computers at home. Most now respond to opportunities to use the computers sensibly and maturely. Even younger pupils show that they can concentrate for lengthy periods and are able to sustain this concentration when they are working alone, in pairs or in small groups. Pupils co-operate well with others as they work with the computers.

130 The teaching of information and communication technology is satisfactory in Key Stage 1. There were insufficient opportunities to observe teaching in the Year 3 and 4 class to judge its effectiveness. There has been some improvement since the previous inspection, when the standards of pupils' attainment and the planned use of information and communication technology were considered unsatisfactory. Resources have been improved, so pupils now can have more opportunities to use the computers, particularly in Key Stage 1. Teachers now use the computers appropriately to extend younger pupils' skills, including extending skills in reading and in mathematics. Because of the long term absence of the Year 3 and 4 teacher, however, the new computers purchased for this class are not yet being used efficiently or effectively.

MUSIC

131 There were insufficient opportunities to observe lessons in music during the inspection because of the structure of the timetable. Consequently there was insufficient evidence to support a judgement about the standard of pupils' attainment and the quality of teaching.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

132 Overall standards in physical education are average in both Key Stage 1 and when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4. In dance and gymnastics standards are good in Key Stage 1. This largely reflects the picture existing at the time of the last inspection. There is no difference in standards between boys and girls. There were no general criticisms about physical education in the last report. However, since this report teaching has improved. This is the result of a programme of staff development which has raised the level of teacher expertise and confidence, particularly in small games activity.

133 Pupils in Key Stage 1 work enthusiastically in games, dance and gymnastics. Their ability to work well individually, in pairs and in groups is another feature of their work. Pupils handle equipment really well whether it is Year 1 pupils getting out small games equipment or Year 2 pupils setting out the gymnasium with large apparatus. Year 1 pupils throw, aim and catch a ball displaying appropriate levels of skill. In lessons they practise well to improve skill levels. Year 2 pupils demonstrate good skills and levels of performance in gymnastics and dance. They work

confidently on large apparatus, bending, twisting, rolling and climbing. When jumping from the apparatus they display good landing technique. When performing on the apparatus they display good body shape and form. In dance they display good movement skills. They enjoy developing movement sequences which tell a story and are a response to music.

134 Pupils in Year 3 and 4 enjoy extending their dance skills. In their work they display a good range of movement skills which they combine together to perform quite complex dance sequences. They evaluate each others' performances and identify good features of these. All pupils concentrate very well and participate fully. This contributes to the good progress they make in lessons.

135 All teachers plan well and structure lessons so that pupils face increasing challenges. They encourage pupils to improve their performances by practising skills, sequences and routines. They also help pupils to evaluate their performance.

136 The co-ordinator supports colleagues well. There is a scheme of work in place that ensures pupils enjoy a balance programme of activities. As part of this programme Year 3 and 4 pupils go swimming for fifteen sessions each year to a nearby pool. By the time they leave school most pupils can swim a minimum of 25 metres and many do much more. Pupils have opportunity to participate in a range of after-school sports, for example a short tennis club is held at the end of school one day a week. Older pupils have some opportunity to participate in competitive team games, for example in a local schools' seven a side soccer tournament.

137 The school is well equipped to teach physical education. Indoor lessons are held in a well appointed gymnasium containing a good range of large fixed and portable apparatus. A good range of well-maintained small games equipment is readily available. The school also has the use of a field and a hard-surfaced playing area. Along with good teaching these resources and facilities contribute to the good progress pupils make in lessons.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

138 In the last report little teaching was observed in religious education and the subject was underdeveloped. Since then there has been considerable improvement in the subject. Standards of attainment have improved. By the time pupils are seven years old, knowledge and understanding of religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. As pupils reach the end of Year 4 standards are above expectations. The policy and scheme of work have been fully implemented and this has contributed to the good quality of education pupils receive in this subject. Religious education is taught regularly and effectively. Resources are adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum and teachers use them well, for example Year 1 pupils see and handle a 'menorah' when learning about the significance of its nine branches in their study of Jewish celebrations. All concerns expressed in the last report have been addressed. The additional resourcing and an improvement in teaching contribute to the good improvement in religious education since the last inspection.

139 By the time pupils reach the age of seven their knowledge and understanding of religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. By the time pupils reach the age of nine they achieve better than expected levels. Observation of some pupils work and lesson observations show that the majority of pupils in both the infants and junior parts of the school, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning over time. As pupils get older they show an increasing ability to express ideas and feelings and they have greater knowledge and understanding of religious issues to aid their thinking and discussions.

140 Reception and Year 1 pupils learn about a range of religions through studying various

celebrations and festivals. Much of this learning is concerned with the study of symbolism. For example, when introduced to the Jewish festival of Hanukkah pupils relate to the significance of light by drawing on their knowledge of the Hindu festival of Diwali. In this way pupils build up an understanding of the significance of light in religious worship. Junior pupils extend their knowledge of symbolism by making up their own symbols, based on ancient ones. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils design their own symbols following a study of some writings from the Old Testament, especially the Book of Isaiah and Psalms. They base these on the concept of the universality of God and His care for all persons. Focusing on this theme and by using probing questions the teacher skilfully draws from pupils a range of their own ideas which they then express through their designs.

141 The written work of Year 2 pupils illustrates a satisfactory knowledge of the richness and diversity of religious festivals. These same pupils compose meaningful prayers, for example on the theme of Harvest, thanking God for his goodness in providing for our needs. In their written work Year 3 and 4 pupils show that they have good knowledge of characters and stories from the Old Testament, such as the story of Noah and the story of Joseph.

142 Teaching overall is good. Lessons are interesting and are made relevant to the lives of the pupils. Opportunities are provided for pupils to contribute their own ideas and suggestions. Teachers skilfully involve pupils directly in lessons and by the use of astute questions they encourage pupils to answer by drawing on their existing knowledge. In this way lessons contribute to the development of speaking skills. Pupils respond to this approach by participating enthusiastically and contributing to discussion. Most lessons make a good contribution to the spiritual, moral and cultural development of the pupils. For example, pupils learn about codes of conduct, consider the importance of rules for effective communal living and study aspects of other cultures, particularly those influenced by Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism.

143 Management of religious education is good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and supportive of colleagues. Her enthusiasm and sound knowledge contributes to the good capacity to improve. Assemblies contribute to the quality of learning in religious education by providing opportunities for prayer and reflection.