

INSPECTION REPORT

SHAW HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103157

Headteacher: Mrs M Barnfield

Reporting inspector: Mr C Kessell
20695

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th February 2003

Inspection number: 246261

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant, junior and nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Anthony Road Alum Rock Birmingham
Postcode:	B8 3AN
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Frank Bruce
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20695	Mr C Kessell	Registered inspector	Art and design Information and communication technology	Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well the school is led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19697	Mrs J Moorhouse	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	Mrs N Bee	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Music Special educational needs	
12172	Mrs W Knight	Team inspector	English Religious education	
8358	Mr A Blank	Team inspector	Science Physical education	How well are pupils taught?
19897	Mr A Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology	
20230	Mrs J Clayphan	Team inspector	Geography History Educational inclusion	The curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
21547	Mrs P White	Team inspector	English as an additional language	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Shaw Hill Primary School is above average in size with 420 full-time pupils (199 boys and 221 girls) aged between four and eleven. There is also a designated nursery offering 52 part-time places. This community school serves the Alum Rock district of Birmingham. The area is recognised as having high levels of social and economic disadvantage. The attainment of the pupils when they start school is very low, particularly their skills in language and communication. The majority of pupils are of Pakistani heritage although another eleven ethnic backgrounds are represented in the school. Ninety-eight per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language. About half of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English. Twenty-seven per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is above average. The majority of these pupils are identified as having learning difficulties. Ten pupils have statements of special educational need. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is 42 per cent; this is well above average. This figure does not include the very high proportion of pupils who go home at lunchtimes. A significant number of teachers have left and joined the school during the last two years. The school was without a permanent headteacher for about a year before the appointment of the current headteacher in January 2002.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is providing an acceptable education for its pupils, but standards in English, mathematics and science are too low. It is a popular and caring school and the new headteacher has brought stability and direction after a period of uncertainty. Overall, the leadership and management by the headteacher and senior staff are satisfactory. The quality of teaching is also satisfactory but consistently good in Year 6. The pupils make sound progress in subjects in relation to their prior attainment. The behaviour of the pupils is good and they have positive attitudes to learning. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The good quality education provided for the pupils in Year 6 enables these pupils to learn at a good rate.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support other areas of the curriculum.
- The school's provision for the pupils' moral and social development is good and is reflected in their positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour.
- The care provided for the pupils is good. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are excellent.
- The range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school is very good.

What could be improved

- Standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- The proportion of lessons where teaching and learning is good.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and the use of assessment information to guide curricular planning.
- The amount of teaching time allocated for pupils in Key Stage 2¹ and the organisation of the school curriculum.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to the parents and carers of all pupils in the school.

¹ Years 3 to 6

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has not improved as rapidly as one would have expected since the previous inspection in October 1997. Many of the positive features identified at the previous inspection have remained. For example, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are still positive and the school continues to provide good care for its pupils. However, in terms of standards and the quality of education provided for the pupils, insufficient progress has been made. Although evidence indicates that standards have risen for the younger pupils in the National Curriculum tests, there has been a decline in test results at the end of Year 6. The quality of teaching is currently not as strong as at the previous inspection. Some of this can be explained by the period of instability seen at the school and the significant turnover of staff in the last two years. The current situation is improving, however, and correct priorities for development have been identified. There are clear signs of improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools ²
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	D	E	D
Mathematics	C	E*	E*	E
Science	C	E	E*	E

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

Results of the 2002 national tests for pupils in Year 6 indicated that standards in English were well below average. Standards in mathematics and science were very low and within the bottom five per cent nationally. When compared with schools of a similar nature, standards were below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. Since 2000, there has been an overall decline in the standards of all three subjects and although some of this can be attributed to the instability that the school went through without a headteacher, there is also evidence of some pupils underachieving in the past. The school's trend of improvement in the three subjects of English, mathematics and science, over the last five years, is below the trend found nationally. However, on a positive note, the school's statutory targets in English and mathematics for 2003 show a significant improvement in the percentage of pupils likely to achieve the expected level 4 in these subjects. National test results for pupils in Year 2 in 2002 showed standards to be very low in reading, writing and mathematics and also within the bottom five per cent nationally. Since 2000, the school's trend of improvement in reading and writing has exceeded that found nationally, although the standards in mathematics have been less consistent.

Standards are currently well below average in English, mathematics and science in Year 2 and Year 6. With the exception of ICT and design and technology in Years 2 and 6, geography in Year 2 and art and design in Year 6, standards in all other subjects are much lower than one would normally expect. Much of this is due to the pupils' limited language and communication skills and the negative impact that this has on learning in other subjects. However, in some instances, inconsistent curriculum coverage has also contributed to below average standards. Although pupils' achievements through the school are currently satisfactory, pupils make better progress in some parts of the school, and in some subjects, than they do in others. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall.

² 'Similar schools' are defined by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils show enthusiasm for learning, are interested in what is being taught and enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall, particularly in classrooms and during assemblies. Pupils do not always maintain these standards when moving around the school unsupervised.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are capable of working independently, concentrating on tasks and using their initiative. Relationships are very good and a strength of the school.
Attendance	The attendance rate is broadly in line with the national average. A significant minority of families take extended holidays during term time and this has an impact on the progress and attainment of a number of pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

Teaching is judged to be satisfactory overall. However, it is consistently good in the Year 6 classes. Pupils learn effectively in this part of the school and often make good progress. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was similar to the previous inspection. Although the majority of lessons have more strengths than weaknesses, some areas for development characterise many of the lessons. Numeracy is taught effectively but in many literacy lessons, pupils are often given work that is inappropriate to their levels of language. Better use could be made of day-to-day assessment to ensure that all pupils, including higher attainers and those with special educational needs, are provided with activities that are in line with their levels of understanding. Basic skills such as speaking and listening could be better promoted and some teachers need to have more realistic expectations of what their pupils can achieve. The control and management of pupils is consistently good and lessons are soundly planned. Support provided by classroom assistants often ensures that pupils with special educational needs or those at the early stages of learning English make the same progress as their classmates.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Although the curriculum is broad, not all of the activities provided for the pupils are relevant to their needs. Some subjects receive insufficient teaching time. The amount of teaching time for Years 3 to 6 is below that recommended for pupils of this age. Provision for day visits is very good and greatly enriches the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. The majority of pupils make sound progress. The newly appointed special needs co-ordinator has identified what is needed to improve and is enthusiastically developing procedures and good practice. She and the head teacher are aware of the lack of monitoring

	procedures.
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Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The quality of support provided by the bi-lingual assistants is appropriate and this results in pupils making satisfactory progress. However, it would be enhanced if the school kept a profile of pupils' developing language competence for teachers to use to plan future support work.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good overall, with the pupils' moral, social and cultural development being strengths of the provision.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils whatever their needs. Pupils are in a safe and secure environment. Assessment procedures are underdeveloped although the school has begun to put processes in place.

Parents' views of the school are positive and there are no areas of significant dissatisfaction. The school works hard to promote an effective relationship with parents, based on mutual respect.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The new headteacher is providing clear educational direction and, since her arrival, has identified a number of important areas for development although it is too early to judge the impact of any changes made. Much of the school management structure is also new and the deputy has been in post for only one term. A number of curriculum areas, for example ICT and mathematics, are well managed by the co-ordinators.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a good understanding of what the school does well and how it can improve. They offer good support, fulfil statutory requirements and are satisfactorily involved in shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring and evaluation processes are still developing and the school still has some way to go before using information on performance to take effective action that will improve standards or the quality of education. However, there is no complacency amongst the staff or governors.
The strategic use of resources	Resources including staff and equipment are appropriately deployed. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory. Resources to support pupils' learning are also satisfactory overall. Specific grants and other funding received by the school are used effectively to provide additional support for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English or have special educational needs. Specific grant funding also provides the school with the highly regarded learning mentors.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school and are well looked after.• Children are well behaved and the school promotes good behaviour.• They feel welcomed and the school offers an 'open door' to all parents.• Cultural values are respected and promoted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of work that children do at home.• The range of activities outside lessons.

The views above are taken from the pre-inspection meeting that was attended by 29 parents and the 164 responses to the parents' questionnaire. Overall, parents are very supportive of the school and inspection evidence supports parents' positive views. Homework is used satisfactorily to support the school curriculum. During the inspection, a number of examples were observed of homework being used to reinforce learning in the class. The range of activities provided by the school outside lessons is very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 By the end of their time in reception the majority of children are unlikely to reach the expected levels in any of the nationally recognised areas of learning. Progress is satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment. The majority of the children enter the nursery with very low levels of language, which detrimentally affects the amount of progress they make. Despite the satisfactory teaching in the nursery, children start the reception classes still with poor levels of communication, literacy and language skills.

2 Approximately 98 per cent of children have English as an additional language when they enter the school and all staff support them appropriately and they currently make satisfactory progress overall. The school is aware of the need to develop pupils' language skills throughout the school. There has been specific training for bi-lingual assistants to aid them in developing these skills but as yet this is at an early stage of development. There are, however, a number of staff who are new to the school and as yet they have not fully developed their awareness of the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language. This can slow the achievement of some pupils, as they are not always given work that is appropriately matched to their needs.

3 The National Curriculum test results for 2002 showed that the pupils in Year 6 achieved standards that were well below average in English. Standards in mathematics and science were very low and in the bottom five per cent nationally. In comparison to similar schools, standards were below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. These judgements are based on average National Curriculum points, which are calculated by attaching point scores to the levels achieved by all pupils. National data indicates that these pupils made satisfactory progress in English but poor progress in mathematics and science, in relation to the level of attainment they reached when they were in Year 2. The school's trend of improvement over five years up to 2002 was below the national trend. Some of the poor progress was a result of the period when there was no headteacher. The percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level 4 in 2002 fell significantly in English and science compared with 2001. The mathematics percentage did not rise from an already low level.

4 National Curriculum tests in 2002, for pupils in Year 2, were very low in reading, writing and mathematics and in the bottom five per cent nationally. When compared to similar schools, standards were well below average for these areas of learning. However, the results for 2002 showed an improvement in the percentages of pupils achieving the expected level 2 in all three areas. In terms of the school's results over the last three years, standards in reading and writing have improved at a faster rate than that found nationally.

5 Standards are currently well below average in English, mathematics and science in Year 2 and Year 6. Even taking account of the challenging circumstances in which the school operates, standards are not high enough. Although pupils' achievements are currently satisfactory overall, there are some inconsistencies as a result of weaker teaching and/or teachers' lack of general understanding of pupils' stages of language acquisition. Where teaching is consistently good or better, the pupils make better progress. There have been differences in the performance of boys and girls in the most recent National Curriculum tests and when looking at the results in English for the past three years together. The school recognises this issue, but is only at an early stage in developing strategies that might prevent the differences found in boys' and girls' performance. The school's statutory targets in English and mathematics for the pupils in Year 6 show a significant improvement on last year's results. The targets are realistic and offer appropriate challenge. However, despite this encouraging

picture, standards are likely to fall in 2004 because of the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 5.

6 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress when they are given work that is well matched to their needs. However, this is not always the case and when they receive work which is too difficult for them, or are given too little guidance to improve, their progress is affected.

7 Standards are not high enough in the remaining subjects. Much of this is due to the pupils' weak language and communication skills. Despite pupils making satisfactory progress in most subjects, standards are below the expected levels in history, music, physical education and religious education at the end of both key stages³. Standards in geography are average at the end of Key Stage 1 but lower than expected at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in art and design are the reverse, below average in Year 2 and similar to those found in the majority of schools in Year 6. Standards are average throughout the school in design and technology and ICT.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8 In the nursery and reception classes the children develop good relationships with the adults who work with them and during their time in the nursery begin to develop good relationships with each other. As they get older these relationships are strengthened. Behaviour is good because most children show positive attitudes to learning, settle in well in the nursery and the reception classes and enjoy coming to school. From an early age in the nursery the children begin to develop the skills of independence such as beginning to tidy up at the end of sessions.

9 Pupils at the early stages of learning English mix well at work and play, and enjoy harmonious relationships throughout the school. They are keen to participate fully in activities and school events. They are motivated and enjoy the attention given to them when they work in small groups with the bi-lingual assistants. The positive ethos of inclusiveness in the school enables them to become confident and fully integrated.

10 The pupils' attitudes to school and their lessons are good. At the time of the previous inspection pupils' enjoyed almost all aspects of school work, were keen to learn and tried hard. This situation has been maintained and pupils show enthusiasm for learning, are interested in what is being taught and enjoy coming to school. They rise to the occasion when teaching is demanding, settle quickly to tasks and are keen to do well. Pupils' positive attitudes were noted in the majority of lessons and this enhanced their learning. Pupils in a Year 6 English lesson enthusiastically tackled a task on writing an adventure story and pupils in Year 2 were keen to do well when discovering facts about castles in a history lesson. Pupils are capable of working independently, concentrating on tasks and using their initiative. Inspectors saw notable examples of concentrated independent work by pupils in Year 4 working on identifying the key features of an explanatory text. Pupils in Year 4 were also seen using their initiative during the introduction to a history lesson when they used dates displayed on the wall to answer questions. Pupils in Year 6 handled materials and resources sensibly during an art lesson and confidently discussed their work with other members of the class. A good example of boys and girls working together co-operatively, helping each other and taking turns was seen during a Year 4 physical education lesson. The vast majority of parents responding to the questionnaire agree their children like school and the inspection findings confirm their views.

³ Key Stage 1 - Years 1 and 2; Key Stage 2 - Years 3 to 6.

11 At the time of the previous inspection, pupils' behaviour was said to be consistently good in the classroom, during assemblies and in the playground. This situation has been maintained in the classroom and during assemblies. The good classroom behaviour has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils are aware of the standards of behaviour expected from the time they start school but do not always meet these standards, particularly when moving around the school in unsupervised situations. Inspectors saw a number of instances of misbehaviour from older pupils during lunchtimes and at the end of the school day. A significant majority of parents responding to the questionnaire agree that standards of behaviour in the school are good. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting agreed that the school promotes good behaviour. There have been no exclusions in the last school year.

12 Pupils respond willingly to be actively involved in the life of the school. The majority of pupils have responsibilities within their classrooms and for keeping shared areas tidy. Some classes have a rota of 'class helpers' and a 'helper of the day' and all, including the youngest children, have an opportunity to be register monitor. Older pupils have responsibilities throughout the school and pupils' good sense of responsibility is carried through into their approach to their work. Year 6 pupils have been trained as mediators by the school's counsellor and are on duty each lunchtime. The mediators are helped by the learning mentors to discuss issues between individuals and groups of pupils. Pupils from Year 2 upwards have an opportunity to be elected onto the new school council. Other pupils work as library monitors and, as part of the school's 'Healthy Eating' project, act as fruit monitors. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and carry them out reliably and efficiently. Inspectors found pupils polite and friendly.

13 Relationships throughout the school are very good and are a strength of the school. The respect shown by pupils for the feelings and values of others is good and no incidences of bullying, unkind or racist behaviour between pupils were seen. Inspectors saw kind and caring attitudes between pupils of the same age and between older and younger pupils. Pupils understand the consequences of unkind behaviour or bullying. Bullying is discussed during assemblies, circle time⁴ and at 'Chill Out Club' run by the learning mentors during lunchtime and pupils know to approach staff or Year 6 mediators. Pupils form very good relationships with teachers and other adults, including the learning mentors and the school's counsellor. In classrooms, the relationship between the pupils and the teacher is of a consistently high quality and has a positive effect on pupils' personal and academic development. Pupils work and play together collaboratively and amicably. This was seen during lessons in physical education, science and art and at playtimes.

14 Attendance at the school is satisfactory, with figures similar to those of other primary school nationally. As at the time of the previous inspection, a significant minority of families take extended holidays during term time and this has an impact on the progress and attainment of a number of pupils. The majority of pupils are keen to come to school and are generally punctual. However, some lessons do not always begin on time and sometimes the school day does not get off to a good start.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15 At the time of the previous inspection teaching overall throughout the school was judged to be good. Eighteen per cent of lessons were judged to be very good or better, and almost 50 per cent were good. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was five per cent, similar to the picture now. However, the proportion of very good or better lessons is now five per cent, and good teaching accounts for 30 per cent. This current profile means that teaching is satisfactory overall. There have been a significant number of staff changes since the last

⁴ Circle time is a session provided for pupils to discuss certain matters as a class, following strict rules about listening to others and taking turns to speak.

inspection and there are three teachers who are currently in their first year of teaching and are therefore relatively inexperienced. Even so, it is clear that the quality of teaching throughout the school has fallen back since the previous inspection and raising the overall quality is a key issue for school improvement.

16 Teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. Support staff are often used well to develop and reinforce learning, in particular language development. Adults manage the children effectively and develop good relationships with them. Planning is satisfactory but day-to-day assessment is not always as good as it should be. Adults do not consistently keep clear records of children's responses in particular, during some adult focused activities. The early years' co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop these procedures to enable all adults to clearly see how well children are responding to the activities offered to them. Apart from placing children into ability groups for mathematical development and communication, language and literacy in the reception classes, there is little evidence of assessment information being used to move children on to the next stage of learning. There is little evidence of any evaluation of teaching. Adults generally interact satisfactorily with groups of children, but sometimes at the beginning and the end of lessons they are not used effectively to collect information on individual children's verbal responses or behaviour. Speaking and listening skills are not consistently promoted well. During class and small group sessions, adults' questions are not directed at all children and this results in some children not taking part. Sometimes adults accept a nod of the head instead of a verbal answer. At other times children are allowed to talk whilst the adult is giving out information and instructions. When adult expectation is low, learning within lessons and ultimately progress over time is affected. Past work shows that adults do not consistently promote basic letter and number formation effectively, in particular in the reception classes, and this hinders learning within some lessons. Progress is overall satisfactory because children generally concentrate well, work hard and respond positively to the tasks they are given but weaknesses in teaching regularly hinder progress.

17 Teaching in Year 6 is good, and is a strength of the school. Similarly, the teaching and the use made of ICT is good. The management of pupils throughout the school is good; teachers have good relationships with their pupils, issue clear instructions and create an environment that results in pupils applying good levels of creative and intellectual effort to learn.

18 Where there are weaknesses in teaching, it is often because teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve are too low. This was evident in lessons where teaching was judged unsatisfactory and in the work in some pupils' books. In one lesson, for instance, in science, pupils were asked to draw a plate with some shapes on it to represent food; pupils learned very little from the exercise and became bored. In an English lesson, the slow pace meant a significant loss of pupils' time for learning. Linked to low expectations in some lessons is the unsatisfactory use of ongoing assessment. This results in teachers being insufficiently aware of where their pupils are in their learning and lessons that do not match pupils' existing attainment. Similarly, pupils themselves are uncertain about what they need to do to improve.

19 Where teaching is good or very good, expectations are higher and the work is matched well to pupils' existing knowledge and understanding. For instance, in another science lesson in Year 6, the teacher used a projector to consolidate pupils' understanding of how light is reflected and shadows are formed, and then invited pupils to devise a multi-media presentation that could be used to explain the phenomena to an audience. This enabled pupils to apply their existing ICT skills in a new field, but also extended their knowledge and competence in using special effects.

20 The majority of pupils in school have English as an additional language and the quality of teaching and learning of these pupils is satisfactory overall. Teachers and bi-lingual assistants work well together and effective support is provided within the context of mainstream activities. The bi-lingual learning assistants use the pupils' first language well, for

example when studying plants and seeds in a science lesson, and this leads to a greater understanding of concepts and vocabulary. Teachers do not always plan specific targeted support or activities to further develop pupils' speaking skills as there is no assessment or record of pupils' stages of language acquisition.

21 Teachers are aware of the pupils with special educational needs but work in classrooms is not consistently linked to the clear targets identified on their individual education plans. This affects the learning within lessons in some classes. It results in pupils not being able to finish tasks because they are too difficult for them. In addition, teachers do not always give these pupils enough guidance to improve, in particular regarding the presentation of their work. The classroom assistants satisfactorily support most pupils but a few give good quality support. All adults develop good relationships with the pupils they work with which results in pupils developing positive attitudes to all lessons.

22 The vast majority of parents feel that teaching in the school is good. In all subjects teaching is generally satisfactory, although in ICT and mathematics it is often good. The teaching of numeracy is sound, but in literacy there are weaknesses. The importance of language and literacy in determining pupils' progress across the curriculum cannot be emphasised enough. Similarly the development of basic skills in science and investigative skills in mathematics are key features to be improved in raising standards across the school.

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

23 The curriculum is broad and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. A particular strength is the number and variety of visits which are valuable in widening pupils' horizons, but the school day is too short in Years 3 to 6 and time throughout the school is not always used well. The provision for religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and there is a daily act of collective worship. The school ensures that pupils have at least one session of personal, social and health education each week in the form of circle time, and lessons in citizenship are being introduced during this year. Pupils are taught about the dangers of drugs. In accordance with parents' wishes, sex education is not taught as such, but pupils are made aware of differences in gender throughout the plant and animal kingdoms, and emphasis is placed on building positive relationships between girls and boys.

24 The curriculum is suitably broad, but too much of the school day is devoted to literacy lessons, not all of which are relevant to the pupils concerned or have had the desired effect of raising standards. For example, all pupils spend at least one 40-minute session each week practising handwriting, but the presentation of work throughout the school has weaknesses. Therefore, although individual literacy lessons are planned satisfactorily, at present the school's implementation of the National Literacy Strategy does not fully meet the particular requirements of its pupils. Teachers make satisfactory use of the National Numeracy Strategy, both in planning the content and the structure of their lessons. The planning and delivery of some aspects of science are inconsistent.

25 The school day is shorter than the recommended minimum number of hours for pupils in Years 3 to 6, and during the inspection there were incidents of sessions starting late or finishing early, although the headteacher reports that time-keeping has improved recently. The emphasis on literacy has restricted the time available for a number of other subjects, for example history in Years 1 and 2. As a result of insufficient time, subjects are not always covered in sufficient depth and this has an adverse effect on pupils' achievement and knowledge in several areas of the curriculum. The school is aware of the need to provide opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking skills. There are instances where it is planned into the curriculum, but there is scope to develop this further and to incorporate structured opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in other subjects such as geography or

religious education. The school uses ICT well to support learning in many other subjects.

26 The provision for the children in the Foundation Stage⁵ is satisfactory. It is planned according to the national guidelines and activities promote all areas of learning. There are regular opportunities for structured outside play.

27 The school ensures that pupils have regular lessons in personal, social and health education and these make a useful contribution to the good behaviour and relationships seen in the majority of lessons, although there is no structured programme for teachers to follow. The new deputy head has developed a comprehensive scheme of work for citizenship and this is being introduced at present. The school works hard to raise pupils' self-esteem and to encourage them to become responsible members of the community. Several initiatives have been introduced recently. A school council has been formed composed of pupils from Years 2 to 6, and 20 pupils in Year 6 have been trained as mediators to help to resolve playground disputes and younger pupils' problems.

28 Provision for extra-curricular activities including outside visits is very good. A good range of sporting and academic activities is offered including five ICT clubs. There is also a popular breakfast club. The school organises a large number of day visits, which greatly enrich the curriculum and these include a visit to hills, the seaside, a canal and Ludlow. There are two residential visits, one in Year 4 and the other in Year 6, that encourage independence and do much to widen pupils' horizons. Visitors include faith leaders and musicians.

29 The school has numerous links with the local community which provide further experience for the pupils of the wider world and also deepen their sense of security and 'belonging'. There is a lot of goodwill from local shopkeepers who welcome group visits. Local businesses are very supportive. An electrical firm sends apprentices to science lessons in Year 4 when pupils learn about torches, and representatives from British Telecom helped pupils in Year 5 to understand how telephones work. Leaders of different faiths visit school to develop pupils' understanding of local religious beliefs. Relations with other schools are similar to those found nationally; students are welcomed into school, teachers visit other nurseries, sports teams play against other teams and pupils in Year 6 visit their prospective secondary schools. An interesting recent development following close links with other primary schools is that Shaw Hill has become the local lead school for orienteering and will offer facilities for groups.

30 Provision for pupils learning English as an additional language is satisfactory. This is not as good as at the time of the previous inspection as the school does not keep profiles of pupils' developing language competence for teachers to use to plan future support work. Also there have been major changes in staffing and not all teachers are aware of the language development needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language. The inclusive ethos of the school ensures that these pupils are valued, included and involved in everything in school life. The school takes good steps to see that these pupils are not treated in any way differently from others. There is a good awareness of the need to develop pupils' understanding of life in a multi-ethnic society. All pupils, irrespective of background, ability or ethnicity, are fully included in all aspects of the school's work and have full access to the entire curriculum. There are effective systems for teamwork, and special educational needs staff and those who support pupils with English as an additional language work well together and often one member of staff works both as an integration assistant and bi-lingual worker.

31 The provision for pupils with special education needs is satisfactory. All pupils have full access to all activities offered and the school has responded positively to the new Code of Practice for special educational needs. Identification and assessment procedures are

⁵ Nursery and reception classes

satisfactory. Individual education plans have clear targets and these plans are reviewed regularly. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop parents' awareness regarding the established systems and to develop more 'child-friendly' individual education plans to be shared with both pupils and parents.

32 As at the time of the previous inspection good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall, with sound opportunities for spiritual reflection and good development of moral, social and cultural dimensions. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting felt that the school not only taught the right values, but also respected their culture. The ethos and shared displays promote these values very overtly, and teachers readily discuss experiences with pupils during lessons and assemblies. However, there are missed opportunities in some subject planning to enhance provision even further.

33 There are regular opportunities for prayer and reflection in assemblies, and pupils have access to a room if they wish to pray privately during the school day. In religious education lessons, pupils are encouraged to relate experiences of their lives to understanding a wider perspective on faith. In some lessons and some assemblies there are opportunities to wonder at the world. Pupils reflected on the first signs of spring and the importance of respecting plants in a Year 1 and 2 assembly, and in a Year 6 ICT lesson pupils wondered at the speed and power of the computer when they searched the Internet for pictures for their 'home page'.

34 Pupils are exhorted to have positive attitudes and to behave well by the many posters around the school that carry commendable maxims like 'Never settle for less than your best'. Most of these attributes are regularly rewarded through praise, stickers, mention in the 'Golden Book' and prizes, which actively encourage pupils to respond to them. However, pride in their written work is not sufficiently promoted. For those pupils with low self-esteem and confidence, there is a mentoring programme that builds up their positive attitudes. Pupils are clearly taught right from wrong and discuss moral issues in both assemblies and religious education lessons, even if pupils' language does not enable them to discuss effectively. The theme of the week during the inspection was 'making choices', and pupils were actively encouraged to consider the right one. Adults continue to set a good example by being considerate and courteous, and pupils are actively encouraged to support charities such as Comic Relief.

35 Very constructive relationships continue to promote pupils' social development as at the time of the previous inspection. Circle time is used to promote these relationships, and any squabbles or thoughtfulness are handled sensitively. Older pupils continue to be trained as mediators to help pupils sort out their minor disagreements on the playground. Many routine responsibilities, such as taking the register to the office and being responsible for property, are allocated. Pupils in Years 4 and 6 have useful opportunities to go away on a residential visit. There are many opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and groups in lessons, such as playing number games and sharing resources in infant numeracy sessions.

36 Pupils are introduced to a wide range of different cultures through displays, trips and visitors as well as occasions in lessons. Through religious education lessons, pupils are introduced to major faiths and associated festivals and celebrations. Music is heard in assemblies and in some music lessons, although, because music is not taught every week, there are gaps in provision. Pupils have experienced a variety of dance including Caribbean and rock and roll. In art they study famous artists, and have had the benefit of working with an artist in residence. Artefacts and pictures from different cultures, such as batik and masks, are displayed in the school 'Art Gallery'. Trips are regularly arranged to suitable places to promote learning in various subjects and provide first-hand experience, such as to a farm, places of worship and historic houses.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37 Shaw Hill takes good care of its pupils. As at the time of the previous inspection, the school's atmosphere is supportive and happy and makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. The school has a sufficient number of relevant and updated support, guidance and welfare policies to guide and underpin its actions. These policies are implemented consistently across the school.

38 The school's procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are good and all staff are aware of the named personnel and procedures. There is evidence of thorough and careful monitoring by the headteacher and the school has a sensitive concern and awareness for the needs of its pupils and their parents. All staff have had child protection training, including the newly qualified teachers and the learning mentors. Policies are in line with local procedures and good relationships exist with personnel from outside agencies involved in pupil care. The school has three members of staff qualified in first aid and a sufficient number of staff who have undertaken first aid training. All the necessary procedures are in place for dealing with minor accidents or incidents. Arrangements and procedures for the conduct of educational visits fully comply with local authority guidelines. Appropriate action has been taken by the school to ensure Internet safety. There is a comprehensive health, safety and security policy, and regular health and safety audits are carried out in the school, involving governors and the school's caretaker. Health and safety is a regular agenda item for governing body meetings. Governors are aware of the need to provide a safe environment for pupils and staff.

39 Supervision at lunchtime is adequately organised through a rota of supervisors. Supervisors and learning mentors are involved in monitoring behaviour through the use of a lunchtime behaviour book and have useful opportunities to discuss problems and concerns with the class teachers and the headteacher on a daily basis. The school has recognised the importance of training supervisors and training has been given in co-operative play. With the help of the learning mentors, supervisors organise the distribution of balls and skipping ropes although the amount of playground equipment is limited. Inspectors saw some incidences of misbehaviour although the majority of pupils played responsibly and sensibly. On the whole, pupils treat supervisors with politeness and courtesy.

40 The school has excellent procedures for monitoring absence and promoting good attendance with a number of suitable strategies for encouraging good attendance and punctuality. The excellent attendance procedures and systems in place were set up by the learning mentors and are now maintained conscientiously by the home-school liaison worker. She is well supported by the learning mentors and the school's education welfare officer. Through home visits, reminders in the school's newsletter and clearly written letters, the school effectively demonstrates the importance of good attendance and punctuality for the smooth running of the school. The school follows up parents who fail to communicate reasons for their child's absence so that, for most pupils, unauthorised absence is minimal. The school has a daily breakfast club and pupils identified as having attendance and punctuality problems have been invited to attend. This initiative has had a positive effect on individual attendance and punctuality. Good class attendance is rewarded on a weekly basis. Parents are invited to the termly 'Attendance Assembly' when individual pupils achieving 100 per cent attendance are rewarded. Twenty pupils received gold awards in July 2002 for full attendance in the previous year.

41 The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The school gives a high priority to the expectation of good behaviour. The learning mentors support this expectation effectively both in their work with individual pupils in the classroom and on the learning mentors' programme. The level of behaviour expected in the classroom and during assembly is clearly understood by pupils and parents. Appropriately worded whole-school rules are displayed in the majority of classrooms and inspectors saw good behaviour consistently rewarded with praise and stars so that pupils were encouraged to work hard and succeed. Good work, effort and behaviour are valued by teachers and publicly recognised

during the weekly 'Celebration Assembly'. Pupils receive a merit award and their names are entered into the 'Golden Book'. In the main, pupils worked and played amicably together and no incidents of unkind behaviour between pupils were seen. Inspectors judge pupils would feel confident to report incidents of bullying and the school's approach would be effective in eliminating it. Staff and the learning mentors have a very thorough knowledge of their pupils and monitor their personal progress in an informal way. Pupils are constantly supported and, in turn, promote the caring and welcoming culture of the school.

42 The school has satisfactory links with external agents and uses them when necessary to support pupils with special educational needs. Documentation is kept on all pupils but it varies in quality. Good examples were seen in a Year 2 class, where individual education plans were being used as a working document. These illustrated very clearly the rate of progress pupils were making as they worked on their individual targets. However, this practice is not consistent throughout the school.

43 Procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. A start had been made in devising new methods of tracking progress in English and mathematics and in setting targets for improvement, but they are, as yet, insufficiently established to be having an effect on raising standards. The school rightly sees target setting, further analysis of assessment data and better marking as priorities for development. A sound start has been made in analysing national test results in mathematics, in order to highlight areas of weakness in the pupils' performance. There are no formal, whole-school procedures for assessing attainment and progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

44 The school analyses the achievement of groups of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and languages. However, as the vast majority of pupils are from a Pakistani background the statistics are not relevant. The school does not have policies and procedures to assess the stages of language acquisition for pupils who have English as an additional language. Consequently, lessons are planned for coverage of subject content and knowledge, rather than developing pupils' weaker speaking skills and to target learning to individual need.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45 The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents. Parents' views of the school are positive and there are no areas of significant dissatisfaction. The school works hard to promote an effective relationship with parents based on mutual respect. The majority of parents responding to the questionnaire agree the school works closely with them. Parents receive sufficient information that is presented in an informative and friendly style. A number of items of school documentation for parents have been translated into Urdu, including the home-school contract, the school's newsletter and the school's prospectus. The prospectus contains detailed and essential information including the school's policy on visits abroad during term time and the type of work children will be asked to do at home. The prospectus is attractively presented with photographs and illustrations of pupils at work and at play. Newsletters are sent home on a very regular basis and contain relevant and useful information such as details of job vacancies in school suitable for parents and reminders on the importance of pupils arriving at school on time. The contribution of parents to pupils' learning is satisfactory both in school and in the work pupils do at home. The school is working towards a greater involvement of parents in their children's education. Parents are invited to the termly attendance assembly and to workshops where they have an opportunity to work alongside their children on mathematics and English tasks. A small number of parents of younger pupils help the school on trips and visits. All parents receive a copy of the home-school contract each year at the first parents' meeting and a copy of their children's agreed class code of conduct. These documents have strengthened the relationship between parents and staff.

46 The majority of parents responding to the questionnaire felt well informed about how their child is getting on at school. There are three formal parents meeting each year. Attendance at these meetings is good, especially in the spring term when parents have an opportunity to look at children's work and discuss progress. In addition there are meetings for parents whose children will be taking National Curriculum tests. These meeting take place at the beginning of the school day and are well attended. A sample of reports scrutinised by inspectors contained a thorough record of work undertaken by pupils in class. However, reports do not give a clear indication of what a pupil knows and can do or the level at which the pupil is working. However, they do contain targets for improvement. In some instances pupils have an opportunity to comment on the report and to set themselves targets for the next year. Inspectors saw some good practice of homework being set in line with the information given in the termly class topic letter sent to parents. The letter gives details of the topic or focus for the term, topics to be covered in literacy, numeracy and other subjects such as art and music, information on class trips and a reminder of the need to be at school on time.

47 There are bi-lingual assistants available throughout the school to translate for parents who have limited English, keeping them informed about school activities and they do this well. A home-school liaison worker is involved in ensuring children attend school regularly and she is having good results. She also organise courses and activities for parents, to help them when working with their children at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48 Since the previous inspection, the school has been through a period of uncertainty. When the previous headteacher left, there was a succession of acting headteachers until the current headteacher joined the school in January 2002. After the period of 'upheaval', a term used by a parent, the new headteacher has brought stability to the school along with purpose and direction. This is clearly recognised and welcomed by the parents, the majority of whom think that the school is well led and managed and believe that the headteacher is very 'active' in her role, and this is welcomed after the recent instability. Unfortunately, the headteacher was unable to enjoy the usual transitional arrangements and had to find many things out about the school for herself. She would acknowledge, one year further into the post, that she is still discovering things about the school. To help with this process, she invited the local education authority to undertake a review of the school's provision to gain an insight into what needed to be prioritised. Her main thrust has been to focus class teachers on assessment and pupils' progress. This is at the very early stages, as are many new school procedures, and it is too early to judge the impact of this initiative, but it could, with other processes, eventually contribute to a rise in standards and the quality of education. However, a weakness in this approach is that the school does not have any established procedures for assessing pupils' overall language competence, when the majority of pupils use English as an additional language and many are at the early stages of learning English.

49 Another priority for the headteacher was to ensure that there was a stable teaching staff. In this area, she has been successful. The school's management structure has also been changed and the role of team-leader has been defined. In a school the size of Shaw Hill this would appear to be an appropriate development and these members of staff will have responsibility for overall pupil progress and the quality of education in their phase of the school. As with the focus on progress and assessment, it is too early to judge the impact of this initiative. The same applies to the headteacher's partnership with the deputy. The deputy, who is a good teacher, has been in post for only a term. Many of the positive features identified at the previous inspection have been maintained, however. The atmosphere of the school remains very positive and the teaching and non-teaching staff work well together. There is a positive ethos, based on a secure race equality policy, which enables all pupils with English as an additional language to thrive, to feel confident and to learn. This is reflected in a number of dual-language displays and books made available for pupils to read. The school's aims and

values remain although they have been revisited by the headteacher and staff with the intention of ensuring that they continue to reflect what is happening in the school. Overall, the leadership and management of the headteacher and other key staff are currently satisfactory.

50 The school's current priorities are identified in the school improvement plan. This is a comprehensive document that focuses on raising standards and the quality of education. Although some elements of the document are detailed and curriculum maintenance plans are completed by all subject co-ordinators, other elements of the plan appear too general and need more structure and prioritisation. The school and governors, who are looking to review the school improvement planning process, acknowledge this. The school's strategy for performance management is satisfactorily linked to the improvement process and professional development for both teaching and non-teaching staff is a key feature of the school. Subject co-ordinators are generally effective and some subjects are well managed. ICT is an example of this and leadership here has contributed to the appropriate standards found in the subject. The headteacher has undertaken some monitoring and evaluation of teaching. She has seen everyone teach literacy as this was a whole-school focus and is looking to move into numeracy observations with the subject co-ordinators. Scrutiny of pupils' work in some subjects has been undertaken and the school's medium-term planning is also monitored by the headteacher. There is some monitoring of teachers' short-term planning by the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators and the deputy headteacher. Despite a good range of monitoring and evaluation, the percentage of satisfactory teaching though the school is too high. More effective action is required to identify and alleviate some of the shortcomings that there are in teaching.

51 Governors, many of whom are relatively new, are properly involved in the work of the school, both as members of various committees and as individuals. They are aware of the need to improve standards and are prepared to challenge what is happening in the school as critical friends. Not only are they aware of the school's areas for development but they are able to identify the school's many strengths. They are appropriately informed by the headteacher but are also able to offer support and monitor developments in provision and the quality of education informally through their role as parents or members of the local community. They are proud of the school and are interested in all aspects of its work. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and are becoming more involved in helping the headteacher to shape the direction of the school.

52 The governors feel involved with the school improvement plan and the budget. Financial planning is appropriately organised with a clear cycle of development and review. Governors take an active part in managing the budget. The school benefits from the expertise provided by a local authority finance officer. This is a good service purchased by the school. At the end of the last financial year, the levels of financial reserves were unacceptably high and exceeded the levels recommended. Improvements to the school building have ensured that the money the school holds to protect it against unexpected developments is now at a level common to suggested practice. This has also ensured that the financial resources available to the school are being used to improve the quality of education and raise standards for the pupils currently in the school.

53 Specific funds and other additional funding are appropriately used. Funding provided by the Excellence in Cities initiative⁶ allows the school to operate two learning mentors who support pupils with low esteem or behavioural problems or who lack confidence in the classroom. They are very highly regarded by the school and governors and have had a significant impact on the attitudes, behaviour and learning of some pupils. Additional funding for those pupils with special needs is used satisfactorily to provide additional teaching and non-teaching support. Additional funding also supports the school's excellent procedures for monitoring and improving attendance by funding the home-school liaison worker. The majority

⁶ A government initiative designed to raise standards in schools in major cities.

of the school's population has English as an additional language. This, together with the change in the allocation of the government grant, means the management for the support of these pupils is now an intrinsic part of the role of the headteacher and is satisfactory. The school has an analysis of need against which it receives its Ethnic Minority Grant funding. The school then considers carefully the way in which it is to meet pupils' needs, employing a number of bi-lingual assistants who work throughout the school to support pupils who are learning English. They act as positive role models for pupils.

54 The newly appointed special needs co-ordinator has identified what is needed to improve the systems in place and is enthusiastically developing procedures and good practice. She is aware of the lack of monitoring procedures, in particular the need to monitor the quality of work that pupils with special educational needs complete in the classroom.

55 The school's overall administration arrangements, including the day-to-day running of the school and its finances, are good. There has not been an external financial audit since January 2000, but nothing seen during the inspection suggests any cause for concern. Secretarial staff are well organised, competent and committed. They make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the daily life of the school and present a very welcoming 'public face' for visitors and parents arriving at the school and offer bi-lingual support.

56 There is satisfactory implementation of the four principles of compare, challenge, consult and compete, by the headteacher and members of the governing body to ensure that the school provides best value in its educational provision. Compare, consult and challenge are the stronger elements. For example, the school and governors are very aware of how the educational standards achieved by the school compare nationally and some consultation has been undertaken with parents regarding the nature of collective worship. Although the school seeks to achieve value for money in the services it purchases, not all elements of school spending are rigorously evaluated to ensure that pupils are receiving the most economic, effective and efficient quality of education.

57 There has been a considerable turnover of teachers during the past two years. Nevertheless, at the moment, there are sufficient teaching and non-teaching staff to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. The pupil-teacher ratio is in line with the national average for primary schools. Visiting teachers offer some specialist tuition in music and dance. There are good procedures for the induction of new staff. Currently, there are three newly qualified teachers in the school and they are receiving good support. Midday supervisors and premises staff contribute well to the daily running of the school.

58 The accommodation is sufficient to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. The classrooms are rather small, but they can accommodate the numbers of pupils. There are two adequately sized halls for physical education and for dining and two easily accessible libraries. There is a music room, a medical room and a well-sited ICT suite. There are a number of additional rooms for work with groups. There is a separate, adequately sized nursery on the school site, with its own outdoor play area. The school building is in good decorative order. Many new windows have been fitted recently and repairs are being carried out to the roof, which leaks in places. Attractive displays provide a stimulating learning environment. Steps make access to certain areas of the building very difficult for people with severe mobility problems.

59 The school lacks a field. The playground is marked out for rounders, netball, cricket, running and small creative games, but it is barely adequate for the number of pupils at playtimes. There is a pleasant garden area, with seating. During the inspection, there was a considerable amount of litter around the edges of the playground, but no evidence of vandalism.

60 Overall, the school is adequately resourced. There is a good range of resources to support teaching and learning in mathematics, design and technology, history and art. For other subjects, resources are satisfactory. Overall, these resources are used effectively. The teachers make very good use of the school's computers to support the pupils' learning. The libraries contain a good range of fiction and non-fiction books.

61 With the stability and educational direction provided by a new headteacher, the good behaviour of the pupils and their enthusiasm for learning and the care provided by the school, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62 In addition to the work already undertaken, to further improve standards and teaching and learning the headteacher staff and governors should:

Raise standards in English by:

- developing spoken language and pupils' confidence to contribute so that they have wider vocabularies, skills to reason and explain and the ability to understand shades of meaning;
- teaching basic skills in reading until pupils are fully competent (including inference, location of information, skimming and scanning);
- selecting reading material to suit pupils' interests and experience and displaying it so that it promotes an enthusiasm for books;
- making best use of timetabled English so that lessons effect improvement in application of knowledge, skills and understanding;
- including an assessment of pupils' developing language competence and using this information when planning classroom activities, such as the development and promotion of speaking and listening skills.

(Paragraphs 5, 16, 20, 24, 25, 44, 67, 68, 69, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82 and 85)

Raise standards in mathematics by:

- providing pupils with further opportunities to develop their mental methods of calculation and to effectively consolidate their knowledge and understanding of number patterns, tables and sequences;
- giving pupils more opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge to solve real-life problems.

(Paragraphs 5, 88 and 89)

Raise standards in science by:

- improving pupils' understanding of scientific enquiry by providing good opportunities for pupils to develop investigative skills through appropriate and challenging practical activities;
- ensuring consistency in the teachers' medium-term planning for science that should also clearly identify the practical activities to be undertaken by the pupils.

(Paragraphs 5, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99 and 101)

Improve the percentage of good or better teaching by:

- ensuring that teachers have the correct expectations of the pupils they teach;

- more consistently providing pupils with work that is appropriate to their needs, particularly those pupils who are at the early stages of learning English, have special educational needs or are higher attainers;
- making better use of the information provided by day-to-day assessment;
- better teaching of basic skills such as speaking and listening.

(Paragraphs 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 76, 77, 83, 84, 91, 92, 100, 104, 114, 119, 121 and 124)

Ensure that all of the curriculum is balanced and relevant to pupils in the school by:

- raising the teaching time at Key Stage 2 to the recommended 23.5 hours;
- ensuring that any additional time allocated to the teaching of literacy provides activities that are relevant and beneficial to the needs of the pupils concerned.

(Paragraphs 24, 25, 85, 112, 113, 114, 116 and 118)

Further develop assessment procedures:

- to assess pupils' attainment and progress in all subjects and use the information to plan appropriate work to meet different needs.

(Paragraphs 43, 44, 86, 106, 110, 115, 120, 127 and 133)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	75
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	4	22	45	4	0	0
Percentage	0	5	30	60	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	420
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		176

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	110

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	437

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	5.5	School data	0.3

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	28	32	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	16	18
	Girls	25	24	25
	Total	39	40	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	65 (54)	67 (54)	72 (59)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	20	16
	Girls	22	26	23
	Total	37	46	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	62 (52)	77 (69)	65 (70)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	32	28	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	12	20
	Girls	13	11	16
	Total	28	23	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	47 (58)	38 (38)	60 (82)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	16
	Girls	13	13	17
	Total	26	27	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	43 (58)	45 (60)	55 (85)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
389	0	0
11	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
4	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	430

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	44
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.7

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	1204001
Total expenditure	1179052
Expenditure per pupil	2807
Balance brought forward from previous year	121501
Balance carried forward to next year	146450

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	11

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	472
Number of questionnaires returned	164
Percentage of questionnaires returned	35

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	30	2	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	49	38	8	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	35	5	2	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	33	16	8	5
The teaching is good.	52	34	6	3	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	37	12	5	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	24	12	2	6
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	30	5	3	5
The school works closely with parents.	40	34	12	4	10
The school is well led and managed.	44	40	4	1	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	39	8	2	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	32	12	2	15

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

63 Children spend a year in the nursery and then the majority of them transfer to one of the reception classes. During the week of the inspection there were 52 part-time children in the nursery. In the two reception classes there was a total of 60 children. This includes eleven children who did not attend the nursery attached to the school. The school has developed good procedures for introducing the children into the nursery and then into the reception classes and these have resulted in most children settling in quickly and happily. They have maintained this high standard since the previous inspection. A number of children have been identified as having special educational needs and these children are well supported.

64 Most of the children start in the nursery with little English or very low levels of English. This is similar to what was reported in the previous inspection. Information collected as the children enter the reception classes shows that the majority of children have very low levels of attainment. Links between the nursery, reception classes and Year 1 are satisfactory and profiles started on all children in the nursery are sent up as they move to reception and into Year 1. These show the progress the children make as they move through the Foundation Stage. However the co-ordinator for early years is aware of the need to develop these profiles to link more closely with the national guidelines known as the early learning goals, which are associated with the Foundation Stage.

65 Provision for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. All children are well supported by all adults who work with them. All classes have assistants who offer good bi-lingual support and this strength has been maintained since the previous inspection. The curriculum is soundly planned on the basis of the nationally recognised early learning goals. Planning is clear and identifies interesting activities which promote all areas of learning, but there are no consistent procedures that show how ongoing assessments on individual children or groups of children influence the planning. Learning resources are satisfactory to promote all areas of learning inside and outside the classroom. In the nursery, the children have daily opportunities for structured outdoor sessions where there are satisfactory opportunities for physical development using a good range of wheeled toys and climbing apparatus. Children in reception classes have access to these and in addition have regular lessons in the school hall for physical development lessons. There are plans to develop outdoor areas further for nursery and reception children.

Personal, social and emotional development

66 Teaching is sound and this area is promoted satisfactorily in lessons. Behaviour is consistently good and most children show positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. This results in most children developing good relationships with each other and with the adults who work with them. Personal independence is developed well. For example in the nursery after using paints, children are encouraged to go and wash their hands by themselves or in reception they attempt to get changed for physical development sessions without adult help. In these instances adults support well and interact when necessary. There are many opportunities to work in pairs and small groups but many children still choose to work alone or alongside others. The children use construction toys enthusiastically but not all are able to play collaboratively. Although no anti-social behaviour was seen, many children choose to play alone or alongside each other and when this happens they interact little and few words are spoken. Progress is satisfactory, but by the end of the reception classes, most children are unlikely to reach the expected levels. In the nursery and the reception classes children are encouraged to select activities themselves and many do this confidently but a few have

difficulty and at times wander aimlessly around the classroom. In all classes, adults give children regular opportunities to tidy away at the end of sessions and they do this well.

Communication, language and literacy

67 The quality of teaching of communication, language and literacy skills is satisfactory. Teaching is occasionally good. Good teaching was seen in a reception class during a story session. The teacher had split the class into two groups, which enabled adults to concentrate and develop language and social skills well. Adult expectations regarding sitting and listening were high as the adults told stories. Weaknesses develop in teaching when children sit for too long in large groups and teachers do not involve all children in discussion. This results in many children sitting passively and not contributing. Although children often work in ability groups in this area, adults do not systematically collect assessment information on individuals to feed into future planning. This results in there being little evidence of any evaluation of teaching. The children's attitudes to learning are enthusiastic and this supports learning within lessons.

68 Speaking and listening skills are not always promoted satisfactorily. Sometimes adults allow children to answer with nods or one word replies when answering questions and this does not develop speaking skills effectively. At other times adults talk when children are not listening and so do not promote listening skills adequately. Children in the nursery handle books carefully and begin to be aware of the difference between the pictures and the text. Higher attaining children begin to talk about what they see although their language is limited to one word or short phrases. Many children in all classes are happy looking at the pictures. In the reception classes very few children have developed the idea of matching their voices to the text. Higher attaining children learn words in isolation but they have difficulty transferring this knowledge to the books that they 'read'. Teachers keep records of the books children have 'read' and make brief comments on reading behaviour. However, these comments are often vague and do not enable them to then work specifically on individual children's difficulties.

69 All children have regular opportunities to develop early writing skills and these are satisfactorily promoted in all classes. In the nursery the children work on developing their pencil control and make marks on paper as they attempt to write about pictures they have drawn. By the time they are in the reception classes many children begin to form letters within these marks. Most reception children write their first name but none can write their full name because they are not generally expected to do so. Previous work also shows that many are not challenged sufficiently because opportunities are missed to promote the development of correct letter formation and the idea of developing simple sentences that clearly show 'words' and 'spaces'. Past work shows that the adults' own handwriting is often not a good role model. By the time the children reach Year 1, most children are unlikely to reach the expected levels but progress is satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment, which is extremely low. ICT is beginning to be used to support this area, for example the children listen to stories and complete simple literacy programs.

Mathematical development

70 The children in the nursery have many opportunities to develop mathematical skills in the activities they are offered, for example as they celebrate a child's birthday and count up to four. They sing simple number rhymes such as 'Five little bears sitting on a wall' to reinforce numbers up to five. Past work in the nursery shows that the children have looked at basic shapes and used squares to make masks. This knowledge is developed in the reception classes as they work on different shapes and develop their cutting skills. In one reception class children were seen looking carefully at a row of children wearing hats numbered one to five. One higher attaining child said, "3 comes before 4 because it is biggest," but many did not respond satisfactorily to this task because the teacher did not engage the entire group in the discussion. A few had great difficulty sitting and listening. Listening skills were not satisfactorily

promoted in this session because the teacher allowed children to shout out. Mathematical vocabulary such as 'longer' and 'shorter' was developed satisfactorily as they began to use this vocabulary to describe items such as 'a long ruler'. Language and literacy skills were promoted well during this task as the vocabulary was reinforced further as they worked in 'short' and 'long' books.

71 Teaching is satisfactory overall. Children's work in reception shows that children have opportunities to develop an idea of how to form numbers correctly. Number charts on the walls promote basic counting skills but are not used well to promote what the spoken number looks like. This hinders learning within lessons and the progress which children of all abilities make over time. Progress is satisfactory overall in relation to their prior attainment but most children are unlikely to reach the expected levels by the end of the reception classes. Past work in reception shows little evidence of any children recording information which they have been taught such as 'one more than' or learning how to write down this information using symbols for 'add' and 'equals'. ICT is beginning to be used to support this area as the children work through simple programs. For example, in the nursery, one little boy was seen counting the balloons he was bursting on the screen.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72 Teaching is satisfactory and the children make sound progress. There is a satisfactory range of activities to support this area. For example, the children have many opportunities to investigate objects and materials by using all of their senses. Previous work shows that nursery children made milkshakes and watched carefully to see what happened to the milk. An informative display in the classroom reinforced this activity. In reception, after going out and playing in the snow, the children watched it melt when some was placed inside the classroom. As they get older they begin to develop a very basic understanding of what they might see when they visit the local town. For example, at Christmas, reception children drew 'Santa' and 'Christmas' trees. Limited language greatly affects the levels the children reach in this area, although adults work hard at promoting language and developing understanding.

73 By the time they leave the reception classes most children are unlikely to reach the expected standards. The majority of children in both classes have great difficulty remembering what they have been taught in the past and in particular recalling the names of objects. For example, when talking to a group of seven reception children, only one, who was a higher attaining child, could name the vegetables on the front cover of a reading book. In addition, to try to explain why things happen is very difficult for the majority of children. The children begin to develop a simple understanding of how ICT can support them in all areas of the curriculum. In the nursery the children use the mouse and cursor to bring up photographs and positive statements of children in the class. A lovely example of a boy working on this program was seen. When he got a picture of a girl up on the screen, he left his place and went and patted the little girl on her arm. He then pointed to the computer screen. Both were delighted and it was a lovely moment, but interestingly, not a word was uttered by either of them. In the reception classes the children visit the computer suite and work on a program to develop an understanding of their body. They work in pairs as they put body parts in the correct places. Lower attaining children achieve this task with support. There are satisfactory opportunities for all children to select from a range of materials to develop skills needed to cut, stick and join materials together.

Physical development

74 There are regular opportunities for both classes to develop skills using the good range of outdoor equipment in the secure outdoor play area. No complete lessons were observed during the inspection but reception classes were seen using the hall. During this short observation a group of 12 children were observed developing a basic understanding of

vocabulary such as 'up' and 'down' as they shook a brightly coloured silk parachute. Planning shows that because of this, all reception children have good opportunities to work in small groups as they begin to develop a basic understanding of spatial awareness and how exercise affects their bodies. By the end of reception most children are unlikely to reach the expected levels in this area. All adults develop personal and social skills consistently as they encourage the children to have a go at undressing and dressing themselves but they are there to help them and guide them when necessary. Children in the reception classes were seen undressing and then placing their clothes in neat piles in the classroom. Teaching is sound. All children have many opportunities to develop skills by working with construction toys and to use soft materials such as dough to develop rolling and cutting skills. An average attaining child in reception proudly pointed to the square she had cut out of yellow dough and said "Yellow". In the nursery, children have satisfactorily moulded dough to make teddy bears. All children have many opportunities to develop their control in handling scissors, paintbrushes and pencils. They handle equipment safely and make satisfactory progress in this area.

Creative development

75 Sound teaching and support enables most of the children to make satisfactory progress as they move through the Foundation Stage. In all classes children have many opportunities to regularly sing songs and most begin to develop a satisfactory idea of how to look after and use musical instruments. There are opportunities in all classes for children to express their own ideas and communicate their feelings through activities, for example in the 'Cafe' in the nursery and in the home corner in reception. Limited language generally hinders learning in all classes; for example higher attaining children name colours such as 'pink' confidently but many children are confused between basic colour names. Most children enjoy painting. In the nursery they have used colours confidently as they painted pictures of 'monsters'; in the reception a higher attaining child said when describing her picture, "It's a happy birthday hat." Creative development is linked with mathematical development as they use shapes in the nursery to make masks using a range of materials. Careful artwork is created using a sound variety of materials and techniques such as collage, printing and painting. There are satisfactory opportunities to develop an idea of printing. Children in the nursery used vegetables to print. They worked with support but with confidence. However, few could name the vegetables that they were working with or speak about the patterns they had made. By the end of reception, most children are unlikely to reach the expected levels because of their limited language and their inability to express their thoughts.

ENGLISH

76 Standards are currently well below average for both seven and eleven year olds in all aspects of English. Some pupils do reach the expected National Curriculum levels⁷, but the proportion of each year group is much lower than in other schools. Very few pupils attain higher levels. However, given that very few pupils start school with English as their home language, and many do not speak it at all, progress across the school is satisfactory. Nevertheless, more consistent progress could be made particularly by higher attaining pupils and in Years 3 to 5. Overall standards have not improved since the previous inspection, although results in Year 2 and aspects of provision are better.

77 By the end of Year 2 most pupils can make appropriate responses to questions put to them, and follow teachers' instructions, but many pupils lack the confidence to volunteer their thoughts and only speak when asked directly. Although some bi-lingual support is available for the pupils who are still at the earliest stages of learning English, it is seldom used for those who are reluctant to talk. As a result, some pupils actually speak very little to adults during the school day. This reluctance to take an active part in lessons continues for many pupils right

⁷ Level 2 at age seven and level 4 at age eleven

through the Years 3 to 6, and they do not learn to take account of the audience and speak audibly. Opportunities to extend speech through role-play and drama are limited, being less good than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' general vocabulary remains restricted. They are not able to use language to reason and even the higher attainers often fail to understand shades of meaning. Pupils in Year 6, for instance, found it difficult to select a suitable alternative word for 'seemed' from the computer's thesaurus when asked to do so. Limited skills in spoken English adversely affect pupils' progress in other subjects. In a Year 5 religious education lesson, for example, pupils struggled to discuss the moral dilemma of what to do when a close friend intends to steal from a shop.

78 Higher attaining Year 2 pupils are able to read simple texts without making many mistakes. They are beginning to use strategies such as knowledge of sounds and the context to work out words they do not recognise. At best, they read with some expression. Most of these pupils, and some average attainers, are able to reliably recall what they have read. Average attaining pupils are also usually accurate readers, but are less confident about using the strategies they have been taught when they encounter words which are new to them. Lower attaining pupils are often not able to apply skills they have been taught without help, and some are still learning by sight the common words like 'they'. Pupils are often not helped by the texts that they read because they do not have any experience of the subject matter. For instance, one Year 2 girl encountered a character who described himself as 'the wizard of the dribble' and even with discussion could make no sense of the phrase, which was essential to the humour of the text.

79 Where pupils have become confident with tackling unknown words in Years 1 to 2, they usually continue to make steady progress through Years 3 to 6. However, because teaching of basic reading skills is not a high priority after Year 2, many average and lower attaining pupils do not make enough progress. Too many Year 4 pupils still need support to apply strategies for tackling unknown words, and the majority are not fluent even with simple texts. Higher attaining Year 6 pupils read with expression, and laugh readily at humorous passages. They refer to the text to support their responses to questions, and summarise the story confidently. However, where pupils are confident readers, the texts they are reading seldom extend their vocabulary or create a need to infer or deduce meaning, and they do not progress to level 5 National Curriculum work even though they have the potential to do so. While average attaining pupils are aware of the need for expression, they are not always able to sustain it when they encounter more difficult words. They are usually accurate but monotonous readers. Like the higher attainers, many are able to state clearly what the story is about. Lower attaining pupils, however, often struggle to understand what they read and do not correct mistakes even where they make nonsense of a sentence. Although Year 6 pupils all know that non-fiction texts usually have contents and index pages to help locate information, very few pupils are aware of library classification, and cannot find books on a given subject except by trial and error. They are not helped, though, by the arrangement of the volumes in the library – which are not placed on shelves in Dewey⁸ order – or by the lack of chart or pamphlet to tell them where to look. Moreover, some books, such as those on domestic pets, are incorrectly sorted. If pupils find a relevant passage on a subject they have been asked to research, most read it verbatim. Only the very highest attainers scan or skim the text to find the exact answer.

80 By Year 2, higher attaining pupils write in sentences that are often demarcated with full stops and capital letters. Average attainers are less consistent in their use of full stops, and lower attainers do not reliably write in sentences. While higher attainers spell common words accurately, average attainers lack consistency. For instance, they copy 'story' correctly from the instructions at the start, but misspell it later. The lowest attainers spell very few words correctly and do not space their words. A few Year 2 pupils are beginning to write at length, and most pupils have increased the length of their written work since the beginning of the year.

⁸ The library classification system used by the school.

While average attaining pupils also show steady improvement in the accuracy of their writing, this is less evident in the work of higher and lower attainers. A significant number of pupils do not write grammatically, omitting prepositions and not using 'an' before words beginning with vowels.

81 Most Year 6 pupils write in sentences with full stops and capital letters, but only the higher attaining pupils use a wider range of punctuation with confidence in their own writing (as opposed to set exercises). This aspect of pupils' work is slow to improve throughout Years 3 to 6. However, all but the lowest attaining pupils spell with reasonable accuracy by the end of Year 6, albeit a limited selection of words, and spelling does improve steadily year on year. Lower attainers too often still make errors in grammar. While pupils have been taught how to structure their writing for different purposes, and higher attaining pupils have learnt to apply this to their work, lower attaining pupils often still struggle to express any ideas reliably. They write very repetitively; for instance one Year 6 pupil started six or seven consecutive sentences with "I should have..". Because they have been given so many things to consider before they are confident about expressing thoughts in writing and secure with basic punctuation, progress of these pupils is limited. The school has not been effective in developing extended writing across the curriculum even though this was a key issue following the previous inspection.

82 Throughout the school, handwriting is particularly poor, and presentation is adversely affected by this. This is despite the time allocated to handwriting lessons, during which most pupils show they are capable of neater work. In their daily work the majority of pupils fail to form letters correctly and place them precisely on the lines. Few pupils in Year 6 join their writing consistently, and even fewer have a fluent style. Pupils also scribble out answers and at worst doodle on the covers of their books. Few show pride in their finished work, although religious education exercise books often show more care.

83 The majority of lessons seen during the inspection were soundly taught, although some good and very good lessons were observed, but pupils' progress indicates teaching is satisfactory over the long term. The consistency of teaching, particularly of basic reading skills, has improved since the previous inspection. Teaching is better in Year 6 where expectations are higher and individual needs are assessed more effectively. Throughout the school, pupils are managed well, regularly praised and encouraged. Classrooms are efficiently organised so that pupils are motivated and are able to concentrate and be independent. Work planned for pupils is varied, and expositions are used well to introduce new work and recapitulate regularly. This results in increased knowledge and regular consolidation where what is taught is meaningful to pupils, and when this occurs pupils work hard. Many teachers use strategies such as partner discussion and directed questioning to involve reluctant pupils in speaking. In Years 1 and 2, some basic skills in tackling unknown words are well taught. However, because work does not meet the needs of a large proportion of the class, and expectations are too often inappropriate during parts of lessons, learning is not as rapid as it could be. Higher attaining pupils are not always challenged during group work, while pupils with special educational needs are often unable to play an active part in the whole-class session. For instance, a group of Year 1 pupils with individual education plan targets to recognise initial consonants and learn a number of high frequency words (usually 'and', 'my' 'can' and 'me') were not able to read most of the words used during their lesson on ordering sentences. While some marking gives pupils a good idea of what they have done successfully, and what they need to improve, it is too often not followed through, so pupils are still receiving similar comments several weeks later. Teachers do not always set a good example in their own writing both in books and on the whiteboard, so pupils are not able to emulate it. Some worksheets are poorly presented, and teachers very rarely comment on handwriting and presentation during English lessons.

84 Although teachers are often effective in providing prompts such as lists of key words and spelling journals, the profile of books is generally low in classrooms. Reading scheme material is regularly stored in plastic boxes (one for each level) on top of cupboards where

pupils cannot see the front of the books. Other fiction is mixed with dictionaries and non-fiction and also displayed where front covers are not visible. Dictionaries and thesauruses are not always readily available. Little guidance is given to pupils about what to read, although a good display of a wide range of Roald Dahl's work was being used in a Year 5 class to stimulate pupils' interest, and was being read by pupils in a reading lesson. Most teachers do, though, use ICT effectively, with regular use of word processing programs and practice tasks in all lessons. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

85 The English curriculum, which takes up nearly half of scheduled teaching time, is not effectively planned. ERIC⁹ and handwriting sessions are not improving attainment in reading or promoting neater and more fluent writing, while lessons devoted to developing speaking are limited. Early morning tasks, particularly in Year 1, are similarly ineffective. Not enough account is taken of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language in planning tasks or providing resources.

86 Assessment procedures include guided reading records and a piece of writing which is assessed in the light of National Curriculum levels. At best, teachers make highly pertinent diagnostic comments on these, but these observations are seldom used to focus on assisting pupils' progress, and targets set for pupils are seldom related. Moreover, comments on annual reports are sometimes misleading when the next target is to achieve something that the comments appear to indicate has improved during the year. Assessment is not being used to modify National Literacy Strategy planning to meet the needs of the pupils, nor to promote bilingual pupils' specific skills in spoken English. The teacher temporarily responsible for English has identified teachers' needs through monitoring pupils' work, and provided relevant training in guided reading.

MATHEMATICS

87 By the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, standards are well below average. This broadly reflects standards at the time of the previous inspection. As the pupils enter the school with very low levels of mathematical development, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils at an early stage of English acquisition and those with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 6, the boys are clearly outperforming the girls. The school has set a challenging target for improvement this year. The pupils have positive attitudes towards learning. They behave well in lessons and they work hard.

88 By the end of Year 2, the pupils investigate number patterns, including odd and even numbers. Many, however, find it very difficult to recognise and continue even fairly simple patterns, especially with decreasing numbers. Higher attainers have a satisfactory understanding of place value in tens and units and they order numbers accurately to 100, but other pupils have difficulties with this. Higher attainers have reasonably quick mental recall of addition facts to 10, but all the pupils find subtraction more difficult. The pupils find the cost of different shop items and they use appropriate coins to make these totals. They find it much harder to calculate change. Most of the pupils have a satisfactory understanding of half as a fraction of a whole. The pupils tell basic time on an analogue clock. They estimate and measure the length of classroom objects, but they are weak at reading scales when dealing with weight and capacity. They recognise and name common two and three-dimensional shapes. The pupils know that data, such as popular car colours, can be shown by means of tally charts, block graphs and pictograms.

89 By the end of Year 6, most of the pupils add two and three-digit numbers, but they find subtraction more difficult. Higher attainers have a satisfactory knowledge of the multiplication tables and they use written methods of long multiplication. Other pupils, however, have a poor

⁹ Sessions devoted to Enjoying Reading in the Classroom, i.e. individuals reading appropriate books.

recall of multiplication facts and they find division difficult, too. The pupils calculate simple fractions of numbers and higher attainers have a sound understanding of equivalent fractions. Knowledge of decimals is generally weak. Most of the pupils find it difficult to apply their numeracy skills in solving real-life problems, for example in the context of money. Weak literacy skills mean that the pupils often find it hard to understand what information is being given to them and what precisely they have to find out, particularly if the problem has more than one step. The pupils name different types of angles and they use protractors to measure angles accurately. They calculate the area and perimeter of regular and irregular shapes. Many pupils are weak at data handling. For example, in representing data by means of bar graphs, the bars are sometimes of different widths and the vertical scale is incorrect.

90 The pupils make sound use of their mathematical skills in other subjects. Pupils in Year 1 draw simple block graphs of their favourite fruits. In design and technology, Year 6 pupils make accurate measurements in designing model bridges.

91 Teaching is often good throughout the school. Lessons are well planned and the teachers share the learning objectives with the pupils. Where the teachers find that the pupils are having difficulties with the work, they alter their planning accordingly. There is good teaching of the basic skills of numeracy, with an appropriate emphasis on developing the pupils' mental calculations and problem solving skills. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher began with an effective 'brain gym' session, which helped the pupils in multiplying and dividing numbers by 10 and 100. The teachers ensure that all the pupils are involved in answering and they do well to develop the pupils' confidence. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher matched her questions well to the pupils' varying needs and this helped them all to make progress in counting on and back in tens from various numbers. In a Year 1 lesson, the pupils had to match their responses to a swinging pendulum and this helped them to speed up their mental recall of number patterns. Some teachers are less successful than others in holding the pupils' attention. In these lessons, the pace of learning sometimes drops.

92 The teachers organise group work well. Work is usually soundly matched to the pupils' varying needs. Expectations of what the pupils might achieve are sometimes not high enough, although there is an appropriate challenge for higher attainers in the top ability groups. In Year 6, for example, three talented pupils are working towards Year 7 learning objectives. At times, work is not matched sufficiently to meet the requirements of pupils with special educational needs, and this hinders their progress. There is often insufficient reference to the numeracy targets on some pupils' individual education plans. The teachers make effective use of many resources. They use practical apparatus and mathematical games effectively to enhance learning. In two Year 2 lessons, for example, this helped the pupils recognise and extend number patterns. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher gave the pupils the opportunity to weigh a variety of everyday food items, which helped in their understanding of grams and kilograms. The teachers use ICT well to enhance learning. In a Year 6 lesson for higher attainers, for example, the teacher made effective use of the interactive whiteboard and this really helped the pupils in learning about percentages and their relationship to fractions and decimals.

93 The teachers use questioning well, in order to make the pupils think carefully, and they try to make mathematics relevant to the real world. In the lesson quoted above, the teacher asked, "What do we mean by percentage? If I say that 96 per cent of you attended school all week, what does that mean?" This helped the pupils to see percentage as part of a hundred. The teachers deploy classroom assistants well and this helps the pupils to make progress. Lessons usually move along briskly, often with time limits for activities. The teachers set regular homework tasks, which consolidate and extend classroom learning. They mark the pupils' work regularly and positively. Where marking is most effective, there are clear comments on how the pupils might improve their work. Examples of this from Year 6 include "Think carefully about what the question is asking you to do", "You need to show where you have divided your shape" and "Make sure all the decimal points line up".

94 The subject is well managed. A clear policy meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Planning is soundly based on the National Numeracy Strategy, supplemented by a commercial scheme of work. Throughout the school, the pupils are taught mathematics in ability sets, so that work can be matched more closely to their varying needs. The two subject co-ordinators check colleagues' planning and they offer help and advice as necessary. They recognise that standards need to rise considerably and they have drawn up a clear action plan to address this issue. They have made a good start in developing systems for tracking the pupils' progress more systematically, though assessment is not yet being used sufficiently to raise standards. The subject is well resourced and this has a positive impact on learning. The subject is making a good contribution to the pupils' personal development. Pupils in Year 3, for example, learn about profit and loss by making items in school and selling them to others. There is a worthwhile mathematics games club for pupils in Years 1 and 2 during the autumn and summer terms. Achievement is celebrated through a commendable 'Mathematician of the week' scheme.

SCIENCE

95 Standards in science are well below average throughout the school. Teacher assessments carried out in 2002 indicated that pupils' attainment in Year 2 was well below the national average overall; however, pupils' understanding of materials and their properties was much better. This may reflect the fact that pupils learn better in science when they can handle and manipulate objects and substances. Other areas of science, that are more to do with ideas and are less tangible, present a greater challenge to pupils who have very limited confidence in English. Given the very low attainment of pupils when they enter the school and their limited competence in English, overall progress in science is satisfactory. However, there are variations in year groups and in different aspects of science.

96 In Years 1 and 2 progress is at least satisfactory in all areas of science, and in understanding materials and their characteristics progress is good. For example, in Year 1, pupils classify materials according to hardness and appearance and also whether they are magnetic or not. In Year 2, pupils explore a wide range of musical instruments and discuss how sound is generated by striking, blowing or plucking the instruments. Pupils carry out tests to see conditions that seeds need to germinate and how water can be both a solid and a liquid. Pupils use simple apparatus such as hand lenses and carry out simple tests that develop their practical skills. However, pupils do not acquire higher order skills such as predicting outcomes and planning tests that are controlled and fair.

97 In Years 3 to 6 overall, progress is satisfactory. In Years 3 and 4 this progress is reflected in all aspects of science including the development of practical skills. Pupils in Year 3 measure temperature changes and draw graphs of their results. They look at different places to find small creatures, such as under logs and collapsed fences, comparing the types of creatures found. In Year 4, pupils look at the sources of sound and carry out an investigation into how best to insulate sound. The emphasis the school has placed on a practical approach to science is evident in these years and often good links are made with literacy when pupils write about their work in science.

98 Progress in the current Year 5 is unsatisfactory. There is some inconsistency in what is actually taught in the two classes and generally topics are covered superficially and the work in science is unsatisfactory in both quantity and quality. Procedures for monitoring what is being done in science have not identified this weakness and therefore this needs to become more regular and rigorous if standards are to be improved. The development of practical skills in this year group is especially weak. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to experiment, record results and consider their findings.

99 The quality of work improves in Year 6 where there is some very good teaching, but even here there is room for improvement. Pupils carry out investigations, but some of these are not very challenging. For instance, pupils looked at how coloured water was drawn through celery and whether plants needed water to stay healthy. Neither of these activities provided sufficient challenge to pupils in terms of knowledge or practical skills and they were inappropriate for the more able pupils in the year group. Teachers' marking sometimes does not identify pupils' misconceptions such as a pupil writing "friction was pushing the chair" and sometimes standards of presentation are allowed to slip instead of improving. Pupils' social skills are promoted well in science, especially through group work.

100 Teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory, but is satisfactory overall. In the very good teaching, pupils in Year 6 used the computer suite to reinforce their ideas of how light is reflected and how shadows are formed. The teacher used resources exceptionally well and then invited pupils to use and extend their skills in ICT to create multi-media presentations about the qualities of light such as travelling in straight lines and being reflected by shiny surfaces. In the unsatisfactory lesson, there was insufficient challenge for pupils who were considering how food is used by the body and what constitutes a healthy diet. Insufficient account was taken of pupils' poor language skills and the activities did not provide opportunities to develop their scientific skills.

101 The emphasis on a practical investigational approach to science needs to continue. It is clear that pupils learn best from this approach. Good links with ICT are already forged. For example, Year 1 pupils draw plants and label the different parts using computers. The curriculum fulfils the requirements of the National Curriculum and reflects recent national initiatives. However, the quality and usefulness of some medium-term planning are inconsistent. Whilst in some year groups this is detailed, in others it is less so than the long-term planning it is taken from, and is therefore less useful as a basis for planning weekly lessons. Practical skills are not identified for development clearly enough and the lack of detail leads to different approaches being adopted in parallel classes.

102 The school has sufficient resources to sustain an even more practical approach to science, and the co-ordinator, who manages the subject satisfactorily, is clear that this is the priority in both raising standards and improving the school's provision in science.

ART AND DESIGN

103 By the time pupils reach Year 6, standards in art and design are similar to those found in a majority of schools. Because of the younger pupils' underdeveloped language skills, standards are below those expected in Year 2. Although they are provided with appropriate ideas and use a range of materials and processes to design and make images, there are weaknesses in the younger pupils' ability to speak about differences in work and to suggest improvements. Although teachers provide regular opportunities to promote speaking and listening skills through the subject, too often pupils sit passively and many do not join in discussions or make contributions to lessons. Pupils with special educational needs generally make the same progress as their classmates particularly when they are well supported by a classroom assistant. Art and design is well promoted through the school with displays in corridors, classrooms and the school 'Art Gallery'. Much of this work is of a good quality, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. For example, Year 6 pupils have produced 'Pop Art' in the style of Andy Warhol, and in Year 5, prints inspired by Paul Klee. Not only do these displays enhance the school environment, they provide all pupils with good opportunities to look at the work of others and to appreciate that art can be used to express ideas and feelings.

104 Teaching is judged to be satisfactory overall although a number of good lessons were seen during the inspection. Further evidence provided by analysis of pupils' previous work showed that there is some inconsistency in expectations by class teachers and not all classes

in the same year group have covered the same work. Good teaching was seen in Years 2 and 6. Year 2 pupils worked conscientiously, showing good levels of concentration and effort as they used a specific shading technique on castles that they had drawn in their sketchbooks. The lesson was well linked to their work in history and good support provided by the teacher and classroom support staff enabled pupils to gain information from illustrations and photographs before they started their activity. Some pupils were also provided with an opportunity to undertake the same activity, but using a program on the computer. Year 6 pupils showed the same levels of concentration and effort as they began to paint a landscape in the style of Monet, and specifically his famous painting *Regatta at Argenteuil*. Both of these lessons were well organised and no time was wasted. The teachers stopped the lessons at appropriate times to reflect on pupils' efforts and to raise teaching points about technique, and in both classrooms language associated with the lessons, such as 'cross-hatching'¹⁰ in Year 2 or 'definition and pattern' in Year 6, was well promoted. Both of these lessons were productive, as a result of good teaching.

105 The pupils are very enthusiastic about the subject. Year 2 and Year 6 pupils were keen to talk about current and past work. Year 6 pupils carefully explained how they had undertaken screen printing and how, in links with their project on 'The Greeks', they had produced drawings of Greek pots using shadow to carefully emphasise the three-dimensional effect. Year 2 pupils were very proud of their puppets made from household objects that they completed with Clive Challoner, an artist in residence. This is a good example of how well the school makes use of outside skills and resources to promote the subject. Another example was Year 1 pupils making minibeasts with another artist in residence. These worthwhile learning experiences also contribute to the pupils' social development, as do the lessons where pupils are encouraged to share resources and equipment sensibly or discuss their work. In a Year 3 art lesson, where pupils were designing and producing a 'Roman' tile, the pupils listened in wonder as the class teacher accurately described what would happen to their clay tiles once they were put in the school kiln.

106 The subject co-ordinator is currently on leave from the school. In her absence, the subject is being successfully managed by an acting co-ordinator, who is able to support other colleagues offering advice on planning or lesson organisation. There are many strengths to the management of the subject. A well-organised scheme of work ensures that a relevant, broad and balanced curriculum is offered to the pupils. Resources are good and well organised. All of the lessons observed during the inspection were well resourced. The pupils use a sketchbook through the school and this enables teachers to have some idea of how pupils' skills and understanding have developed. However, there are no formal assessment procedures and this is a weakness. ICT is often used to support the subject and this is a strength. Year 6 pupils, for example, discussed designing Islamic patterns on the computer. In March, an art club will start for talented artists and this will further enhance the provision in the school.

¹⁰ A form of shading that is made up of an intersecting series of parallel lines.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107 It was not possible to observe any lessons during the inspection, but an analysis of pupils' work and discussions with some of them indicate that, by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, standards meet national expectations for pupils of this age. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection.

108 By the end of Year 2, the pupils satisfactorily design and make purses out of fabric. They consider how they will make the purses strong and decorative. They compare their finished products with their original designs. The pupils use joining mechanisms to make characters from the stories of *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. In work linked to a history visit to Sudbury Hall, the pupils make simple moving toys. They join dowelling together to make effective musical instruments, such as shakers. In food technology, the pupils design and make a fruit salad.

109 By the end of Year 6, the pupils understand the need for the three-fold process of design, making and evaluating. They know that it is important to consider the user of the product. The pupils make satisfactory designs of bridges, complete with labelled diagrams, lists of materials and accurate measurements. The finished products are sound. The pupils refine their designs for more complex musical instruments until they arrive at a final design. They consider what sound they wish to produce. They evaluate their finished products and consider ways in which they might improve them. In food technology, the pupils design and make a variety of sandwiches. In work linked to mathematics, pupils in Year 3 create a 'trading company', whereby they design and make items such as badges and biscuits and sell them at a profit in the school.

110 A clear policy meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Planning is soundly based on national guidelines. Each class has a short, concentrated focus on design and technology each term. The headteacher has assumed temporary responsibility for the subject. She checks teachers' planning and she makes informal checks on the quality of teaching. There are no formal, whole-school procedures for assessing the pupils' progress, other than an end of year summary of their attainment. There are plenty of good quality resources and this has a positive impact on learning. Local business links have enabled the pupils to benefit from the expertise of visitors. During their residential visit to the Stansfeld Study Centre, Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to work collaboratively to design and make shelters.

GEOGRAPHY

111 Geography was not being taught in school during the inspection so judgements have been made by analysing samples of pupils' work throughout the school, studying documents and talking to staff and pupils.

112 By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards that are average and they make satisfactory progress. Pupils know their way around the school and playground. They show knowledge of the locality and have drawn plans of their routes to school. Following a visit to the Lickey Hills, pupils compared the area to Alum Rock and described what they liked. They know that maps show 'more things' than plans, for example seas. Pupils name Birmingham as their home city and England as the country where they live.

113 Standards are below the nationally expected level by the end of Year 6. This is because not enough time is given to teaching the subject and work completed earlier in the school year shows that tasks are not consistently matched to the needs of different groups of pupils. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 showed that they have not built well on their geographical skills and that their knowledge is limited. They have retained a satisfactory number of facts about Pakistan, but show little knowledge of any European countries. While they remembered

visiting Ludlow earlier in the school year, they were only able to make superficial comparisons with Alum Rock, for example "It's smaller than here". Although map-reading skills have developed satisfactorily, progress in other areas of the subject has been inconsistent.

114 Planning shows that teachers have made sure that pupils have covered the required topics, but samples of work indicate that not enough thought has been given to planning follow-up tasks that help their understanding and develop pupils' writing skills. This is partly due to limited time for geography, but also because literacy time has not often been used for writing geographical reports and accounts. Pupils in each year group are usually set the same task. This results in a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils who record carelessly, while pupils with special educational needs and those whose English is less well developed than their peers', struggle with work that is not appropriate for their abilities. Visits provide valuable opportunities for pupils to extend their field skills, as for example when pupils in Year 5 studied a river in Woodgate Valley, but written work afterwards was sparse. There is not much evidence that pupils are encouraged to use their mathematical skills or ICT to develop their work.

115 The subject co-ordinator is new to the post and she has already identified the need to improve resources for some topics and wishes to monitor teaching. She reviews teachers' planning, and attends some planning sessions with the curriculum co-ordinator. A useful portfolio of work enables teachers to be more aware of the levels achieved in each year. Assessment is not used effectively to check pupils' progress and to adjust planning where needed. Resources are satisfactory, and the number and range of visits are very good. The subject provides generally satisfactory opportunities for pupils' cultural development as they learn about life in Britain and in different countries.

HISTORY

116 Pupils reach standards that are below average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. The main reason is that too little time has been allocated to the teaching of history so that, although most topic areas are covered, pupils do not make satisfactory progress in developing their historical skills. Added to this, work completed earlier in the school year shows that teachers do not consistently match tasks to the different ability levels within each class. This does not help pupils with their learning and understanding, and affects their progress over time.

117 Pupils in Year 2 enjoy history. During a lesson about castles they showed some understanding of 'then' and 'now' as they discussed what castles are like and who lived in them long ago. This is the first topic they have learnt about this school year, and since pupils in Year 1 also only learn history for one half-term in the year, knowledge and understanding at the end of Year 2 are below levels found nationally. Planning suggests that pupils in Year 2 have also learnt about some famous people in the past, but in discussions pupils had no memory of them.

118 Pupils' learning in Years 3 to 6 often continues to be superficial due to lack of time. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 revealed that they have an increasing bank of knowledge about the Ancient Greeks but they found it hard to use their knowledge to contrast life in Greece with that of life in different historical periods or to recognise changes within those periods. They had no recollection of looking at an event from more than one point of view, and there was uncertainty about when different periods of time were. Pupils in Year 3 have taken part in a simple archaeological dig and know a satisfactory number of facts about Boudicca. Pupils in Year 4 have studied canals and have some knowledge about the Victorians. Pupils in Year 5 had not done any history prior to the February half-term.

119 Teachers plan conscientiously to cover as much of each topic as there is time for but do not promote speaking skills well enough to encourage pupils to think and to develop their

historical skills in greater depth. Tasks are rarely planned at a number of levels to ensure that all pupils are challenged appropriately and can work with understanding. This adversely affects pupils with special educational needs and those who are at the early stages of learning English. In lessons observed, teachers used questions well to assess how much pupils remembered and to encourage pupils to think. These lessons also provided opportunities for pupils to practise expressing their thoughts and ideas, but many pupils were passive and only answered when directly addressed. However, pupils showed good short-term recall. Where teachers had high expectations of good behaviour, pupils responded well and teachers usually shared the focus of the lesson that helped pupils understand and concentrate. There was little evidence that pupils regularly use their ICT skills in history, but ICT was well used in a lesson in Year 6 when all pupils researched facts about Ancient Greece. This enabled them to answer questions of differing complexity, matched to different ability groups, and resulted in good advances in learning. Pupils use their mathematical knowledge to devise and use time lines. Pupils in Year 6 used Venn diagrams to define similarities and differences between Athens and Sparta.

120 The co-ordinator is newly in post. Her leadership is satisfactory as she develops her role. She has monitored planning and is expanding a portfolio of past work, but this has not yet been assessed to show achievement in each year group. Resources are satisfactory and are used well to enhance the topics. Educational visits are used very well to bring history alive for pupils and play an important part in teaching them about past culture in Britain. Assessment procedures are being developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

121 By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards in ICT are average. This is a similar picture to the previous inspection. The subject is a strength of the school and plays a significant part in school life. It is well promoted and used very effectively to support learning in many areas of the curriculum. This, and the very good leadership and management of ICT by the subject co-ordinator, also contributes to the pupils achieving appropriate standards and making good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Although pupils' achievements in the subject are often good, particularly when teaching is strong, in some classes progress is only satisfactory as a result of less effective teaching. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are at the early stages of learning English make the same progress as their classmates. However, when teaching is less effective, some of their progress can be unsatisfactory.

122 Pupils in Year 2 show good keyboard and mouse skills despite the fact that many of them have weak literacy skills. They confidently enter the school ICT suite and log on to a computer. They save and retrieve their work and use the printer. The pupils have undertaken a number of word processing activities and some of the pupils have written their own stories related to *Jack and the Beanstalk* or letters to *The Three Bears*. They talked confidently about using an art program to produce 'firework' pictures' and practising their work in mathematics on the computer. By the end of Year 2, pupils are expected to have their own 'accounts' on the school network so that they can manage their ICT work more independently. The pupils were beginning this process during the inspection.

123 Year 6 pupils talked very positively about ICT and this reflects how effectively the subject develops through the school. They regularly use the Internet to research school work and were able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of electronic communication. The pupils described accurately how they had completed presentations using combined pictures and text and reflected on their current project, producing a web page. The pupils have also used spreadsheets, written newspaper reports and designed Christmas jigsaws for the children in reception. The pupils were less confident when describing the modelling and control elements of ICT, but school curriculum planning indicates that this area will be revisited during the summer term.

124 Because of the good progress pupils make overall, teaching is judged to be good, although there are some inconsistencies through the school. Where teaching is good or better, pupils make rapid gains in their progress. This was seen during a Year 6 lesson led by the subject co-ordinator. Very good subject knowledge enabled the teacher to ensure that all pupils were well supported and challenged. After a very clear lesson introduction using the computer suite interactive whiteboard, all pupils had a very good understanding of what they were doing. They began designing their own home pages after studying the school's website. All talked confidently about what they were doing, using subject specific language such as 'hyperlink' to explain how they were going to join pages together. They 'surfed' the net looking for ideas and were obviously comfortable with this area of the curriculum. A pupil with special educational needs was well supported by a classroom assistant who followed the recommended strategies in the pupil's individual education plan. The school technician also provided good quality technical support for pupils who needed it and had also designed the school's website. Although most other teaching during the inspection was satisfactory, one area for development was a feature of many lessons. Teachers' awareness of individual pupils' levels of learning could be better. Too often, pupils with special educational needs or at the early stages of learning English were given work that was not appropriate to their needs or experience. Although there are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls, in mixed gender groups, boys can tend to dominate and in many lessons there is insufficient monitoring of group work to ensure that individual pupils are not dominating the computers at the expense of others.

125 Teachers use ICT well to support other subjects and many examples were observed during the inspection. This approach helps pupils achieve satisfactory standards in ICT when, in many other subjects, standards are below those levels expected. Two good examples were when Year 4 pupils accessed a CD-ROM to reinforce their understanding of Tudor chronology, and Year 6 pupils accessed the computer thesaurus as part of a writing exercise undertaken in the computer suite.

126 The subject contributes well to the pupils' social development. They are encouraged to work together and discuss what they are doing. The pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and the ICT clubs run by the learning mentors and support assistants are held after school and are well attended. Despite a number of pupils having special educational needs and being at the early stages of learning English, no pupil was observed being daunted by the computers or keyboard. In the best lessons, it was often those pupils with difficulties who made the best progress and enjoyed themselves the most. Some pupils in Year 6 are exceeding the levels expected for their age.

127 The subject is very well managed by the subject co-ordinator who is a good role model in the classroom and a very enthusiastic practitioner. She is responsible for much of the good practice observed in the school and should take full credit. There is a good scheme of work to ensure appropriate curriculum coverage and the co-ordinator has had release time to support in some year groups as well as ensuring that teachers' planning reflects the demands of the scheme of work. The main area for development is to produce formal assessment procedures and the co-ordinator has already started to consider this. The ratio of computers to pupils is similar to that found in the majority of schools, as was the spending on the subject in the current financial year. The school is lucky to have its own technician who can provide invaluable support to classes, teachers and individual pupils. The school's computer suite does have some disadvantages. It gets very warm and can be affected by noise from lessons in one of the school halls.

MUSIC

128 By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils reach standards that are below those expected for their ages. Progress is satisfactory in relation to prior attainment. Low language skills make it difficult for pupils to remember the specific musical vocabulary that is expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. These judgements broadly reflect those identified in the previous inspection although standards at the end of Year 2 were slightly higher.

129 Discussions with pupils in Year 2 showed that in the past they have learnt songs such as *I am the Music Maker* and average and higher attaining pupils sing them confidently. However, most of these pupils had difficulty naming percussion instruments and needed prompts to recall instruments such as 'bells', 'triangles', 'shakers' and 'drums'. In Year 6, pupils enthusiastically spoke about songs that they knew, such as *Tell me why* and *From a distance* but all pupils had great difficulty trying to recall the names of musical instruments that they had played in the past. Pupils from Years 2 and 6 found it difficult to remember what they had previously been taught in music, and their understanding of the composing and appraising element of music was limited.

130 There is too little evidence to make a judgement on teaching but in the one lesson seen, teaching was satisfactory. In this lesson, pupils in Year 5 had the opportunity to listen to music and try to identify the instruments that they heard. However, few managed to give clear explanations because of their low levels of English. For example, when asked where they might hear music similar to the music they were listening to, higher attaining pupils said 'churches' or 'cathedrals' but none were able to give any more detail. The teacher used the board well to develop musical vocabulary to illustrate different voices such as 'soprano', 'alto', 'tenor' and 'bass' but few children were confident enough to use these words when describing what they had heard. Pupils later identified familiar sounds from a tape, such as 'traffic' and a 'vacuum cleaner', and the teacher worked hard and gave them many opportunities to explain what they heard. However, during this class discussion, only a few pupils were confident to have a go at answering the teacher's questions. Standards in this Year 5 class are clearly well below the expected levels for their ages.

131 Previous work was limited to a selection of graphic scores produced by pupils in Year 3. Past planning confirmed that in this lesson last term, pupils in Year 3 worked on developing their own graphic scores 'using shapes, colours and symbols'. There was too little evidence in this sample of work to make a judgement on standards, progress or teaching.

132 Additional evidence was gained from listening to pupils sing in assemblies and during their weekly singing assembly. The quality of singing is satisfactory which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Adults regularly miss opportunities to promote music generally during these sessions. However, the music co-ordinator promoted music well during a singing assembly for Years 3 to 6. He showed good subject knowledge and promoted pupils' cultural development effectively as he spoke about composers and highlighted the piece of music, which was *Spring* by Vivaldi. Cultural development is further promoted in music when visitors such as Calich, a South American Folk group, are invited in to the school to perform for the pupils. Additionally a group of musicians from the Muslim community have recently provided an exciting music workshop for pupils in Year 6.

133 The co-ordinator is currently developing a scheme of work for teachers to follow, based on the national guidance and previous school guidelines. Although resources are satisfactory they are being developed to link in with the new developments in the subject. There are a considerable number of keyboards that enables all pupils to begin to learn how to use them. There is a room designated for music but in the one music lesson seen, the pupils stayed in their classroom. There is no evidence of ICT, literacy or numeracy skills used to support work in the subject. Displays around the school do not promote music well and there is little evidence of teachers' displays reinforcing skills previously taught in music. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to improve the monitoring and assessment procedures, which are

underdeveloped, and the necessity to promote the teaching of music, in particular the appraising and the composing element, more throughout the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

134 Current standards in physical education are below average throughout the school. However, there are elements within physical education where standards are better than this because of the special provision made for pupils. In dance in Years 1 and 2, standards are average, because pupils are provided with specialist teaching that enables them to make good progress and some pupils excel because they take advantage of an after-school club taught by the visiting dance teacher. The school provides regular badminton clubs, both at lunchtimes and after school. This results in some pupils reaching above average standards in this sport. They have good stroke formation, know how to serve properly and understand the rules and scoring system.

135 Pupils' progress in all aspects of physical education is satisfactory, but pupils enter the school with well below average attainment in physical development. The school provides more opportunities for pupils to swim than most schools. Pupils in Year 3 have an intensive block and then this is followed up in later years. Even so only a minority of pupils reach the national standard of 25 metres, and this is below the average found in most schools. Pupils' experience outside school is limited and this is evident in their ball skills too. Pupils in Year 5 do not have the control one would expect of children of their age in using bats and balls and pupils in Year 6 have below average skills in gymnastics. Very few pupils are able to perform controlled balances and even fewer are able to link these into good quality sequences.

136 The school has a satisfactory range of resources to enable physical education to be taught effectively and the teaching is satisfactory overall. However, the teaching observed in lessons ranged from unsatisfactory to good. In the good teaching, a specialist dance teacher developed pupils' responses to music very successfully, encouraging them to move with control and to build up sequences using a wide range of steps. In the lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, the pace was slow and not enough was expected of the pupils to ensure that they made at least satisfactory progress in basic gymnastics.

137 Provision for physical education is sound within the curriculum and the provision in extra-curricular activities is good. The time available for some lessons in the morning is too short to allow teachers to develop themes and ideas sufficiently. This was the case in a gymnastics lesson in Year 6, which was forced into an unnatural and premature end, in order for school assembly to take place. More time is usually available for afternoon lessons. Older pupils use changing rooms to dress for lessons and some parents would like the privacy that this arrangement affords to be made available to other year groups.

138 The accommodation supports teaching indoors well. There are two halls that are used for the subject. However, outside the accommodation is not as good. The playground provides a useful hard surface for games and sports, but the field used by the school is some way away from the main building and this makes access difficult.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

139 Although progress is satisfactory throughout the school, standards in religious education are well below average. This is largely because pupils' lack of confidence in spoken English limits their ability to discuss moral issues and to understand how religion affects people's lives. Although most are very strongly aware of how their own faith is important to their community, they cannot confidently apply this knowledge to other faiths. Much work is done orally, so little writing was available for scrutiny. While this in itself is not a weakness, in practice pupils' factual recall is often limited to the work they had recorded, so their overall

knowledge is limited. As at the time of the previous inspection, understanding of faiths other than Islam and Christianity is limited.

140 Year 6 pupils know about Christian and Muslim holy books, but have to refer to their notes for sacred texts of other religions, so where they have made no notes, as in work on prayer and worship, they recall little. Many pupils do not use the relevant vocabulary with confidence, and they certainly do not ask their own questions about the importance of prayer that they studied earlier in the school year. Year 5 pupils realise that the Ten Commandments are in many ways similar to their own religious teachings. However, when asked to discuss a moral dilemma that they might meet in their own lives (that of a good friend who considers stealing from a shop) few are able to consider different ways of handling the situation. They just know that stealing is wrong. Although pupils began to learn that Jesus was a teacher as well as a leader in Year 2, Year 4 pupils do not understand the significance of the crowd's reaction to him on Palm Sunday during their lesson on the Easter story, but they do recall the narrative satisfactorily. Year 2 pupils know that Christians celebrate Christmas and Muslims Eid, and can name some Bible stories they have heard. Although they have studied places of worship, they cannot describe them or say why they are special. In their lesson, pupils give examples of special days, and recall some features of Shabbat as related to them.

141 Religious education is soundly taught. Lessons are well planned to incorporate a moral or spiritual element as well as factual information. However, teachers are not effective in promoting discussion on the moral or spiritual component where pupils are unresponsive, which is often the case. Strategies such as partner discussion are used appropriately, but they often fail to promote a much greater level of participation. In most classes, contributions are nearly always from boys. If girls do speak, they often only give factual answers. Resources are usually used effectively to promote interest, although unlike in other subjects, the use of ICT is limited. During the inspection various artefacts, a big book and a children's Bible were used. Pertinent reference is often made to displays around school or assembly themes so that pupils are more aware of the relevance of work, and personal experiences are valued and used. In a Year 6 lesson, for instance, the teacher quoted a pupil's comment that he would not have done something wrong on the playground because he was a good Muslim, and asked the boy to say what this meant in practical terms. Where pupils are expected to write, the task is not suitably matched to their (often limited) literacy skills, and too little time is given for reasonable output. Religious education is not, therefore, supporting literacy effectively. Extension tasks for higher attainers are seldom more challenging, frequently just colouring, although pupils in Year 2 who used their initiative were actively encouraged. One had found out information about Judaism at home and another looked at the 'big book' used during the introduction when she finished her writing.

142 Religious education contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by raising awareness of different faiths and cultures, demonstrating moral issues and sharing experiences of life, but could be more effective in developing pupils' speaking, literacy and ICT skills.