

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST THOMAS' CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Wednesfield, Wolverhampton

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104363

Headteacher: Mrs Helen Morris

Reporting inspector: Mrs Judith Hicks  
2063

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2002

Inspection number: 245493

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior  
School category: Voluntary controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Mattox Road  
Wednesfield  
Wolverhampton  
West Midlands

Postcode: WV11 3TG

Telephone number: 01902 558963

Fax number: 01902 558297

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs A Barry

Date of previous inspection: March 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2063	Judith Hicks	Registered inspector	Science Music	The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19680	Elizabeth Jay	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?
18709	Nina Bee	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Geography Equal opportunities The Foundation Stage	
3858	Alan Blank	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?
28686	Elizabeth Walker	Team inspector	English History Religious education Special educational needs	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The inspection contractor was:

Schools Inspection Unit  
School of Education  
The University of Birmingham  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham B15 2TT

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>26</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a voluntary controlled Church of England primary school located close to the centre of Wednesfield, a community that forms part of the city of Wolverhampton. The school, which is of average size, is popular and over-subscribed in most year-groups. There were 219 boys and girls on roll at the time of the inspection, most of them white and from a local background. There is a small but growing group of pupils from minority ethnic groups, however, many of whom are of Indian extraction. Although some of these pupils speak a community language as well as English at home, all have a secure grasp of English and require no additional support. Numbers on the register of special educational needs (SEN) are below average, but the school has four pupils with significant problems requiring a statement of SEN, as well as five others with quite serious learning difficulties.

The school is located in a relatively disadvantaged neighbourhood, but a number of families choose to travel in from beyond the immediate locality, giving a balanced intake. The numbers of pupils taking a free school meal are below the national average. Most children attend nursery before they join the school and attainment on entry is slightly above average. Personal and social skills and mathematics are a little higher than usual for four-year-olds, but literacy skills are only average.

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

This is a good school that sets very high standards. It is deservedly popular with parents. Within a secure framework of traditional values, the pupils rise to the expectations of staff by working hard and behaving exceptionally well. Teaching is good, and as a result the pupils forge ahead, achieving above average standards overall. The school is well led and effectively managed, providing good value for money.

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

- Promotes very high standards of behaviour, personal development and relationships.
- Ensures that all pupils make good progress and that many achieve above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the age of eleven.
- Provides teaching that is mainly good, and very good in some year-groups.
- Gives children a flying start in the reception class.
- Provides well for pupils with special educational needs.

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

- Writing throughout the school, as identified in the school development plan.
- Investigative science in the junior classes.
- Opportunities for some subject leaders to raise the profile of their subjects further.

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

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

Good progress has been made since the school was last inspected in 1998. Cultural development was judged unsatisfactory at that time and is now good, whilst criticisms of provision for the physical development of reception children have been largely addressed. Test results have improved, especially in mathematics, partly because senior staff are now more analytical in identifying strengths and weaknesses in the pupils' performance. High standards have been maintained in many subjects, but are now much the same as other schools in art and design and in religious education. The school is well placed to continue to raise standards and improve further.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

At the time of the inspection the most recent test results available dated back to summer 2001. The pupils then in Year 6 achieved results that were above the national average overall. When compared with all other schools in England and with schools that have a similar intake, these results were well above average in mathematics, above average in science and broadly average in English. At the same time, pupils then in Year 2 (the present Year 3 class) achieved average results in writing, but were above the national average in reading and well above in mathematics. The school's test results have improved over time in line with the trend in most other schools, but there has been sustained improvement in mathematics. The school received a national award for improvement in 2000. Targets agreed with the local education authority in 2000 and 2001 were achieved comfortably, but were not challenging enough in mathematics. This year and next more testing targets have been set, which the school is on course to reach.

The standard of work seen during the inspection was well above average in English, mathematics and science in Year 2 and above average in these subjects in Year 6. Despite these good standards, the school has rightly identified that there is room for improvement in pupils' writing skills. There is also a need to strengthen the skills of scientific investigation at the junior stage. In all other subjects standards are at least satisfactory. They are above average in history at the age of seven and in information and communication technology at eleven. Music is above average throughout the school, with particular strength in singing.

Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well throughout the school. Children in the reception class make consistently good headway and reach higher standards than average for their age-group in all areas of learning. Progress is very good at the infant stage, raising standards considerably by the end of Year 2. There is more variation in the junior classes, but progress remains good overall and is never less than satisfactory.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils thoroughly enjoy school, work hard and want to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is of a very high standard. The pupils are friendly and considerate, and have very good manners.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils are eager to help and take on responsibilities. They collaborate very effectively and support those who need extra help. Relationships between the pupils are harmonious and constructive.

Attendance	Average. Most pupils' attendance is good, but some families take their holidays in term-time, bringing the attendance figures down.
------------	---

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school, with very good features in some classes. The high quality of the pupils' completed work shows that teaching is consistently good in reception and mainly good in the infant classes. In the junior classes teaching is a little more uneven in quality, although never less than satisfactory; there are consistent strengths in some junior year-groups and in particular subjects. The teaching of both English and mathematics is good, and sometimes very good, throughout the school. All the staff have a secure understanding of national strategies for improving literacy and numeracy.

Strengths of the teaching include strong professional knowledge, thorough preparation and, in many classes, enthusiastic and energetic delivery. Planning takes good account of pupils with special educational needs, who are very effectively included in all class activities, and there is plenty to challenge pupils at all levels of ability. Relationships with the pupils are very good and teachers expect that all will try their best to achieve high standards. All the pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, respond very positively by settling straight down to their tasks, working hard and productively. This is particularly striking in the infant classes and contributes to the high standards being achieved by the age of seven. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and no significant general weaknesses. However, there is scope to improve marking in some classes, especially to make it quite clear to the pupils how they can improve on their previous efforts.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There is full coverage of the curriculum, which is effectively planned on the basis of national guidelines or similar schemes of work.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is a strength of the school. Pupils' needs are accurately identified, support is well organised and the pupils have clear targets to achieve.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	All the pupils from minority ethnic groups have a secure grasp of English and have no need of special help. Most make the same good progress as other children.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This area is a further strength, with particularly good provision for moral and social development. The school has a positive family atmosphere. Daily assemblies and collective worship give opportunities for reflection and develop ideas of sharing and caring in and out of school. Cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Staff know the pupils well and are trusted by them. There are good systems for encouraging good behaviour and attendance.
Partnership with parents	Good. Annual reports to parents are of particularly high quality.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides thoughtful and intelligent leadership and is very effectively supported by the deputy head. There is a strong staff team, all of whom are committed to sustaining the school's high standards. The school is well organised and competently managed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Sound. The governing body is well organised. Despite a recent change in leadership, governors are fulfilling their responsibilities effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good and still improving. The headteacher and deputy head have a clear overview of the school's strengths and areas for development, but subject co-ordinators have not in most cases had sufficient opportunity to monitor classroom practice in their subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Effective use has been made of grant funding to improve staffing levels, giving pupils extra support in the classroom. The school development plan identifies the right priorities for development, but long-term financial planning is not set out in enough detail. Senior staff and governors are careful to seek good value for money in their spending and have adopted an effective 'best value' policy.
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school is well staffed with teachers and classroom support staff, who are very effectively deployed. Resources for learning are generally good, including computer facilities. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. Classrooms are of a good size and the library is an asset, but space on site is limited and there is insufficient space for junior games.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• Standards of behaviour are very high.</li> <li>• Children are helped to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The children enjoy coming to school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• Working with parents.</li> <li>• Arrangements for collecting children after school.</li> </ul>

The inspection team whole-heartedly endorses the favourable comments of parents. The team believes that the school does work well with parents, but this message does not always come across as clearly as it might. Many parents with real problems or concerns have found staff to be accessible, friendly and helpful. The range of extra-curricular activities is judged to be adequate for a primary school of this size. Inspectors share the concerns expressed about current arrangements for parents to collect their children at the end of the school day.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 At the time of the last inspection in 1998 the school was achieving standards that were above average in English, science and a number of other subjects, but attainment was only average in mathematics. Since then high standards have been sustained in English and science, and there has been a marked improvement in mathematics, which is now comfortably above the national average at eleven. This is impressive because the particular group of pupils now in Year 6 performed well below the national average in their mathematics tests at the age of seven. Standards remain above average at the age of eleven in information and communication technology (ICT) and in music, as in 1998. The standard of singing is a particular strength. There has been a slight dip in subjects such as art and design, largely because of the school's current drive to raise standards further in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but in general steady headway is being made. There are no areas where standards are below average or achievement is less than satisfactory. The rising trend in test results has been broadly similar to that of other schools in recent years. St Thomas' received a national award in 2000, largely as a result of the sustained improvement in its mathematics results.

2 Test results for eleven-year-olds in summer 2001 were above the national average taken as a whole. When compared with all other schools in England and with schools that have a similar intake, the pupils' performance was well above average in mathematics, above average in science and broadly average in English. Inspection findings for the current Year 6 group are not dissimilar, with standards above average in each core subject. There is some improvement in English as initiatives to improve the pupils' writing start to take effect, but on the other hand standards in mathematics is not quite as high as those achieved by last year's group. Targets set in agreement with the local education authority in 2001 were achieved comfortably, but were not challenging enough in mathematics. This year and next more testing targets have been set, which the school is well on course to reach.

3 Pupils in Year 6 listen intelligently and talk confidently about their work, using a wide vocabulary and well structured sentences to express their point of view. They read widely and discuss their favourite books and authors with enthusiasm. They possess all the necessary skills to extract information from a text, but do not have many opportunities to use the school library for independent research. Writing is not of the same high standard as reading, partly because the pupils do not have enough opportunities for extended independent writing in subjects of the curriculum other than English. Even so, the quantity and quality of the pupils' work is above average, covering a good range. The pupils present their work to a good standard, writing in a clear italic script. Some are not joining their letters correctly, however, and this limits the speed and fluency of their writing to some extent. In mathematics, Year 6 pupils have good computational skills and a secure grasp of concepts such as percentages. They reason well and can apply their mathematics in real situations, for example calculating goal averages for the school football team. Good use is made of mathematics to support learning in science, where line graphs are used to plot and extrapolate results. The pupils retain what they have learned, which means that their factual knowledge is very secure in subjects such as science and history. In science they undertake practical work and measurements carefully and accurately, but do not have enough experience of planning their own investigations. The pupils use ICT very proficiently in Year 6. By the time the pupils are ready to transfer to their secondary schools, standards are above average in English, mathematics, science, ICT and music. In all other subjects standards are well in line with those reached in other schools.

4 In the 2001 national assessments, pupils then in Year 2 (the present Year 3 class) achieved average results in writing, but were above the national average in reading and well above in mathematics. These results were well above the average for similar schools in reading and mathematics. Inspection findings show that standards in the present Year 2 are higher than this. The pupils are now reaching levels well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards are above average in history and music, and average in all other subjects. Building on a good start in the reception class, consistently strong teaching is lifting standards by the end of Year 2.

5 Pupils in Year 2 produce an impressive range of work for their age-group, for example recording their findings in science in the form of charts, tables and labelled diagrams, as well as short written accounts. As part of their literacy work they write imaginative poems and stories freely and with very secure technical skills for their age. They read fluently and with good understanding, talking with interest about the characters and stories they enjoy most. Above average speaking skills enable the pupils to talk through their work and reason aloud in mathematics. As a result they are able to carry out two-stage calculations and to compare different methods of setting about a calculation. The pupils are developing a good range of vocabulary, enabling them to talk about a wide range of topics. They listen and respond well to one another and to their teachers in class.

6 Nearly all the pupils make good progress and achieve well right through the school. Many children have attended nursery before starting school, and as a result attainment on entry to the reception class is a little above average, especially in personal, social and emotional development and mathematical development. Attainment in communication, language and literacy is no better than average for the age-group. By the end of their time in reception the majority of children are on course to reach at least the expected levels in all areas and a significant number are likely to exceed these levels, so that the standards achieved are above average overall. Children make good progress because teaching is consistently good and they all have positive attitudes to learning and listen well to instructions. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when children were judged to make progress that was only satisfactory in the reception class.

7 The pupils achieve particularly well at the infant stage, with standards raised considerably by the end of Year 2. There is more variation in the junior classes because teaching is not quite as consistent, but progress remains good overall and is never less than satisfactory. Teachers cater well for pupils of different abilities, and there is plenty to challenge the higher attainers in most classes. This is reflected in the good proportion of pupils who reach the higher levels in national tests at eleven. There are no detectable variations in attainment amongst pupils from different backgrounds and those from minority ethnic groups do at least as well as others in their class. An analysis of test results at eleven over three years suggests that girls tend to do particularly well in mathematics compared with boys; this is not in line with the national picture, where boys slightly outperform girls. Inspectors could find nothing to support or explain this during the inspection, however, when boys and girls were observed to make similar good progress.

8 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The range of support they receive is used effectively and the support staff work hard to ensure that pupils learn consistently and that their needs are met, especially in literacy and numeracy sessions. Some of these pupils improve to the point that they reach or come close to average standards in national tests at eleven. Those with more acute difficulties, including pupils with statements of special educational need, participate fully in lessons and progress well, although at a much lower level than their classmates.

9 Taken as a whole, standards are above average at St Thomas' and the pupils achieve well. Factors contributing strongly to this success are the pupils' positive attitudes and their very good behaviour in class, together with good teaching throughout the school. Recently, careful analysis of test data has been used to identify and then target areas of relative weakness, and this is helping to raise standards further. Strategies to improve writing are also starting to have an effect. Areas for further development include continuing efforts with writing and attention to certain aspects of investigational science at the junior stage. Subjects that have been 'ticking over' since the last inspection, especially art and design and religious education, now deserve a higher profile to restore standards to their previously high level.

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

10 In the previous inspection report, the pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development were considered to be very good. These very high standards have been maintained, and parents share these views. Parents report that their children are eager to come to school and throughout the school pupils settle quickly to their work, concentrate well and work harmoniously together. Those with special educational needs are integrated well into the life of the school and have very good attitudes to their work. Relationships between the pupils are very good and all take part in activities on an equal footing. Opportunities are taken to celebrate different cultures. For example in a geography lesson, when discussing language, pupils were asked how many of them could speak two languages and several pupils proudly said that they could do so. Pupils show that they understand the feelings of others and are supportive of each other. These attitudes reflect those of the teachers, who not only know the pupils in their own class very well, but all the pupils in the school. The warmth in the tone of voice that teachers use contributes to the very good relationships in the school. Teachers are well trusted by their pupils: a group of older pupils said they would be confident to speak to any member of staff if they were troubled.

11 The pupils' behaviour is very good. There is a remarkable absence of bullying and very little unkind behaviour of any sort. Only one child has been excluded in the whole history of the school. The pupils are exceptionally well mannered and welcoming. They are interested in visitors and initiate conversations. Behaviour in assemblies is exceptional. The pupils come in quietly and during the assembly they are not only silent, but achieve a stillness which creates an atmosphere of worship. Clear moral values are taught and illustrated and pupils' responses show that they have understood these. After only one or two full terms in the school, the very high standard of behaviour is already evident in the reception class, where the children respond to quiet reminders about good behaviour, consideration for others and the need to take turns and put up their hands before speaking. The children show a good level of independence when they tidy up at the end of sessions and change confidently and quickly for physical development lessons. Pupils continue to respond very well to the high expectations of the teachers throughout the school and this makes a substantial contribution to the standard of work that they achieve.

12 Pupils play well together in the playground and play is not unduly boisterous. This is partly because the school provides a good range of equipment and activities for the lunch-time break. During the inspection the pupils enjoyed playing cricket and other ball games as well as marbles, whilst some younger ones made long daisy-chains.

13 The pupils' excellent behaviour in the dining hall, where all age-groups mix happily at the tables, makes lunchtime a sociable and pleasant occasion for everybody. The older pupils clear cutlery and plates and are eager to help. They also take turns to be responsible for the recorded music in assembly and help with the younger pupils during wet playtimes. At present there are no mechanisms for taking pupils' views into account on issues that concern them, and some older pupils express the wish for more opportunities to undertake

responsibilities. Younger pupils are asked to perform small tasks within the classroom, which they enjoy doing. The school has not only engendered a willingness to undertake responsibilities, but an enjoyment in doing so.

14 The attendance rate of pupils continues to be satisfactory as it is broadly in line with the national average for English primary schools. Punctuality is good. However, considerable school time is lost because of the number of parents applying to take their children out of school for holidays during term time. The school has calculated that last year 118 educational weeks were lost in this way - the equivalent of more than three school places. The school reports no unauthorised absence, but there are some inaccuracies in the way authorised and unauthorised absences are recorded in the registers and parents need to be reminded that only the school can authorise absence.

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

15 Teaching and learning are good throughout the school, and very good in some classes. The high quality of the pupils' completed work shows that teaching is consistently good in reception and mainly good in the infant classes. In the junior classes teaching is a little more uneven in quality, but remains good overall and is never less than satisfactory. There is a slight tendency to use worksheets too much in some classes, and this sometimes limits the scope and independence of the pupils' written work. Even so, there are consistent strengths in some junior year-groups and in particular subjects, including both English and mathematics. All staff have a very secure understanding of the principles and methods of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Subject co-ordinators often show very high levels of expertise when working in their own areas. This suggests that there is a strong potential for staff to support one another in developing teaching skills still further.

16 Teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good. Speaking, listening and social skills are well promoted in all activities. As a result the children listen carefully and with good understanding to all the instructions and information they are given. They speak confidently and ask questions when they need further information. This has a significant effect on the rate of their learning. All adults in the reception classroom interact well with groups of pupils. Activities are interesting and well resourced and opportunities are seldom missed to reinforce new skills and vocabulary. The class is organised well, with good teamwork between all the adults involved. Teachers' planning is good and day-to-day assessment is used effectively to move individuals and groups of children on to the next stage of learning.

17 Throughout the school strengths of the teaching include strong professional knowledge, thorough preparation and, in many cases, enthusiastic and energetic delivery. Staff have a good understanding of how to plan a lesson and are clear about what they want to achieve. Teachers invariably link their lessons explicitly with previous work and explain to the pupils what is expected, reviewing progress at the end. There is good planning to ensure that pupils of all levels of ability are catered for. Relationships with the pupils are very good and teachers expect that all will try their best to achieve high standards. The pupils respond very positively by settling straight down to their tasks, working hard and productively. This is particularly striking in the infant classes and contributes to the high standards being achieved by the age of seven. In one Year 2 mathematics lesson, for example, the introductory mental arithmetic session was pitched at a demanding level, with the pupils challenged to make 100 in two steps, starting with a given quantity such as  $4 \times 10$ . The teacher's style was bright and encouraging, making the lesson fun for the pupils and ensuring that all remained fully engaged. Effective use was made of individual whiteboards to check the accuracy of the pupils' calculations. With a well-judged pace, this part of the lesson was just the right length to sustain the pupils' full interest, taking no more than 15 minutes.

18 No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection, and the quality of the pupils' written work shows that there are no general weaknesses. Although day-to-day assessment is generally good, especially in English and mathematics, there is scope to improve marking in some classes, especially to make it quite clear to the pupils how they can improve on their previous efforts.

19 Basic skills, including reading and comprehension, are effectively taught in almost all respects. In a good lesson on letter-writing in Year 3, for example, there was clear exposition of the purpose of paragraphing and a well-managed discussion of formal and informal styles, drawing on ideas suggested by the pupils. Attention to developing vocabulary, both everyday and technical, was a strength in this lesson, as it was in many of the others observed. Opportunities for quick discussion in pairs or groups are a regular feature, contributing to the progress pupils make in speaking and listening and helping them to articulate and retain ideas. In a very successful Year 5 science lesson, the teacher skilfully helped to shape the pupils' emerging ideas and scientific explanations by noting them down on the board as they arose. As a result it was possible to capitalise on the ideas developing and the learning taking place in each group. Year 6 pupils made rapid progress in their understanding of factors during a very well planned mathematics session. Particularly good provision was made for pupils at different levels of understanding, with plenty to challenge the high-fliers. The highly effective use of ICT to support teaching and learning is a particular feature in the Year 6 year-group.

20 There are high expectations about the presentation of work, especially that prepared for wall displays. These make a good contribution to learning by creating a stimulating environment in the classrooms and helping to set a high standard. Handwriting is taught effectively in general, but some shortcomings are evident as pupils move through the school. Whilst letter formation is carefully taught in the first instance, there is not enough attention to teaching joined writing further up the school, with the result that some older pupils are still printing. Not all staff provide a good enough model of the school's italic style when they write on the whiteboard or flip chart.

21 Staff ensure that all pupils, including the small numbers of girls and boys from minority ethnic groups, are fully included in all class activities. Planning generally takes good account of those with special educational needs. Teachers ensure that these pupils, like all the others, are fully engaged and participate in class and group discussions. Manageable questions are directed to individuals and teachers wait patiently for the answer to come. In this way the pupils are reassured, gain confidence and sustain their efforts to learn. Individual targets are taken into account in the day-to-day planning of lessons. Teaching and learning are good, particularly in English, where pupils are withdrawn in small groups and given additional support in developing reasoning and comprehension skills. Support staff are involved in the planning of lessons so that they are aware of how pupils with special educational needs can play a full part in the lessons. Where they are involved, for example, in a Year 4 lesson, they are very well directed and clear about how pupils could achieve their learning targets and contribute their work to the class discussion. Pupils are effectively supported in consolidating their technical reading skills using national programmes.

22 Support teachers and other support staff are making a strong contribution to the pupils' learning. They work closely with class teachers and are deployed flexibly and imaginatively according to the needs of particular classes and groups of pupils. Support staff often work with lower attaining groups, but not invariably so. Some contribute particular expertise, for example in work with computers.

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

23 At the time of the last inspection the curriculum provided by the school was described as broad and balanced. However, there were some weaknesses. There was insufficient outdoor play equipment for reception children and this limited their opportunities to develop some of the physical skills such as climbing. Further up the school pupils did not have a satisfactory programme of work to inform them about the use and misuse of drugs. Both these weaknesses have been rectified to a large extent. The school now provides a curriculum of good quality that meets statutory requirements in full.

24 Provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is good. Interesting activities are well planned according to the new guidance. There are regular opportunities for physical development in the hall but rather too few opportunities for structured play outdoors. However there are plans to develop the outside area for the reception children and this will make it easier to increase opportunities for learning outdoors.

25 In Years 1 to 6 the curriculum is effectively planned, using national guidelines for most subjects and other published schemes in the case of music and physical education. Religious education is taught in line with the Wolverhampton Agreed Syllabus. Sufficient time is given to each subject for pupils to make at least satisfactory progress and good progress in some areas. Some of the teaching sessions for literacy and numeracy are too long, however, lasting 80 minutes or more when an hour or less would be more suitable. In these long sessions pupils continue to work hard, but their powers of concentration are tested too far for the most effective learning to occur. Some opportunities are taken to develop literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. For instance, the pupils have written about the Alpine environment in geography and make good use of line graphs to record their findings in science. There is, however, a need to create further opportunities for older pupils to research topics using the library and to develop independent writing further in subjects such as history and science.

26 Arrangements for personal, social and health education are good, and a programme for citizenship is being developed. The school now has a clear policy for drugs awareness in place and staff and governors have attended training in this area. Sex education is incorporated in the science programme, and topics such as healthy life-styles are clearly identified in planning at the junior stage.

27 The school is fully committed to ensuring that all pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, can take full advantage of all the activities and opportunities available. The teaching programme is well organised in this respect. Teachers' planning usually takes good account of all levels of ability and educational need, with different work or extra support provided for those who require it. Provision for pupils with identified special educational needs is well organised and this is a strength of the school. The targets on individual education plans are clear and explicit, so that they can be achieved in a reasonable length of time. They are reviewed frequently so that pupils understand what they are expected to learn in order to make progress. This enables all the pupils to make good or sometimes very good progress as they move through the school.

28 The school has a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities for a school of its size, though some parents would like to see more. Opportunities for competitive sport are better than average. Older pupils take part in a very good number of sporting competitions including football for both girls and boys, and cross-country running. The involvement of girls in competitive football is a reflection of the school's determination to provide equal opportunities for all pupils.

29 Links with the community make a sound contribution to the pupils' learning. The school invites a number of visitors to speak to pupils, such as a member of the Sikh community and a nurse to speak on health matters. The local vicar is a regular visitor who often takes assemblies. The school has a number of useful links with local schools. There is liaison with neighbouring high schools to plan the curriculum for ICT, qualifying the school for some free equipment, whilst older students come to school to work with pupils in Year 5 in their physical education lessons.

#### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

30 Provision for these areas of pupils' personal development is now very good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when spiritual development was only sound and cultural development unsatisfactory.

31 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is now good, an improvement since the last report. In some lessons the teacher's skilful use of good questions gives pupils the chance to respond thoughtfully and absorb the impact of literature or music. They have the opportunity to consider how they can explain and express their thoughts and feelings in poetry and imaginative writing. Pupils have opportunities to consider and reflect about issues they are discussing. Pupils are able to speak freely in the knowledge that they will be listened to and their opinions will be valued. A positive family atmosphere is a feature of the school. Daily assemblies and prayers build on and consolidate ideas about the concept of sharing and caring both in and out of school. Moments of spirituality are suggested in the entrance hall when the display of Christian symbols is discussed and Christian beliefs clearly identified. Pupils respond very well to the sense of quiet as they wait for collective worship to begin and reflect on the worship they have participated in. During the inspection, however, assemblies were more effective in supporting the pupils' moral development than in giving space for spiritual development.

32 The moral development of the pupils is very good and parents value the high expectations of personal conduct the school places on their pupils. Older pupils distinguish right from wrong and younger pupils follow the good role models they present. Teachers use praise very effectively and encourage pupils to consider the response they make to discussions and in the way they conduct themselves in school. Pupils are taught to recognise fairness and justice and how to persuade others by reasoning. Pupils recognise and celebrate both their own and others' achievements. Their very good behaviour reflects the very strong emphasis the school places on caring about others. Pupils display very good manners to both adults and other pupils, often saying 'excuse me' or 'sorry' if they feel they have hurt someone. They wait for each other and value their friendships.

33 Social development is also very good and the relationships the school community fosters are a real strength. Pupils listen to each other, and older pupils assist younger ones in the playground so they feel supported and included. They share their games and activities very well with each other. The responsibilities pupils undertake in the day-to-day life of the school are carried out with maturity and consideration. Pupils are encouraged to use their initiative and carry out tasks which help in the smooth running of lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make a significant contribution to activities and they play a full part in the life of the school. Teachers develop very positive relationships with their pupils by valuing their efforts and responses, both in discussions about their work and in talking about the activities pupils are involved with in and out of school.

34 Provision for pupils' cultural development is now good. Pupils have a good awareness of their own heritage and know about the richness, history and natural beauty in the local area. Pupils are regularly taught about and use discussions to explore other major world

faiths as well as Christianity in their religious education lessons. Although the pupils attend church regularly, however, they have no opportunities to visit other places of worship. The pupils experience a range of music and a limited range of art from non-western countries but this is not yet fully developed within the curriculum. Overall, the school fosters an interest and seeks to promote links in order to raise pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity and richness which is around them.

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

35 The good standard of care and support for pupils noted in the previous report is now of a very high standard, and parents express appreciation for this. The school is well aware of the difficulties that some families experience and helps pupils in a sensitive and unobtrusive way. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well known to staff. As a result their academic and personal needs are very well catered for and, with the right support, they have full access to the curriculum. The school works carefully with parents to ensure the welfare and care of pupils who have specific medical conditions and the school nurse also offers support. Several members staff have been trained in first aid. The school's policy and procedures to ensure child protection are very thorough, following local guidelines. The named person has been trained, but child protection has not yet formed part of in-service training for all members of staff.

36 Pupils are very well known to the staff; thus the monitoring of their welfare and personal development tends to be informal but is nevertheless effective. Pupils keep a record of their achievements both in and out of school and the annual reports to parents provide a record of personal development as well as academic progress. The school takes any rare instance of unkindness or teasing very seriously and acts immediately to resolve the issue. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of the staff, but they also value the rewards for effort and the award of house points and stars.

37 There are good procedures for monitoring attendance. Each week the absence figures are discussed with the Education Social Worker when she visits; individual pupils are monitored carefully and home visits made where there is concern.

38 Procedures for monitoring the health and safety of pupils, including risk assessments and the checking of equipment, are all in place. Very effective procedures have been developed to ensure safe use of the Internet. However, a few points of concern were drawn to the notice of the headteacher and governors. Immediately before the inspection a small number of parents expressed concern about arrangements for collecting pupils at the end of the school day. These are unusual in that adults are expected to wait for their children outside the school grounds. Even though class teachers accompany the pupils to the gate, inspectors agree with parents that current arrangements are not satisfactory and could pose a hazard.

39 Assessment procedures are satisfactory in English and mathematics. The school is aware of the need to develop these procedures further so that pupils are given individual targets to work towards in these subjects. Procedures in science are also satisfactory and the co-ordinator is currently revising and developing these further. In ICT, as in mathematics, a 'traffic light' system of assessing how well pupils have grasped the concepts being taught is working effectively. In other subjects the co-ordinators are aware of the need to develop assessment procedures so that teachers can readily see how pupils are doing as they move through the year. At present this is not so and in some subjects, especially art and design and design and technology, it is difficult for teachers to know what pupils have already achieved. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is good, ensuring that all the pupils concerned have individual education plans tailored to their personal needs.

40 Performance information is carefully analysed and used to track pupils' progress as they move through the school. Teachers use this information effectively to place pupils into ability groups in lessons and this then enables them to move individuals and groups of pupils on to the next stage of learning more easily.

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

41 The partnership between parents and the school is now good, and this represents an improvement since the last inspection when it was satisfactory. Parents expressed a very high level of support for the school in the questionnaires sent out before the inspection. All the many parents who responded thought that standards of behaviour are high and that the school helps the children to become mature and responsible. Parents reported that their children like school and that they are expected to work hard and do their best. Parents considered the school to be well led, thought that teaching is good and that their children receive the right amount of homework. Those who attended the parents' meeting reflected these very positive views. A minority expressed concern about the provision of extra-curricular activities, and in addition to this, concern was expressed about the arrangements made for collecting their children at the end of the school day. Inspectors consider the provision of extra-curricular activities to be satisfactory, but that the arrangements for collecting children need to be reconsidered, as explained in paragraph 38.

42 The information provided for parents in the pupils' annual reports is good and much improved since the last inspection. The comments about each pupil's work and progress, particularly in English, mathematics and science, are very detailed and great care is taken to make the reports specific to individuals. There is a section on behaviour and attitude to work, which is used well in making, where necessary, direct comments on the need for improvement. Future targets are included, although not all are specific enough to be entirely useful. Letters to parents from the school tend to be formal in style, informing parents of events rather than giving news or celebrating achievements. Some parents have expressed a wish for more information about the curriculum, and the school is now bringing forward plans to meet this demand. There are some omissions of the required information in the prospectus and in the governors' annual report to parents, which need to be addressed.

43 The information provided for parents of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Parents are invited to discuss their children's needs and how they can help them to make progress. Information about pupils with statements of special educational needs is in written form and is good. Parents are invited to contribute to the review of their child's statement and are involved in the reviews of individual education plans.

44 Parents make a substantial contribution to the life of the school. There is a very active Friends of the School Association, which organises many fund-raising events and also a valuable weekly bookshop. A small number of parents give valued help in the classroom on a regular basis and many offer help on school visits.

45 The 'open door' policy of the school is greatly appreciated by most parents; many speak warmly of the help and support that they and their children have received. There are a few parents, however, who feel there is some distance between them and the school. The school therefore needs to reach out to all parents to ensure that they feel engaged, thus enhancing the existing partnership between parents and the school.

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

46 This is a school that sets very high standards and reflects the Christian values of its foundation. This is particularly evident in the very good behaviour that is expected and achieved throughout the school, as well as in good levels of academic achievement. The staff set themselves high professional standards and put the pupils first. There is a firm commitment to equality of opportunity and inclusion for all, seen especially in the quality of provision for those with special educational needs. Many teachers, governors and parents have a long-standing connection with the school, and this contributes to the sense of continuity and the friendly family atmosphere. Although in some respects the school is highly traditional, staff are up-to-date professionally and there is a general commitment to raising standards and improving provision further.

47 Leadership and management were judged good at the time of the last inspection and this has been well sustained since the appointment of the current headteacher in September 1999. As she establishes herself in her role, the headteacher is providing the school with thoughtful and intelligent leadership and is beginning to take the school forward. She is very well supported in this by the deputy headteacher. As a result the progress made since the last inspection has been good, with the two key issues effectively tackled. Standards have been raised, especially in mathematics, where there has been some underachievement in the past. The improvement in test results has been partly brought about by the careful analysis of information to identify strengths and weaknesses in the pupils' performance.

48 The school has a strong, stable team of hard-working teachers and classroom support staff. The co-ordination of literacy and numeracy is good, and as a result the national strategies have been introduced effectively throughout the school. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and the relevant co-ordinators have monitored classroom practice in English and mathematics, as well as undertaking regular trawls of pupils' work to identify areas for improvement. This is all helping to raise standards. In other subjects, co-ordinators have had some opportunities to look at pupils' completed work, but they have not had the same chance to gain an overview of teaching and learning throughout the school by classroom observation. In some cases this is inhibiting development. Weekly planning is checked by the headteacher, but there is no tradition of subject co-ordinators having access to their colleagues' planning. This is a shortcoming.

49 The headteacher is the co-ordinator for special educational needs. She is well experienced in this field and supports her colleagues well on both a formal and informal basis. She arranges reviews for pupils with statements of special educational need and regularly discusses with parents and staff how these pupils are progressing. Additional funding for pupils is spent carefully and wisely in the provision of support. The governing body is aware of the position and receives regular updates on the provision for pupils with special educational needs.

50 Despite a recent change in leadership, the governing body is fulfilling its role competently and is meeting almost all its statutory obligations. All required policies and procedures are in place, including a policy for race equality. There are, however, minor omissions from the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents. Governors are actively involved with the school, support it loyally and defend its interests when necessary. They contribute a wide range of knowledge and skills, and provide important links between school, church and community. There are regular termly meetings of the full governing body, but much of the business of the school is handled through two committees – finance and general purposes, and curriculum. This is a highly effective arrangement, ensuring that, since all governors serve on one or other of these committees, all are actively involved in decision-taking. Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher and have a sound awareness of the school's strengths and priorities for development.

51 The school development plan has some strengths, with the right priorities identified for the coming year. However, the governors' long-term objectives, financial plans and rolling programmes are not set out in any detail, so that long-term intentions are not clear enough. In particular, perfectly acceptable reasons for a high carry-forward figure in last year's budget are not properly explained in the development plan. These criticisms were first raised in a local audit report last autumn but have not so far been addressed. Financial planning has undoubtedly been hampered by inadequate and sometimes inaccurate financial information from the local education authority. This is an issue that governors are now taking up with the relevant service providers.

52 Senior staff and some of the governors have a far more secure grasp of the school's financial position than this would suggest. The governors fulfil their responsibilities for setting and monitoring the budget conscientiously. Governors are careful to seek value for money in their spending commitments and have adopted a sound 'best value' policy. Contracts are regularly reviewed to ensure that the school is obtaining good service and resources are in some respects managed very effectively. In particular, grant funding is being used to raise levels of achievement by the employment of additional teaching and classroom support staff. Good appointments have been made, even when posts have become available on a temporary basis at the last minute, and extra staff members are imaginatively deployed where they are most needed.

53 Taking into account those on temporary contracts, the school is well staffed. Staff management is good. Because the school has a flexible approach and supports those who become unable to work full-time, experienced members of staff have been retained and are continuing to make a valuable contribution to the work of the school. Arrangements for the performance management of teachers are securely in place and are making a useful contribution to school development. With good administrative support, the school is well organised and runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

54 Resources for learning are generally good, well-organised and regularly used. Although there are not enough computers to cater for a whole class, ICT resources are generally good. The reference library is well-organised and stocked, and the pupils have plenty of interesting books for personal reading. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. Classrooms are of a good size, but space on the site is limited and insufficient for junior games.

55 Taking into account the quality of provision and the progress being made by the pupils, the school is judged to give good value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56 This is a good and effective school, with a recent track record of improvement, but there is the potential to do better still. In order to improve further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

### 1. Raise standards of writing further by:

- identifying more systematically opportunities for independent writing in subject areas other than English;
- identifying opportunities for extended writing, as set out in the school development plan;
- reviewing the school's handwriting policy and practice to ensure that pupils are taught a consistent style and learn to join their script at an earlier stage.  
(See paragraphs 3, 20, 25, 78, 79, 93, 116, 141)

### 2. Strengthen investigative science in the junior classes by:

- giving the pupils increasing responsibility for planning investigations and deciding what equipment and materials are needed for their tests.  
(See paragraphs 3, 93)

### 3. Enable subject leaders to raise the profile of some subjects throughout the school, by:

- providing them with more opportunities to monitor their colleagues' planning and pupils' completed work;
- establishing a rolling programme to enable co-ordinators to observe classroom practice and work alongside other teachers to raise standards further in each area of the curriculum;
- making better use of the time currently given to overlong literacy and numeracy sessions to strengthen provision for other subjects.  
(See paragraphs 25, 48, 89, 97, 102, 111, 119, 130, 145)

57 In addition the governors should consider including the following issues in their post-inspection action plan:

- Improve the school development plan by undertaking more detailed medium and long-term planning, and by including more precise financial information.  
(See paragraph 51)
- Reviewing arrangements for parents to collect their children at the end of the school day.  
(See paragraph 38)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	8	30	16	0	0	0
Percentage	2	15	55	29	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	215
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		31

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	12

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
---------------------------	-----

National comparative data	0.5
---------------------------	-----

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	20	13	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	19
	Girls	11	12	12
	Total	30	31	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (97)	94 (100)	94 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	19
	Girls	11	10	12
	Total	30	29	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (94)	88 (94)	94 (90)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	22	10	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	20	20
	Girls	8	8	10
	Total	25	28	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (91)	88 (85)	94 (97)
	National	75 (75)	17 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	19	21
	Girls	7	8	10
	Total	23	27	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (76)	84 (82)	97 (94)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	4
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	4
Indian	13
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	31

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	59

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/a
Total number of education support staff	N/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/a
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/a

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.7
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2
Total income	437,331
Total expenditure	440,146
Expenditure per pupil	2,037
Balance brought forward from previous year	75, 839
Balance carried forward to next year	73,024

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	215
Number of questionnaires returned	87

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	36	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	46	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	80	20	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	51	47	1	1	0
The teaching is good.	63	36	0	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	42	12	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	37	3	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	82	17	0	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	45	13	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	57	40	0	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	45	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	41	24	11	3

## **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**

58 Children are admitted to school at the beginning of the autumn and spring terms before their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection there were 31 children in the reception class, none of whom had identified special educational needs. In order to meet national requirements concerning class size, two teachers currently work in this class for most of the week, well supported by classroom assistants.

59 The school has recently implemented new procedures for introducing the children into school, and these have resulted in all settling in quickly and happily. Attainment on entry is slightly above average overall, a little higher than was reported at the time of the previous inspection. The children start school with above average skills in personal and social development and in mathematical development, but their attainment is only average for communication, literacy and language.

60 Provision for the Foundation Stage is good and this is an improvement since the previous inspection when it was judged to be sound. The school has worked hard to develop the provision according to the most recent national guidance. All children are well supported by the adults who work with them. Adults continually promote the development of basic communication, literacy and language and the children's personal and social skills. There are good opportunities for children to begin to develop confidence when speaking during class discussions, for example when they split into smaller groups to talk about items of interest that they have brought into school. Mathematical skills are similarly well promoted, as when counting skills are developed through number rhymes.

61 Learning resources are satisfactory to promote all areas of learning inside and outside the classroom. The children go outside for structured outdoor sessions, where there are opportunities for physical development using wheeled toys, including two- and three-wheeled cycles. The teachers are aware of the need to plan more regularly for these outdoor sessions, in particular at the beginning of term when the class consists of a number of very young children. All reception children have regular opportunities to use the apparatus in the main hall to develop physical skills.

62 Teaching is good. The children are well managed and adults have high expectations about their behaviour and response to the activities they are given. All adults interact well with groups of children, and opportunities are not missed to reinforce skills and develop vocabulary. This was done particularly well during a cooking activity where vocabulary such as 'flour', 'sugar' and 'mixed spice' was developed well with children of all levels of ability. Children were given good opportunities to recall what they had done and list the ingredients they had used as they made 'polar bear' biscuits. This resulted in good learning because the children concentrated and listened carefully. ICT is beginning to be used effectively to support learning, in particular to promote basic literacy and numeracy skills. This consistently good teaching influences learning throughout each day. It results in good progress by all groups of children - an improvement since the previous inspection, when progress was judged to be sound. Teachers' planning is good and accurate day-to-day assessments help to move the children on to the next stage of learning.

63 The curriculum is well planned on the basis of the national early learning goals. However, profiles on individual children need further development and the teachers are aware of the need to devise a system to show individual progress in each area of learning.

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

64 Teaching is good and this area of learning is well promoted in everything the children do. Behaviour is good and most children listen well in all situations. By the end of the reception class most are likely to reach at least the expected levels and a significant number are likely to exceed these levels, so that attainment is above average taken as a whole. Progress is good because the children show positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. Personal independence is well developed. For example, most children change quickly and confidently by themselves for physical development sessions; after using glue or visiting the toilet, they sensibly go and wash their hands. There are many opportunities for the children to work in pairs and small groups and to begin to develop the skills necessary to work independently. Most children select activities with confidence and all are encouraged to tidy away at the end of each session. Planning and past work shows that the children begin to develop a basic understanding of religions and celebrations within different faiths. For example they learnt about baptism as they listened to a story, *Evie's Baptism*.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

65 The quality of teaching of communication, language and literacy skills is good. Speaking, listening, reading and writing are consistently promoted in all the children do. Higher attainers were seen identifying initial and final sounds in words and then classifying, for example, those that ended with 'p'. They confidently put items such as 'lollipop' and 'soap' into this group. Children are often seen choosing books individually or sharing them with a friend or an adult. The love of books is promoted well, which results in all children handling books carefully and enjoying reading activities. Most children sustain concentration well as they sit and look at books. Lower attaining children reinforce numeracy as well as literacy skills as they read with an adult *Ten Play Hide and Seek* by Penny Dale. They use the pictures well to tell the story. Average and higher attaining children read accurately. They are beginning to use their knowledge of letter sounds to work out words that they are unsure of. Most of these children have a developing idea of the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts.

66 The children are becoming confident writers as they develop early writing skills. They record their ideas and experiences carefully through drawing and attempting to write independently. Many are beginning to form sentences as they write and eagerly ask how to spell words so that they write them correctly. Most children attempt to write their names and indicate that they are aware of the need to write letters correctly because they are all regularly shown how to write letters with the correct formation. There are many opportunities to develop writing skills: for example they practise writing in speech bubbles as they write about *The Enormous Turnip*. Most children are likely to at least reach the expected standards and many are likely to exceed these levels, so that the standards reached are above average taken as a whole. Progress is good in this area of learning.

## **Mathematical development**

67 Teaching is good and the children enjoy the many experiences they are given to develop basic number skills. All children have opportunities to learn mathematical vocabulary in the many activities they are offered, such as 'longer' and 'shorter'. They are taught that shapes such as triangles, circles, rectangles and squares have 'edges' and 'corners' as well as 'sides'. They all learn number rhymes, which reinforce the sequence of numbers up to 10 and the sequence from 10 back to zero. Higher attaining children work on sequencing numbers up to and over 20. They all begin to develop an idea of the correct way to form their numbers. Most children begin to be aware of how to add and subtract numbers and as they get older they learn how to record simple addition and subtraction sums.

68 Adults interact well within the groups and give the children many opportunities to articulate their thinking, thus developing their mathematical understanding. For example in cooking activities they learn how to weigh out ingredients. As they play in the sand they decide which container will hold the most sand. In the 'Freezer Shop' children read shopping lists as they use pennies to buy pizzas and lollipops. Progress is overall good and most children are likely to reach at least the expected levels by the end of their time in reception. Many are likely to exceed these levels and the standards achieved are above average overall.

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

69 Teaching is good and most children make good progress, reaching above the expected standards by the end of the reception year. Past work shows that children look at themselves as babies and identify what they wore then and compare those clothes with today. They sequence pictures of people correctly from childhood to old age. The outside area is used well as they look for minibeasts in the playground and then use magnifying glasses to look at them carefully. The children have looked at different sources of light such as torches, lamps and lampposts outside in the street. They use developing literacy skills to fill in worksheets, which reinforce their understanding. All children regularly take part in cooking activities and learn about safety in the kitchen and how heat affects the ingredients which they mix together as they make cakes and biscuits. They look at different materials and classify those which 'bend' and those which 'will not bend'. Adults take every opportunity to reinforce ideas taught previously, so that most of the children are likely to reach the expected levels for their ages by the end of the reception class and many will exceed these levels. All children learn how to join materials together by using a range of tools as they make seed packets from various types of paper. Writing skills are well promoted in this activity as they write instructions on the back of the packets. They use construction toys to build models as they work together in small groups or choose to work alone. ICT skills are promoted well, which results in the children working confidently on the computers. They are given programs which promote in particular literacy and language, mathematical skills and art skills well.

### **Physical development**

70 The school has improved the resources for this area since the previous inspection when they were judged to be unsatisfactory. Resources are satisfactory but there are too few planned opportunities for structured outdoor play. Plans are in place to develop this area. There are regular opportunities for children to develop physically in the hall. One outdoor play lesson was seen and here the teaching was good. Adults interacted well as children confidently used wheeled vehicles that included three and two-wheeled cycles. The lesson was satisfactorily resourced and the children shared the equipment well. Activities were challenging and social skills such as the importance of taking turns was emphasised well. Learning was good because instructions were clear and all children were expected to listen. Most children handle scissors, paintbrushes and pencils with good control although a few children have difficulty holding pencils as they write. All children play imaginatively with construction toys and have opportunities to use soft materials such as clay and the lifelike 'snow' in the 'snow scene' tray. Progress in this area is good and most children are likely to reach the expected levels or exceed them by the end of the reception class. Standards are above average overall.

## **Creative development**

71 Most of the children are likely to reach the expected levels by the time they end their time in reception, with many exceeding these levels. The children sing songs with great enjoyment and have opportunities to play percussion instruments in lively lessons planned by the adults who work in the reception class. A visiting pianist, whose enthusiasm and specialist knowledge of music adds much to the learning, enhances these lessons. The majority of children express their own ideas and communicate their feelings through well-organised role-play sessions in the 'Snow House'. Past work shows the children have made a colourful class picture after listening to the nursery rhyme 'Mary, Mary'. They used a wide range of materials and techniques as they cut silver paper to make bells, printed symmetrical butterflies, used their hands to print the leaves for the trees, made flowers from tissue paper and developed a good idea of simple sewing as they decorated felt shells. All children show a growing awareness of three-dimensional artwork as they make bees from recyclable materials. Paints were used confidently as they painted colourful pictures of their gardens. ICT links well with this area as children create images of minibeasts using the computers. Sound quality displays enhance the learning environment inside the classrooms. Teaching is good and the children make good progress in this area.

## **ENGLISH**

72 Standards in English have shown some improvement since the last inspection. By the time pupils are seven overall standards in English are now very good, whereas they were judged to be above average in 1998. Pupils in the infants are reading well above average for their age-group, whilst writing is above the usual standard. By Year 6, the pupils are achieving standards in English which are above national standards, as at the time of the last inspection. Test results have shown a variation from year to year since 1997, but have risen overall in line with the national trend. Over time they have been above average, and are consistent with the present inspection findings. Results in writing in the most recent national tests (2001) were not as high as those in reading, but the school is aware of this and is taking steps to improve pupils' performance in writing. Current standards of writing are improving because teachers are using good strategies, stimulating an interest in writing and in some lessons are providing additional opportunities to improve the quality of pupils' writing. The National Literacy Strategy, which has been implemented very well, is being adapted to provide opportunities to use the skills and grammatical knowledge pupils have learnt so that they use them in their personal writing.

73 The pupils' speaking and listening skills at the end of Year 2 are above those expected of seven-year-olds. Pupils make rapid progress in the infant classes because teachers create many openings, giving them opportunities to talk and discuss situations with each other and with the teacher. They are given time and good support to clarify their thoughts and offer them in the course of many discussions during the school day. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to play a full part in these discussions and work with friends to extend their speaking and listening skills. Those from ethnic minority communities are equally involved and participate fully. Pupils' vocabulary increases alongside their good progress in basic reading skills and reading comprehension.

74 By the end of Year 6 pupils achieve above the nationally expected levels of competence in speaking and listening. They are keen to respond to questions, and contribute eagerly to class discussions, having listened carefully to others before offering their ideas or reasons. They are confident and use a wide vocabulary and speak in well-constructed sentences when giving their answers. They listen carefully to the teacher and adapt their remarks to the context in which they are working. For example, pupils were enthused by the Beatles music they had heard and used the lyrics as evidence in a history lesson about life in

the 1960s. A number of pupils show well above average skills, using a wide vocabulary and complex sentence structures to express their views.

75 Pupils' attainment in reading by the time they are seven is well above national expectations. They read confidently and enjoy a range of books from the class library. Infant teachers provide well-sequenced opportunities in the literacy sessions so that they can develop pupils' reading skills. They encourage pupils to build up both their sight vocabulary and their understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds. The good use of games and other activities consolidates and reinforces pupils' learning. Teachers ensure that pupils' reading progress is monitored frequently. Pupils read individually both in group and individual sessions to an adult on a regular basis. Pupils take reading books home and are well supported in their reading by parents. The dialogue in the reading diaries could, however, be extended to include comments on progress and further support which may be needed. Pupils with special educational needs receive additional support through careful intervention in the groups and make good progress.

76 Pupils make steady progress in reading in the junior years, although not at the same rate as in the infant stage. Even so, standards are above average by the time they are eleven. Pupils read in groups on a regular basis and develop their skills during literacy sessions. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 discuss plot development, name their favourite authors and discuss their styles of writing. Pupils read confidently, self-correcting as they go and anxious to get into the story so they can predict what may happen next. The reading material they can choose from is carefully selected for each year group and covers a wide range of interests. There are opportunities to read silently each day and pupils are encouraged to read their books at home. A small number of lower attaining pupils attempt to read books that are not always appropriate to their reading level; this undermines their confidence and indicates that pupils, especially higher up the school, are receiving insufficient guidance in their selection of books. The monitoring of pupils' progress in reading at this level is not sufficiently focused. Even so, by the time pupils leave the school, the majority can read very competently. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to extend their reading skills by researching information from non-fiction books. This aspect needs to be further developed so that pupils use reading as a tool to extend both their knowledge and skills. The book resources are good and the small but well organised library could be used further so that pupils can extend their research skills.

77 Writing standards are well above national expectations by the time pupils are seven. Most pupils write well and are confident in using a range of styles and ideas. In Year 1 they are able to understand rhythms and rhyming words to compose a favourite food poem using phrases for example 'peas jiggle, mash melts'. Pupils in Year 2 enjoy writing a modern-day version of *Red Riding Hood*, putting the story into a contemporary context so that the reader is engaged and can appreciate the humour and sequence of the story. Pupils give detailed attention to developing the character and use a range of punctuation including speech marks to give vitality and interest to their writing.

78 By the age of eleven standards in writing are not as high as those in reading, but remain above average. Pupils have experienced and use a variety of approaches to develop their writing. They use skills they have learnt so that by the time they are eleven they can write stories with a detailed plot, using chapters to develop the story-line and using punctuation carefully and succinctly. They use different forms of writing; for instance Year 3 pupils use their writing skills to re-draft a badly written letter, recognising grammatical errors and selecting more appropriate words. Year 5 pupils convince the audience that the use of child labour in Victorian times should be abolished. They write letters to Members of Parliament of the day, conveying both the arguments and describing the conditions in a forceful evocative style. The school has focused carefully on improving the standards in

writing and has provided both time and resources to extend writing opportunities. The quantity and quality of pupils' writing are now good and have improved since the time of the last inspection. The school should continue to provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length and to write accounts and reports in subject areas other than English. In this way pupils will be able to use their skills in context, rather than using writing frames and stimuli which have less relevance.

79 Standards of handwriting are good when pupils use the italic handwriting style and join their letters so that the handwriting flows. However, the majority of pupils do not fully develop the school style and many do not join letters together. This inhibits the speed and fluency of their writing and can disturb the pupils' feel for spelling patterns. Overall, pupils are taught spelling systematically throughout the school and are given opportunities to use the words in their writing. Pupils sometimes make errors in their free writing because they are inhibited by their handwriting style and less able pupils lose the flow and pattern. Pupils make good use of the word banks and very good classroom displays to assist their spelling and writing techniques. In many lessons pupils with special educational needs are provided with specific word banks which they use confidently. Many are able to use a personal dictionary to good effect.

80 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in the lessons are very good. They show a keenness and enthusiasm to learn. They are careful and consider how best to use the resources they have in the lesson. Younger pupils are eager to read, and select and handle their books carefully. At the start of all literacy lessons pupils are expectant and sit quietly, responding quietly by raising their hand or responding immediately the teacher calls their name. They wait to be invited to contribute to the lesson. They read well together from the large text or piece of writing and consider those around them. As pupils proceed through the school, the very positive attitudes to literacy prevail and pupils are able to discuss with each other points at issue and share the humour of the story with the teacher. Pupils enjoy these aspects of the lesson and always respond in a sensible and mature manner.

81 The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good. Some particularly strong features are regularly present in the teaching of the infants and at times in the juniors. All teachers have good subject expertise, which they apply effectively. Lessons usually move along at a good pace, with challenging questions and discussion points. In all lessons teachers' planning is rooted in the National Literacy Strategy, but is planned flexibly to ensure that the individual learning needs of the pupils are taken into account. Teachers explain clearly what they expect the pupils to learn in each lesson. Those with special educational needs are very well supported by specific teaching to develop their comprehension, using cues to develop both reading and writing skills. They make very good progress in the small group lessons because they are focused and challenged to extend their ideas before reaching a conclusion. The variety of tasks is stimulating and engages the pupils' interest. In good lessons pupils are referred to the objectives of the lesson as they complete their tasks and plenary sessions are used very well so that pupils can discuss and extend their thinking. In a successful Year 2 lesson the teacher used pupils' discussions with each other to extend the points she was teaching. Pupils with special educational needs were able to play a full part because the teacher ensured that they were heard and their contributions were respected. As a result all were making good progress. Teachers make effective use of tailored worksheets to reinforce pupils' learning of grammatical aspects of English. In the best lessons the worksheets are designed to ensure that the task is appropriate to individual needs, enabling the pupils to apply the skills they have learnt to their writing. For example all pupils in a Year 2 lesson used a different worksheet to compose a poem with words beginning with the same letter. They recognised the use of alliteration and more able pupils were beginning to scan and rhyme their poems. They worked well together to complete an

interesting piece of writing which required both individual effort and collaboration with each other.

82 There are variations in teaching styles and some minor shortcomings. In Year 6, a reliance on published schemes to provide the resource and teaching material is not always appropriate for less able pupils, who do not make sufficient progress in some lessons as a result. Marking of pupils' work is not consistent and in some classes does not always indicate to pupils how they can improve their work. Pupils are not always aware of the skills they need to achieve a higher standard. Where pupils do not respond to the comments and review their work, progress is limited to some extent.

83 The co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure there are clear guidelines to support the teaching of English. She has good knowledge and is enthusiastic about the National Literacy Strategy, which has been implemented throughout the school very effectively. There have been few opportunities for her to monitor the quality of teaching throughout the school; however other monitoring and discussions enable her to have a clear view about standards and the progress pupils are making throughout the school. The future development of the subject includes monitoring the quality of teaching and sharing the best practice throughout the school.

## **MATHEMATICS**

84 Results in tests taken in 2001 indicated that pupils' attainment was well above the national average in Years 2 and 6, exceeding the targets set. Current standards are well above average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. At the time of the last inspection standards were only average, so this represents a marked improvement.

85 In Year 2 pupils can add and subtract two-digit numbers accurately, sometimes using mental methods only, and at other times using a range of different strategies to reach their answers. For instance in one lesson the teacher asked pupils to calculate what they would need to add to 4 times 10 to make 100. One pupil explained that 4 times 10 is 40 and then she counted up to 100 in tens to get the answer of 60, but another pupil suggested that, having got 40, you just take that away from 100. The ability to carry out calculations involving two distinct steps and to discuss the virtue of different methods is advanced for pupils of this age. In the same class pupils complete equations such as  $? + 14 = 35$  and have a developing understanding of simple fractions such as halves and quarters.

86 In Year 6 the work completed by pupils demonstrates their understanding of decimal fractions and their relationship with percentages. Pupils can add and subtract numbers to two and three decimal places and multiply two and three digit numbers. Work in other areas of mathematics is also of a high standard. They analyse geometric shapes in terms of sides and vertices and three-dimensional shapes in terms of faces and size of angles. Pupils gather data to draw graphs, sometimes linking with their work in science and ICT.

87 Pupils enter Year 1 from the reception class with generally above average attainment in mathematical development. All the pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, continue the good progress made in the reception class throughout the school. In Year 1, pupils collect information on favourite crisp flavours and have a graph of the results imaginatively mounted on the classroom wall, using the empty crisp packets. They can count up to and back from 50 reliably and recognise lines of symmetry in simple shapes. In Year 3 pupils take the idea of symmetry further. They discuss horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines and test their ideas using mirrors to find if shapes do have lines of symmetry and if so, how many. Pupils talk confidently in mathematics lessons; they like to explain how they come to conclusions and listen to each other's ideas. In Year 4, pupils consider rotation in terms of

turn in clockwise and anticlockwise directions, while in Year 5 the concept of 'turn' is taken further, using protractors to measure angles, and classifying them as acute and obtuse. The work of classroom assistants is often valuable in helping pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. All areas of mathematics are given appropriate coverage, including pupils' opportunities to investigate and apply mathematics. This is very evident in the use of information from the performance of the school's football teams; averages are calculated and league tables produced. Further evidence of mathematics being used across the curriculum comes in science. Pupils measure forces and produce graphs of the results; the relevance of this work is enhanced when pupils use computers to create the graphs. Computers are used regularly in mathematics to enhance learning; this is especially evident in Year 6, where the classroom is adjacent to the computer suite.

88 Teaching in mathematics is consistently good and sometimes very good. Teachers are clear about how to deliver lessons that reflect the National Numeracy Strategy. They plan lessons that match the different levels of pupils' ability in their classes and often have extra work planned for pupils of higher ability so that they are challenged and extended. In a very good lesson in Year 6, for example, the teacher asked pupils to identify the factors of complex numbers such as 32 and 56 as a warm-up activity. A 'flip chart' was prepared so that pupils' answers could be recorded immediately and discussed. The work was revisited in the conclusion to the lesson, but using a computer and screen. Questions were asked in such a way as to make pupils competitive, which they found amusing and engaging. In all sessions, this detailed and extensive preparation keeps lessons moving at a good pace and means that pupils are working and learning continuously. Teachers make it clear what they want pupils to learn and at the end of lessons this is reviewed as a class, so that pupils can display their knowledge and understanding of what has been covered. In the odd lesson where teaching is only satisfactory, introductions are a bit too long and they need to be delivered with more zest.

89 Pupils like mathematics. Their very good attitudes to school are evident in lessons, they listen well, move between activities sensibly and use time very effectively. These positive attitudes make a major contribution to pupils' progress and learning. This is evident even in some lessons that are very long, sometimes 80 minutes or more. However, these over-long sessions are not the best way of using time and some consideration should be given to reordering the school day so that time is used even more productively.

90 The subject is well managed throughout the school. The co-ordinator is involved in monitoring pupils' work in all classes on a regular basis. Teaching is monitored regularly and information from this has been used to improve the provision for pupils' learning. Assessment procedures in mathematics provide teachers with good information on pupils' attainment and progress. This information also helps to identify where there are weaknesses in pupils' understanding so that teachers can modify their planning to revisit topics and rectify misunderstanding where this is appropriate.

## **SCIENCE**

91 Standards in science are currently above average at the end of Year 6 and well above in Year 2. This is consistent with recent national test results for eleven-year-olds and with teachers' assessments of the attainment of seven-year-olds in summer 2001. Building on a good start in the reception class, the pupils are making very good progress in Years 1 and 2 and good, although less consistent, progress at the junior stage. This picture is similar to findings at the time of the last inspection, but with some improvement in standards by the end of Year 2.

92 Pupils all have similar opportunities to participate in lessons and to achieve well in science, but girls have performed better in national tests in recent years. Where practical

work is undertaken in mixed-ability groups, those with special educational needs are very well supported by their peers and make good progress, although their understanding is usually at a less sophisticated level than the others. More able pupils are catered for effectively in most classes, with activities planned to give extra challenge in many lessons. Last year just over one third of the pupils reached the higher level 5 in the national science tests, whilst in 2000, two pupils reached the very high level 6. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve just as well as their classmates.

93 Older pupils' attainment is above average overall, because they have a very secure grasp of subject content by the end of Year 6. The pupils describe the functions of major organs in the human body and understand how animals and plants may be adapted to a particular habitat. They have ideas about how mixtures can be separated, applying their knowledge to solve problems, and they have a good understanding of the physical processes they are currently studying. Some aspects of scientific investigation are also above average, especially the pupils' ability to record their findings graphically, to interpret results, extrapolate and explain anomalies. Good use is made of computers to track and analyse results. The pupils' use and understanding of scientific vocabulary is securely developed, and they are good at observing and making measurements. There are some relative weaknesses in aspects of investigative science, however. Although they have a secure understanding of the basic principles of fair testing, the pupils now in Year 6 have limited experience of devising for themselves simple tests to answer a question or check out a hypothesis. As a result they find it relatively difficult to cope with practical ideas, especially making decisions about the equipment, materials and quantities that might be utilised in a test. Apart from some written work of good quality on micro-organisms, pupils' books suggest too much reliance on worksheets to record findings. The older pupils are not often expected to write up explanations in their own words at any length, but they do make good use of charts, graphs and diagrams of to communicate and record scientific ideas.

94 Although it was not possible to see science taught in Year 2, discussion with pupils and their written work show that current standards in science are well above average at the age of seven. The pupils have a broad range of experience of observing, investigating and recording what they see, including taking measurements. In recent work on plant growth, for example, pupils in Year 2 have observed plants grown in different conditions and recorded their rate of growth. They make sensible predictions and are developing a sophisticated understanding of the principle of fair testing for their age. In discussion, Year 2 pupils came up with sensible and practical ideas for testing out a proposition that was new to them. Their books show coverage of a wide range of topics, with ideas recorded in the form of flow diagrams, labelled drawings and diagrams, charts and independent writing. The pupils are developing a grasp of scientific terminology: one child describes a material as 'rigid', for example, whilst another writes that 'all animals feed and reproduce'. A piece of work entitled 'fiction and fact about plants and animals' shows the pupils' sense of enjoyment and the use of their imagination.

95 On the basis of the five science lessons seen and the pupils' finished work, teaching and learning are good overall at both key stages, although a little less consistent in the junior classes. Teaching in the lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to very good. At best, teaching draws on strong subject knowledge and a good understanding of how pupils' investigative skills develop. A highly successful Year 5 lesson, for example, dealt with the way in which solids can be changed to improve sound transmission; as part of this learning, the pupils made and tested string telephones. The purpose of the lesson was very clearly explained and linked to the work that had gone before, and the pupils were thoroughly briefed about the practical activities involved, including safety aspects. Because they were given plenty of scope to make choices, the pupils were encouraged to think carefully about which combinations of materials would be likely to work best and why, before trying out the

telephones in practice. When the initial task was completed pupils were free to experiment, for example with three- and four-way telephones. The teacher supported very effectively by flagging up key vocabulary on the whiteboard and by distilling and summarising pupils' provisional findings on a flip chart. As a result the pupils' ability to offer scientific explanations using the correct terminology was effectively developed, with vocabulary such as 'vibrate', 'amplify' and 'transmit' becoming familiar through use. The teacher's enthusiasm transferred to the pupils, who worked together on the task in hand with complete absorption.

96 Learning is best when the pupils have the opportunities to engage in practical activities at first hand or to observe testing in action. During the inspection, groups of Year 4 pupils tested different inclined plane surfaces for friction, developing their ability to predict, estimate and measure forces accurately. The pupils made much better progress during this activity than others in their class who were completing worksheets at the same time. Year 3 pupils watched intently as a model car was propelled along a measured run by an elastic band pulled back to varying degrees. Preliminary discussion produced a good understanding of the need to control variables, and problems with the test results were used to good effect by a quick-thinking teacher. Pupils in Year 1 were excited by the opportunity to cut open a variety of fruits to find the seeds. They worked patiently and meticulously to extract the seeds, identify and count them.

97 Science is effectively led by a well-informed and enthusiastic co-ordinator. The school is in the process of adopting a new national scheme of work, which is proving successful apart from the need for minor adjustments. Whole-class assessment is currently undertaken at the end of each block of work, but a need for more accurate individual assessment has rightly been identified. With this in mind, new materials are currently being tried out in Years 2 and 5. The co-ordinator has a good idea of the subject's strengths and areas that need further development on the basis of book trawls. Relative weaknesses in the older pupils' understanding, for example of filtration, have already been addressed. However, the co-ordinator has not yet had an opportunity to improve practice still further by observing lessons or by working alongside colleagues in the classroom. This is planned for the current year, but the necessary resources have not been explicitly identified in the school development plan as they need to be.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

98 Pupils reach an average standard by the ages of seven and eleven; this is slightly lower than the above average attainment reported at the time of the previous inspection. Throughout the school pupils make satisfactory progress.

99 No teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2 but sketchbooks are used effectively and art and design is linked well with other subjects. For example pupils in Year 1 have made a class picture after listening to the story of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. They have used painting and printing skills and developed a satisfactory understanding of three-dimensional art as they modelled vegetables, using a variety of materials. Pupils have experimented with paints and mixed colours such as red and yellow to make orange. Collages have been made after pupils have bent, torn, cut, twisted and folded a variety of materials. In Year 2 pupils have sketched leaves and then made templates of these shapes. Finally, using felt they have sewn leaf shapes expertly onto hessian to make 'autumn collages'. Painting skills were used well as this class linked art and design with their history topic on Victorian England.

100 There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on teaching in the upper part of the school because only one lesson was seen. The teaching in this lesson was satisfactory. The teacher, assisted by pupils, developed a lovely 'seaside still life' for the pupils to create their own piece of artwork. There was good reference to the artist Paul

Cézanne, whom they had talked about in the previous lesson. Resources were used well as they looked at work by other famous artists such as Vincent Van Gogh. During this lesson basic art skills such as sketching were not well promoted and this affected the standard of work produced. Relationships within the class were good, however, and all pupils worked with enthusiasm and enjoyment.

101 Past work in all classes shows that pupils work with a satisfactory range of materials and techniques. Art and design is regularly linked with other subjects such as mathematics, geography and English. Pupils in Year 3 have used their knowledge of rotation and then drawn straight lines to create curves. They then discovered hidden two-dimensional shapes within their designs. In Year 4, pupils looked for lines, shape, colour and pattern in aerial photographs and developed their own abstract collage. After looking at work by the poet Benjamin Zephaniah, pupils in Year 5 used charcoal pencils and sketched different parts of his life. There is little evidence of artwork in Year 6 because art lessons have not had a high profile due to an emphasis on English and mathematics.

102 Teachers use the national guidelines to plan for art. However skills such as sketching are not being progressively taught as pupils move through the school. This is most apparent in the junior classes and this is why standards have dropped slightly since the previous inspection. The subject is led by two co-ordinators who are aware of what is needed to raise standards further, for example to develop assessment procedures and to monitor what is actually being taught throughout the school. Resources are satisfactory to teach the National Curriculum, and ICT is beginning to be used to support the subject. Pupils have used the computers to produce their own pictures and patterns. Sketchbooks are used in all classes but are used better in some than others. They are used particularly well in Year 2.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

103 Standards are average by the ages of seven and eleven. All pupils make sound progress. The standards which the pupils reach are similar those reported in the last inspection. Judgements are based on discussions with teachers and pupils and a scrutiny of planning, design and technology books and a limited amount of past work. Two lessons were observed, in Years 2 and 3. There is too little evidence to make an overall judgement on teaching but in the lessons seen teaching was good. Planning was good and teachers gave clear instructions whilst emphasising specific vocabulary such as 'axles' and 'chassis' in Year 2 as pupils designed wheeled vehicles. This activity was cleverly linked to their history topic on the Victorians. In Year 3, as pupils designed sandwiches, the teacher reinforced the importance of being hygienic and the necessity of working in clean surroundings. Relationships between teachers and pupils were positive, as were the pupils' attitudes to learning. Learning was good because pupils listened well and were enthusiastic and persevered at the tasks they were given.

104 In Year 1, after listening to the story, pupils had the opportunity to use different materials and design homes for the Three Little Pigs. Past work shows that in Year 2 pupils have worked in groups and designed, made and evaluated 'Joseph's Coat'. This work was closely linked to art and design and ICT as they looked carefully at repeating patterns from different parts of the world. Cultural development was promoted well as they looked at fabrics from Africa. Pupils then used a computer program to create their own patterns. They joined fabric together using staples, Sellotape and thread and decided that thread was the most successful. Past work in Year 3 shows that pupils have looked at different types of bread as they tasted and evaluated a range of bought sandwiches before starting to design their own. Design and technology books show that in Years 4, 5 and 6 all pupils have opportunities to plan, make and evaluate. For example pupils in Year 4 have designed and made money containers and chairs. Designs were limited, however, and the finished products were not

available. In Year 5, photographic evidence shows that pupils have designed, planned and made musical instruments. There were good links with the history topic, Ancient Egypt, in Year 6 as pupils designed and made an Egyptian water mover (a shaduf); again, however, it was not possible to see the finished products.

105 The school follows the national guidelines, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. However there is no monitoring of what is actually taught and some classes do not follow this guidance accurately. This does not ensure that skills, knowledge and understanding are progressively taught. The design and technology books are used better in some classes than others. They are used particularly well in Year 2. The subject is soundly led by the two co-ordinators, which is an improvement since the previous inspection when the leadership was reported as unsatisfactory. Both teachers are aware of the need to develop assessment procedures so that the progress of individuals can be easily tracked as they move through the school. Some teachers are aware of the importance of using ICT to support the curriculum. However there is little evidence to suggest that at present it is used to much effect in design and technology. Resources are satisfactory to teach the National Curriculum.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

106 Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection. The national guidelines have been introduced and the co-ordinator has identified the need to develop resources to link with this guidance. By the ages of seven and eleven pupils reach the standards that would be expected for their ages. These standards are similar to those reported in the previous inspection. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs.

107 Judgements are based on one lesson seen in Year 3, discussions with pupils, and by examining teachers' planning and past work. There is too little evidence to make an overall judgement on teaching, but teaching in the lesson seen was satisfactory. The lesson was well planned and resources were used effectively to promote the teacher's intention, which was to enable pupils to understand and appreciate the importance of recycling. Vocabulary such as 'reduce', 'recycle' and 'reuse' were emphasised well. Questioning directed to the class was good but the teacher did not involve enough pupils in the initial interesting discussion. Pupils demonstrated positive attitudes to the subject. However during the written task there was too little mention of the importance of writing letters correctly and neatly, which resulted in some untidily presented work. In addition a few pupils did not hold their pencils properly and the adults did not address this.

108 Pupils in Year 1 study their local environment as they look at where they live; their street and the type of house they live in. They are beginning to develop a secure idea of the United Kingdom and the wider world. Literacy and art are linked well to the subject and opportunities are not missed to promote pupils' cultural development. For example, after listening to a West African folk tale called *The Fire Children*, the pupils made and dressed clay people and placed them on different countries on a world map. All pupils in Years 1 and 2 are enthusiastic to see where Barnaby Bear has been for his holidays and photographic evidence clearly shows how they track him on his travels. In Year 2, pupils develop their understanding of where the United Kingdom is in relation to the rest of the world. They identify London as the capital of England. Pupils begin to make comparisons between Wednesfield and other far away places such as Tocuaro, for example looking specifically at the different types of weather. They look at Lulworth Cove, a coastal area, and show a good understanding of how to use a key to label features which they identify. The subject is closely linked to history as pupils find out how the Victorians spent a day at the seaside.

109 Past work clearly shows the satisfactory progress made as pupils move through Years 4, 5 and 6. In Year 4 pupils have studied India, and literacy skills were used well as they wrote about family life and the climate. Pupils in Year 5 built on and developed their understanding of coastal areas as they discussed and wrote about the advantages and disadvantages of sea defences. Vocabulary such as 'rock', 'debris', 'cliff', 'headland' and 'waves' were emphasised well on a classroom display. The recent topic studied in Year 6 has been involved with learning about a mountain environment, rivers and the water-cycle.

110 Geography displays in classrooms enrich the learning environment and reinforce the topics being taught. The subject supports the pupils' social, moral and cultural development well as they learn about life in different countries. Educational visits such as a visit to Fairbourne reinforces and enhances what is taught in the classroom. The use of ICT to support the subject is limited, however.

111 The co-ordinator, who has recently been appointed, is enthusiastic and interested in the subject and has a good idea of standards throughout the school. She has correctly identified areas for improvement and is in the process of developing assessment procedures so that pupils' progress can be tracked accurately as they move through the school. There have been no opportunities for her to monitor what has been taught and this continues to be an issue from the previous inspection.

## **HISTORY**

112 Standards are above average at the age of seven and broadly average at eleven. This is similar to findings at the time of the last inspection except that attainment is now dipping slightly in Year 6. Progress and learning are good in the infant classes and satisfactory at the junior stage. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress throughout the school.

113 By the time they are seven the pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of life in the past. They know that anything that happened yesterday is history. They are able to make comparisons between themselves and children in Victorian times. They make use of simple timelines and recognise the difference in lifestyles when they handle items which would have been used by Victorian children. Pupils in Year 2 use photographs and books to make detailed comparisons between a day at the seaside in Victorian times and the way they themselves spend time on the beach. The teacher encourages pupils to test their ideas by questioning sources of information and by corroborating ideas and information.

114 Pupils in Year 2 note details in dress and equipment and learn vocabulary and derivations of words linked to the time, for example 'promenade'. The teacher guides them by using a range of open questions and provides a wide range of activities, so that all pupils including those with special educational needs can consolidate their skills and develop their own ideas and reasons for their comparisons. A very good display incorporating photographs and objects that pupils can handle and describe stimulates pupils' interest and discussions. The display contains a range of questions and vocabulary linked to key words connected to the theme which pupils can use in their own writing. They begin to understand how significant people in Victorian times, such as Florence Nightingale, brought about change for the better.

115 Pupils in Year 6 have a good historical knowledge and awareness of the past. Their understanding of the Greek civilisation and the impact it made on democracy is good. They can order historical events and recognise the significance of major events in a period of time. However these older pupils have not had enough experience of researching independently from books or primary sources and making their own interpretations of the evidence. There

are limited opportunities in Year 6 for them to write at length, offering reasoned explanations for historical events.

116 The range of opportunities and experiences junior pupils receive as part of their history topics is good. Teachers use the knowledge pupils gained, for example in Year 3 when they experienced life during the blitz at Shugborough, to extend the comparisons pupils make and demonstrate how life has changed. Discussions and opportunities for writing are used but pupils do not extend their research skills sufficiently and rely too much on worksheets for information. In Year 6, pupils were anxious to research knowledge from the primary sources which the teacher made available using music from 1960s and the life and times of The Beatles. They used the Internet to extend their research but realised that people in school had heard the music when it was first composed. There are not sufficient opportunities given to pupils to develop their own line of enquiry and develop their thinking about how the past has influenced the present day.

117 Pupils in Year 5 used the skills they have learnt in literacy to empathise with the life of the Victorian child. The teacher provided a range of situations so pupils could understand the effects of child labour on the economy and education. The pupils use a range of persuasive arguments in their letters to Members of Parliament to improve the conditions. In the letters they convey both a historical understanding and indicate knowledge of the social conditions in Victorian times. This work did contribute well to the development of literacy skills.

118 Teaching in history is sound. There is good coverage of the guidelines for the subject in each year group. In a topic on the Tudors the pupils used other areas of the curriculum to consolidate their knowledge, for example using needlework skills to make Tudor roses. The teacher very successfully introduced a range of music from the Tudor age to convey to both a feeling for the period and in order to make comparisons.

119 The resources for the subject are satisfactory; the school makes good use of the local resources in the area. The co-ordinator has other responsibilities in the school, but has developed the history guidelines with other colleagues. There are no formal procedures to assess pupils' work and at present no opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning in the subject.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

120 The pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. They design screen-based vehicles from their components and design cards for Mothers' Day. Pupils also use computers as a source of information. In Year 2 pupils find out about insects and teeth, linking work on computers with science and health education. By the end of Year 2 standards are average for the age-group.

121 Satisfactory progress is maintained through Years 3 to 5 and then accelerated progress in Year 6 enables pupils to reach standards that are above average, as at the time of the last inspection. The main reason for the acceleration in progress is that the Year 6 classroom is next to the computer suite and pupils move freely and frequently between the two. The teacher in Year 6 is the co-ordinator for ICT and is keen and capable of promoting the subject in many areas of the curriculum when opportunities arise.

122 In geography, pupils in Year 6 have written articles about mountain terrain using information from the Internet. In doing so they have merged photographs and text and then enriched the finished product by adding sound effects that the computer can play back as the pupils present their work. In a lesson in Year 6, pupils use computers to program the sequence of events in model traffic lights. They insert instructions for changes, time delays

and sequences. Pupils demonstrate the capacity to solve problems, work together and to evaluate their programming abilities. The work is taken to even higher levels by some more able pupils who set about programming two sets of traffic lights set at right angles to each other, as in the real world. There is a real sense of achievement as they reach their goal that demonstrates clearly that their attainment is above average. The equipment used to reach this high standard has been obtained by the school's involvement in a joint project with a neighbouring high school and an educational supplier.

123 Teaching is good in ICT. Teachers are confident in using the equipment and know how to present new ideas in a meaningful way. In Year 1 pupils learn about how household devices are controlled by switches, some being simply off and on and others such as washing machines and video machines having more complex settings. In Year 4, pupils make links with their work in mathematics on angles and turn when they program a vehicle to complete a square circuit that involves eight separate instructions. In Year 5, pupils study information on body sizes that has deliberate errors within it. Pupils search the information finding the faults and learning that poor information can lead to inappropriate conclusions and hence the need to be vigilant in gathering and examining data. The preparation for this lesson is thorough and pupils are given work at different levels, matched to the different levels of ability within the class. The use of ICT to record results and write reports of school football matches is a good example of the subject being used imaginatively and for relevant purposes.

124 There are a generous number of computers in school. They are found in the specialist suite and in classrooms. The use of trained support staff is a particularly strong feature of the school's provision. This enables groups to work in the suite with very good quality support whilst the rest of the class remain with the teacher. ICT is well led, teachers are supported and training is shared amongst the whole staff. Recent procedures for monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are good. They identify clearly what pupils have studied and where their understanding is not as secure as it might be, so that teachers know where they may have to revisit topics or carry out further work before moving on. Its use needs to be widened to include all classes.

## **MUSIC**

125 Attainment in music was judged to be above average at the end of both key stages at the time of the last inspection, and these good standards have been sustained. The standard of the pupils' singing is well above average throughout the school. All the pupils achieve well overall, with very good progress made in the best lessons. The way in which all pupils, whatever their age and ability, are fully involved in music-making is a strength.

126 Throughout the school the pupils sing whole-heartedly, with confidence and commitment. They look as well as sound good when they are performing. Even when learning a new piece, they show an awareness of audience and communicate convincingly. When working on familiar pieces the pupils invariably learn the words by heart, with older pupils taking the responsibility for organising their own files of sheet music. The pupils follow a lead accurately and ensemble is very good. Words are articulated accurately and clearly. From the first the pupils produce a good tone and enjoy singing at considerable volume. Depending on the skills of the teacher, this occasionally results in dynamics that lack subtlety and some inattention to phrasing. In the hands of a skilled teacher, however, the results can be very good. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils produced an expressive tone and phrasing, alternated between staccato and legato sections and showed a wide dynamic range. These pupils confidently added an ostinato to their piece, which was clapped and chanted, then performed with an additional percussion part. Two pupils confidently performed part of the piece as a duo, adding to the variety of texture. Overall the standard of performance reached in a short time was impressive.

127 In most of the lessons observed the main focus was singing, often using pitched or unpitched percussion instruments as an accompaniment. However, pupils in both Years 1 and 2 developed listening skills, attending carefully to an unfamiliar song on CD and developing skills such as identifying and tapping with the pulse. In Year 1 the pupils used their knowledge of unpitched percussion instruments to suggest ways of representing 'a rainy sound' and 'windy weather'. In Year 3 the pupils worked effectively together to create percussion pieces representing different groups of workmen in Ancient Egypt. The pupils collaborated well and presentable pieces were emerging within a short space of time. They listened carefully to the efforts of others in the class and made constructive suggestions as to how the work could be improved.

128 Teaching and learning are mainly good throughout the school, ranging from sound to excellent. There was one flawless lesson in which the teacher's professionalism and expertise were very evident. The lesson was cleverly constructed, with learning developed at just the right pace for the pupils to achieve a very high standard of performance. Staff with less expertise all make a good effort by preparing thoroughly, selecting suitable material and teaching with commitment and enthusiasm. They are very capably assisted in this by the school's sessional pianist, who accompanies, helps to overcome problems and joins in with group activities such as composition. Occasionally opportunities for improving the pupils' work are missed when the teacher does not notice a finer point, for example a ragged entry or untidy phrasing.

129 Music is making a strong contribution to the pupils' personal and cultural development, especially by developing a sense of community, enjoyment and pride in performance. Pupils in the junior age-group have the opportunity to learn the descant recorder, and groups play regularly in assembly and on special occasions. Once beyond the beginner stage these pupils perform to a very high standard, playing accurately in several parts and reading standard notation. The tone achieved is exceptional. Groups of pupils have had the opportunity to take part in performances and celebrations with other schools in the city. They have visited in the community, for example singing for residents in an old people's home. School performances and concerts are said by parents to be of a high standard. The pupils have opportunities to listen to professional musicians, with regular performances put on by members of the local education authority's music team.

130 Music is very effectively led by a co-ordinator who has first-rate expertise in the subject. She has taken the lead in creating opportunities for the pupils to take part in performances and to engage with the wider community. As yet she has not had the chance to monitor the work of other teachers directly or to work alongside them, but two days non-contact time is scheduled for next term. This arrangement has been costed and is included in the school development plan.

131 The music curriculum is based on a published scheme that provides full coverage, including a suitable range of recorded music for listening. This is a sensible strategy that supports less confident members of staff in their lesson planning. Where appropriate, materials are well chosen to support work in subjects such as history and geography. The use of ICT to support the music curriculum is an area that is under-developed.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

132 Standards in physical education are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is the same as at the time of the last inspection for younger pupils and, though it appears to represent a fall in standards for older pupils, this is unlikely. Unlike the last inspection, it was

not possible to observe gymnastics, athletics or swimming this time. During this inspection dance and games were seen and the standards in these activities were average.

133 Progress is satisfactory throughout the school. In a Year 2 lesson pupils' ball skills are developed using a range of activities and equipment. Following a vigorous warm-up, pupils roll balls to each other, field them and roll them back. Pupils develop the techniques of hand position, being prepared and keeping their eye on the ball. Later these skills are taken further as they use hockey sticks to send the ball. The development of these skills can be seen further up the school. In Year 5, pupils learn how to field the ball using the 'long barrier' technique. They work in pairs and sending the ball with increasing speeds. In these lessons pupils' learning and skill development are helped by their positive attitudes. Teachers can confidently send pupils away to work in pairs knowing that they will stay on task and work well together. As a result time is used well, and the most is made of the learning opportunities.

134 In a dance lesson seen in Year 5 pupils listen to a pre-recorded programme that encourages them to imagine they are mannequins who are slowly coming to life. First their eyes twitch, fingers start to move and eventually their whole body comes alive. Pupils watch each other's performance, commenting on the good points and sharing their ideas. This evaluation is carried out with sensitivity and genuine appreciation of other pupils' efforts.

135 Teaching in physical education is consistently good. Teachers follow a secure pattern that starts with an energetic warm-up that gets pupils breathless and prepared for further activity. The main part of lessons is well planned and resources are prepared in good time. Teachers explain what they want pupils to do clearly, getting them to focus on techniques and skills. They make good use of pupils as exemplars so that they learn from each other and take a pride in their own performance. In games lessons, practice in skills is followed by a chance for pupils to use their skills in small-sided games. In Year 6, after practising catching and throwing, and bowling in cricket fashion, pupils go off into small groups of five or six to play a game with bowler, batsman and fielders. Again the good behaviour of the pupils is especially valuable as they are able to organise themselves and run the games fairly and without disputes.

136 The physical education curriculum is well planned and includes all the required elements. The school has chosen to offer athletics rather than outdoor and adventurous activities that are usually carried out as a residential experience. There are plenty of teaching resources. The curriculum is enriched by the provision of several after-school clubs. Opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive sport are good, including girls' and boys' football teams that play regularly throughout the year. Very good use is made of the results in these matches to produce tables and spreadsheets of players' performance, goal scorers and match reports using computers, making their work in ICT both relevant and meaningful.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

137 At the time of the last inspection pupils were attaining standards that were judged to be above those expected by the previous locally agreed syllabus. The syllabus has been reviewed since that time. The majority of pupils by the age of seven and eleven are now attaining standards that are in line with the two attainment targets of the current agreed syllabus.

138 There have been some minor changes to the syllabus which the school has incorporated into its scheme of work. The six key themes are addressed in detail and infant pupils learn about aspects of Sikhism and develop their understanding about Christianity. In

the junior classes pupils extend their knowledge about the two faiths they have already visited and explore aspects of the Hindu and Islamic faiths.

139 Teaching of religious education across the school is good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are well supported by information and resources. Lessons are planned in some detail and take into account pupils' knowledge and experiences. Displays of Christian and Islamic artefacts are used to good effect and stimulate discussion. The good use of reference material and word banks assists pupils in their tasks and encourages them to look for information.

140 Pupils in Year 1 have some understanding about the church as a place where people worship. They are introduced to the building through a well-told story and the good use of photographs stimulates discussion about churches pupils have visited for services and celebrations. The teacher encourages the pupils, through using sensitive questioning, to name the key features in the church. Pupils are confident in their answers; the teacher uses the pupils' responses and extends their knowledge by encouraging pupils to describe a christening as a 'welcome into God's family'. By the end of the lesson pupils are able to name key features and record their knowledge in well-drawn pictures of parts of the church.

141 Pupils in Year 6 spend a day in the local parish church exploring the history of the building, learning about the stories depicted in the stained glass windows, and the significance of the sacraments in the worship at the church. Members of the congregation support the pupils by explaining the local significance of the building. The teacher makes some links with the literacy skills pupils have learnt, but the use of worksheets precludes the personal accounts that could otherwise have emerged.

142 Pupils enjoy the various themes and aspects of the syllabus and make good connections between the different faiths and traditions. In a Year 3 lesson on 'special things', the teacher engaged pupils' interest by giving clues and carrying out the rituals associated with the handling of the Qu'ran. Pupils observed carefully and drew the conclusion that this book was indeed special. They showed respect for the Qu'ran and were able to draw parallels with the Bible as a holy book. Pupils work hard and respond well to the teacher's expectations that they need to concentrate on the task. Pupils' behaviour is good and they work well in order to finish their work. Pupils with special educational needs work with partners to support their efforts and they make good progress in their understanding of special things. They are encouraged to talk about things which are special to them and relate their experience to the group. This adds significantly to their speaking and listening skills.

143 Pupils, by the time they are eleven, have a good understanding and knowledge of Bible stories and are able to explain the significance of a miracle, and why Jesus told stories in the form of a parable. They understand that prayer is a common strand to all beliefs but that different believers pray in differing ways. They can explain different festivals which are important to Sikhs, Muslims and Christians. Whilst the knowledge about the local church and its significance for Christians is secure, there are no opportunities to visit other places of worship so that pupils can compare and recognise the significance of the mosque or gurdwara within the relevant faiths.

144 Pupils' work is presented well and pupils in Year 3 practised their Arabic symbols carefully and with great precision. Pupils take a pride in their work and are anxious to succeed. The marking of pupils' work does not always reflect their achievement, however, and there is no assessment of either skills or knowledge which pupils have been taught.

145 Subject co-ordination is satisfactory. The co-ordinator recognises the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. There has been little opportunity to develop the subject recently

because of the demands of other initiatives and subjects. A limited amount of monitoring is undertaken to ensure the subject is taught according to the agreed syllabus. The resources for the subject have been developed since the last inspection and are now good. There is a range of posters and books, in addition to videos and artefacts from all the beliefs covered in the syllabus. They are stored well and are accessible but staff are mindful of the practice needed for significant objects. The school has used a visit to Lichfield Cathedral to develop the concept of a pilgrimage and continues to make good use of the Parish Church as a resource, but the school should be mindful of extending its links to other denominations and faith groups.