

INSPECTION REPORT

SIDEMOOR FIRST SCHOOL

Bromsgrove

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116664

Headteacher: Mrs Lesley Leigh

Reporting inspector: Mrs Rowena Onions
18354

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 5th December 2002

Inspection number: 247659

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 – 9 Years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Broad Street
Bromsgrove

Postcode: B61 8LW

Telephone number: 01527 872271

Fax number: 01527 837459

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Chris Platt

Date of previous inspection: October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18354	Rowena Onions	Registered inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology Music Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9173	Sarah Mc Dermott	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
31334	Barbara Atcheson	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics History Educational inclusion including race equality	
32226	Teresa Quick	Team Inspector	Science Religious education Physical education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
2911	Eric Steed	Team inspector	English Art and design Geography English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Evenlode Associates Ltd
6 Abbey Close
Alcester
Warwickshire
B49 5QW

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Sidemoor First School is a school of average size, with 175 full-time and 65 part-time three to nine-year-old pupils on roll. Some children attend the nursery class from outside the immediate area of the school. About half the nursery children leave the school at the end of this year to attend their neighbourhood school. A number of pupils, especially pupils with special educational needs, remain in the school because their parents feel they are well settled and do not wish to move them. The school has approximately equal numbers of boys and girls. Eighty-six per cent of the pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage, other pupils come from a range of heritages. There are three pupils for whom English is an additional language, but all of these pupils speak English fluently. The school is situated in the north of Bromsgrove and mainly draws its pupils from the nearby area. Twenty-one per cent of pupils take free school meals, which is above average. The pupils enter the reception class with a range of attainment but, overall, it is below average. There are 37 pupils (20 per cent) identified on the school's special educational needs register. This is about average. Three pupils have statements of special educational need. The school has pupils with a range of special needs, most of which are mild, specific learning, speech and language or physical difficulties.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is very effective in providing a very good quality of education for the pupils. Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics and attain average standards. These standards are rising. The pupils in the reception year and in Years 1 and 2 are well taught. Older pupils and those in the nursery are very well taught. Pupils have very good attitudes towards school and learning and they behave very well. The school is very well led and managed and considering its average costs, it gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well in most subjects throughout the school. They achieve very well in English and mathematics in Years 3 and 4.
- The quality of teaching throughout the school is at least good. It is very good in the nursery and in Years 3 and 4.
- The relationships between all members of the school community are excellent and this has a very positive effect on the pupils' learning.
- As a result of very good social, moral and spiritual education, pupils become increasingly mature and behave very well. They enjoy being in school.
- The headteacher's quiet purposeful management is very effective. She is very well supported by the staff, parents and governors. This places the school in a very good position to improve further.
- The school's curriculum is made stimulating and exciting by the addition of a wide range of visits, visitors and themed days. Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and the school caters well for higher attaining pupils.

What could be improved

- The consistency and effectiveness of the teachers' planning and marking.
- The links that are made between subjects so that pupils are given more opportunity to use or consolidate what they have learned in one subject when studying another.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has shown very good improvement since its last inspection in October 1997. Standards have risen in English and mathematics and continue to rise. Pupils are now achieving well in most subjects. The quality of teaching and learning continues to be a strength and has improved as there is now more good and very good teaching. Pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour, which were good at the time of the last inspection are now very good. The curriculum is very effective. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development has improved from good to very good overall. The quality of the links with parents has improved, in particular with respect to the information provided about what is taught. The leadership and management of the school have also improved from good to very good. The school has successfully addressed all the issues raised in the last inspection report.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	E	E	D	C
Writing	D	D	C	B
Mathematics	D	E	D	C

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

Children enter the nursery class with a very wide range of attainments, including a significant number who are placed there because they have special educational needs. They make very good progress during their time in the class. About half of the children go on to attend the reception class at Sidemoor. There are significant differences between the attainment of different year groups when they enter the reception classes, with most being either below or well below the county average for attainment. Children make good progress in this year group and by the end of the year many attain the national goals set for this age child. However, because there remains a significant minority who do not and because there are fewer than average numbers of higher attaining children, the overall profile for the groups is generally below average.

Over the last few years, standards in English and mathematics in the school have been rising. They continue to do so. National tests show that standards for Year 2 pupils in 2002 were below the national average in reading and mathematics overall, but in line with those attained in similar schools. An average number of pupils attained the expected level (level 2). Standards were better than they were in previous years. Standards in writing were average overall and above those attained in similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that standards continue to rise and that the current Year 2 pupils are attaining average standards in English and mathematics. If their current rate of progress continues, they are set to do even better by the end of the year. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs and those with higher attainments, are making good progress and are achieving well. Because of the consistency of planning and teaching, and because of the way pupils are taught in groups divided by attainment, pupils are making even better progress in English and mathematics in Years 3 and 4 and achieve very well.

Standards in science are average in both Years 2 and 4. Pupils make good progress in learning both facts and enquiry skills in science and are achieving well. In most other subjects, pupils are attaining standards that are in line with those identified for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 4 and they generally achieve in at least a satisfactory way. Standards are above average in physical education throughout the school and in music and religious education by Year 4. Pupils are achieving well in these subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils like being in school. They join in very well with all the activities that are provided for them. They show interest and good levels of concentration and this helps them to make at least good progress.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in class, attending well to what they are asked to do. Behaviour in the playground is generally very harmonious.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils develop very well personally becoming increasingly independent and responsible both for their work and when doing jobs around the school. Relationships are excellent. Pupils are friendly and polite to adults and show a care and concern for each other above that usually seen. Their trust and liking for the adults with whom they work means that they are prepared to make extra effort in their work and this helps raise standards.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Despite very few unauthorised absences, the attendance at the school is only average because a small but significant number of parents take their children on holiday in term time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Very good

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

Children in the nursery class benefit from very good teaching that helps them to rapidly settle into school and to learn what is expected of them there. Activities are stimulating and exciting. Children receive good teaching in their reception year that helps them build on their very positive start and assists them to learn well in each area of their development.

Pupils in the rest of the school are well taught and this ensures that they learn well. During the inspection, a significant amount of good and very good teaching and some excellent teaching was seen. Lessons are well organised and pupils are very well managed and this means that there is an orderly atmosphere in the school and the pupils are therefore in an environment that helps them to learn successfully. Lessons are planned to contain a variety of different types of activity. This, together with the enthusiasm shown by the teachers, makes learning fun for the pupils. Some lessons, however, are better planned than others. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, it is largely because teachers are not sufficiently clear in their planning about what they expect pupils to learn. This makes their teaching less sharply focused and learning is also satisfactory rather than good. The best planning is in Years 3 and 4 because teachers are very clear about what they want different groups of pupils to learn in each lesson and over a course of lessons. This clarity helps them to be very clear to the pupils about what they expect them to learn and helps both adults and pupils target their energies more precisely. Some marking of work is very effective in showing pupils how to improve. This is not, however, always the case and marking does not, therefore, always assist pupils to learn as much as it might. All teachers make good use of the time available to them. They expect pupils to work hard and to complete a good quality of work in each lesson. Because they have excellent relationships with the pupils, pupils want to do as they are asked and they work at a good pace. Teaching assistants are used very well especially in English and mathematics lessons and their help is particularly valuable to those pupils who experience greater difficulty. Teachers cater for the needs of all pupils well. Pupils with special educational needs and those of higher attainment are well taught because the teachers are careful to give them work that is suitably challenging. Good care is taken to ensure that boys are as interested in their work

as girls. Literacy and numeracy are well taught in Years 1 and 2 and very well taught in Years 3 and 4. Pupils are given daily tuition in all the basic skills and this helps them to learn well and to make good or very good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum that is very successfully enriched by the use of visits, visitors and the areas immediately around the school. This helps interest the pupils in their work. Although there are links made between subjects, these are not as well planned as they could be.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The provision is very well organised and helps pupils make very good progress in English and mathematics. Pupils are well supported in class and receive very good teaching when they are taught in small groups outside the classroom. The school provides well for pupils with higher attainments.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The three pupils who speak English as an additional language do so fluently and make progress at the same rate as their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. The provision for the development of personal skills is very effective and helps pupils become increasingly mature. The provision for the spiritual, moral and social development is very good. The example set by adults plays a significant part in this. The provision for cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Each pupil is known and valued as an individual. Very good attention is paid to making the school a warm and secure place in which to work and play.

The school works very well with the parents. In the main, parents are kept very well informed. Parents are very supportive of the school and a good number help either in class or when pupils go on trips.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher leads by example and provides a firm steer for the work of the school. She has developed a strong team who support her well in their leadership roles. All staff are part of the school team and are determined that the school should continue to improve. The strength of the leadership and management of the school was especially evident when it continued its planned improvement during the successful leadership of the deputy headteacher whilst the headteacher was away leading another school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. The governors are informed and supportive. They play a good part in school improvement and fulfil all of their statutory duties well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There is particularly effective use of data in monitoring the work of the school. Other procedures allow co-ordinators to know what is strong about their subjects and what needs to be improved. The effectiveness of the checking of teachers' planning, however, could be improved.
The strategic use of resources	Good. All money is well spent and there are good procedures in place to check that money spent helps to raise standards. In the most part, the school

	uses the principles of 'best value' well. The school compares its performance with other schools and is careful that purchases constitute the best value for money. There is not, yet, however, regular consultation of parents' opinions about the effectiveness of the school.
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The school is well resourced and has good accommodation. Both these help the staff to provide the quality of education seen.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That children like and behave well in school • The progress the children make • The quality of the teaching • That the school expects children to work hard • The way the school helps children to become mature and responsible • The way the school works with parents, its approachability and the information provided • The activities provided outside lessons 	Neither the parents' meeting nor the parents' questionnaires raised significant areas that parents would like to see improved.

In the very large part, the inspection team agrees with the parents' positive opinions.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the school from the age of three onwards with widely differing attainments and abilities. Few have had formal education prior to this and a significant number are placed in the nursery because they have special educational needs. Almost half of the children in the nursery class do not live in the area immediately around the school and go on to attend other local schools. The education provided for children in the nursery class is very good overall, with particular strengths in the teaching of aspects of personal, social and emotional and language development. This ensures that the children achieve very well in these aspects, and well overall, although many continue to have below average attainments as they leave the nursery class.
2. The attainments of children who enter the reception class at Sidemoor First School differ significantly from year to year. The profile changes as a result of a number of factors, including the number who enter the school at this point, the number of children with special educational needs whose parents choose for them to stay at the school rather than changing to their local school, and the usual variation between year groups seen in all schools. Assessments show that almost all year groups had attainment on entry to the reception class that were below the county averages and that half the year groups still in the school were well below the county average. The exception was the current Year 2 class who had close to average attainments when they entered the school. Even where the group was average or below average many children, despite the very good work done on this in the nursery, had well below average language skills. Over the reception year, pupils make good progress and achieve well in all aspects of their development. When the current Year 1 group completed their reception year, they had improved their attainments from a well below average base. Many had successfully gained the goals set for this age child (the early learning goals) and those who did not had made good progress towards them.
3. Both data from national tests and inspection evidence show that pupils make good progress and achieve well in English, mathematics and science during Years 1 and 2. The group of pupils who completed the end of Year 2 national tasks and tests in 2002, entered Year 1 with well below average attainments. Their results in the tasks and tests showed that these pupils had below the national average attainments in reading and mathematics and average attainments in writing. This means that this group had achieved well in Years 1 and 2 overall and very well in writing. Judged against other schools with a similar number of pupils taking free school meals, their results were average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. Standards have risen steadily since the year of the last inspection and are continuing to rise. Inspection evidence shows that the pupils achieve very well in writing, because very successful whole-school attention has been given to this, and well in reading and mathematics. At this point in the academic year, the pupils in Year 2 are attaining average standards in English and mathematics, but the rate of their progress seen in their books shows that they are well set to attain above average standards before the end of the year. Thus this group of pupils, who had a near average profile on entry to the reception year, are also achieving well.
4. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' spoken language develops well. Pupils increase the vocabulary they know and use and become increasingly able to ask and answer questions clearly and to give explanations of their thinking, for example being able to explain why they would use a particular type of glue to stick a given material in design and technology. All pupils learn to spell with increasing accuracy and to assemble simple, correctly punctuated sentences when writing. They write for different reasons, including writing poetry, letters and stories. Their handwriting, however, does not show such good development and work could often be neater and better presented. Basic skills in reading are well taught and this means that pupils, although they often lack some expression in their reading, can read

unfamiliar words with confidence and competence. In mathematics, pupils develop a range of mental and written competence. By Year 2, they can add and subtract two-digit numbers accurately and are beginning to be able to multiply and divide. They can describe shapes, giving simple properties, such as the number of edges and vertices, and can measure with some accuracy, for example measuring objects in the classroom.

5. The school's internal data from the testing of pupils at the end of Year 4 shows that pupils have made good progress over the two years. The Year 3 and 4 pupils are taught in three parallel mixed age classes. Last year, the school instituted a system whereby pupils are divided by attainment into sets for the teaching of English and mathematics. This has been a very successful move and pupils currently in Years 3 and 4 are making very good progress and are attaining average standards in English and mathematics. Pupils are achieving very well in these subjects. Spoken language continues to mature and pupils begin to be able to argue a point, giving some justification for what they say. They listen well to each other and to adults, for example listening to the explanation of what the candles on the advent wreath signify and showing an ability to discuss their meaning at a later date. They can draw parallels between this and the meaning of the lights in the Diwali celebration. Writing becomes increasingly accurate and, where relevant, imaginative. Standards in spelling and punctuation rise. Handwriting, however, is often too untidy. Pupils continue to expand the types of mathematical operation they can do in their heads and on paper. Their attainment is, however, somewhat affected by their lack of speed with this. This has been identified by teachers and is the subject of everyday work.
6. Currently standards in both Year 2 and Year 4 in science are average. Standards amongst the current Year 2 group are higher than they have been in previous years. Because pupils enter the school with below or well below average attainment, they are achieving well. Both knowledge of facts and the proper way to investigate within science are developed systematically. Pupils discuss their work well, demonstrating their knowledge. They have less to show in writing because they are not often enough given the opportunity to do this or to learn how to set out their practical work clearly.
7. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) overall are currently average but are rising rapidly as pupils have access to the ICT suite for a longer time. As each aspect of the subject is taught, pupils achieve well. Attainment in most other subjects largely meets the expectations set out in the National Curriculum for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils achieve in a satisfactory way. Pupils in Year 2 also attain the standards set out in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and achieve in a satisfactory way. Older pupils, however, are currently achieving well in religious education and standards in Year 4 are above the expected level. As in science, however, pupils show their sound knowledge, skills and understanding of other subjects through their oral work but their written work is only just satisfactory because they do not have many opportunities to develop skills in this. Standards in physical education are above average and pupils achieve well. Very good attention is given to the teaching of the full range of physical skills and this pays dividends in the standards seen.
8. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with more complex difficulties, are well taught both in class and in withdrawal groups. As a result, they make very good progress against their previous attainments and against the targets set for them. This means that they achieve very well in both English and mathematics and do well in other subjects. There are three pupils with English as an additional language, but these pupils speak English fluently and make progress in line with their peers. Pupils of higher attainment also make good progress. The school is very aware of their needs, particularly in English and mathematics, and they are given good teaching in class and encouragement through some extra activities. This enables them to achieve well.

9. The headteacher and staff have make very good use of data from testing to set targets and to ensure that these are met. Data is, for example, used very well in organising groups and selecting pupils, not all of whom have low attainment but whom the school thinks could be achieving better, to receive extra help. The attainment of groups, for example boys and girls, is also carefully monitored. The school has identified some differences in the achievements of boys and girls and has taken good action to try to overcome this. During the inspection, there was no evidence of this difference in the lessons observed or the work seen, showing that action has been successful.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good and make a very positive contribution to their learning. Relationships are excellent. Parents are very pleased with the attitudes and values encouraged by the school and are extremely happy with the standards of behaviour achieved. Pupils like being in school. All aspects of pupils' attitudes, values and personal development, found to be good at the time of the last inspection, have further improved.
11. In school, pupils' attitudes towards learning are very good. Most pupils demonstrate a very positive attitude to their work and are keen to learn. They listen to their teachers carefully and politely, ask and answer questions and willingly offer their own ideas and suggestions. Pupils settle to work quickly. They collaborate well, sharing resources, taking turns and listening to each other. They work very well together, particularly when they are given practical work to complete in groups. The reward system in lessons and the 'praise assemblies' have a positive impact on the pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Pupils are enthusiastic about the activities offered to them outside lessons. They particularly enjoy the visits they make to places of educational interest.
12. Overall, behaviour is very good. The headteacher, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and the pupils themselves have high expectations of the behaviour that is acceptable in school. Behaviour at break and lunchtime is very good. Pupils play happily together in mixed-age and gender groups. They are enthusiastic to help in school. The youngest pupils willingly clear up equipment after lessons and actively seek to do jobs such as taking the register to the school office. There is a very detailed list of duties that Year 4 pupils happily perform, for example organising the toys in the playground, the music for assembly and answering the telephone. The house captains are very proud of the duties that they perform, especially in relation to the reward system operated by the school. Each day a group of Year 3 pupils very successfully acts as 'playground pals', wearing distinctive green caps to show their status and availability to help any pupil who might be sad or lonely. There are no documented incidents of bullying in the school and parents and pupils alike report that this is the case. Similarly, all minority groups are very successfully included and there is an absence of racism. There have been no exclusions from the school.
13. Relationships between all members of the school community are excellent and this has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Pupils relate very well to their teachers, to other adults with whom they come into contact and to one another. There is an atmosphere in the school that allows pupils to have a friendly and relaxed attitude to adults. There are frequent informal conversations between adults and pupils that enable them both to gain social skills and to feel safe and secure. The trust that is developed between adults and pupils means that pupils want to do as they are asked. This leads to them making greater effort in class to meet the targets that have been set for them. Pupils with special educational needs greatly benefit from this, building and maintaining a level of self-esteem that increases the success of their learning and should stand them in good stead in the future. Pupils are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. There is a very good emphasis by the school on caring, ensuring that pupils understand the impact their actions have on others. Pupils applaud other pupils' successes both in class and in assembly. They care about their teachers, each other and the environment. Pupils show a respect for the views of others, both in the way they listen to each other and in the way they consider the culture and traditions of others in lessons such as religious education

and in assemblies. They are aware of some of the bigger issues in the world. Older pupils, for example, talk with some concern about the effects of pollution. In this, pupils' spiritual and moral development is very good.

14. Most pupils want to come to school. Their attendance is currently broadly in line with the national average. Most pupils arrive punctually in the morning and do not delay the start to the school day. Unauthorised absence is well below the national average. However, authorised absence is higher than most primary schools and there is a substantial number of families who take their children out of school in term time for holidays. In the term of the inspection, there were over 30 instances of holidays taken in school time, many for the maximum of two weeks.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The teaching and learning of children in the Foundation Stage (the nursery and reception classes) has been maintained since the time of the last inspection and is good overall. It has some particularly strong features in the nursery class. The children are rapidly made to feel safe and secure and are helped to learn the expectations and routines of school life. Basic skills are carefully taught and there is a sensible and effective emphasis on language and communication. The teachers in both year groups consider the needs of all the children and this enables all, including those who have the most difficulty and the higher attaining children, to learn well in all aspects of their development.
16. The overall quality of teaching and learning for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good. It is very good for pupils in Years 3 and 4 because it is more consistent. In each subject taught, teachers in all four year-groups have taken good care to ensure that they have the skills and expertise they need. In ICT, for example, effective training has recently taken place that enables teachers and teaching assistants to assist pupils to build their skills well. Teachers show an enthusiasm for each subject that is conveyed to the pupils and they, in their turn, express interest and liking for many different subjects. This enthusiasm means that pupils are prepared to put in that 'extra effort' that keeps them concentrating well even when they find the work hard. Boys and girls by and large display the same enthusiasm for subjects and put in the same amount of effort. The overall lack of difference between the learning of boys and girls is in large part due to the careful thought and attention that has been put into designing a stimulating and cohesive curriculum.
17. Teachers plan lessons conscientiously, but there is a significant difference seen between the quality of planning in different subjects and between classes. The best planning is seen in English and mathematics and in Years 3 and 4. This helps the consistency of the teaching in these classes and is instrumental in making it more successful. In Years 3 and 4, the planning shows very clearly what it is expected that pupils of different ages and attainments will learn over a course of lessons and during each session. This enables teachers to target very accurately their teaching. In some of the other planning seen, teachers are only writing what pupils will do in a session and, in some lessons, this means that learning, although always satisfactory, could be better. The majority of lessons seen during the inspection were good, but in those that were only satisfactory, it was a lack of precision in the teaching, caused by a lack of precision in the planning, that needed improvement.
18. Basic skills in both English and mathematics are carefully taught. Pupils are given daily practice in reading and writing. Due emphasis is given to elements such as spelling and punctuation. Although handwriting is taught, standards and expectations are not as high in this aspect of work as they should be. Careful attention is given to teaching pupils to improve their spoken and written language and pupils are effectively helped to increase the range of vocabulary they are able to use. Basic computational skills are also regularly taught and practised and, although some older pupils still lack speed in mental operations, pupils gradually and effectively build their mathematical competence. English (including literacy) and mathematics (including numeracy) are well taught in Years 1 and 2 and very well taught in Years 3 and 4. The difference in the quality of teaching is due to the

precision of planning and teaching discussed above and the impact that this has on the pupils' learning.

19. Teachers manage pupils very well. The relaxed atmosphere in the school and the excellent relationships are created by the way pupils are managed. There is an expectation that pupils will behave and concentrate well and pupils are anxious to fulfil this because they like and trust their teachers. Lessons are very orderly and this creates an atmosphere in which pupils can learn well. Teachers use a good number of ways of organising their classes. They use whole-class teaching well, for example when teaching pupils mental strategies for adding 9, 19, 29... to another number in a mathematics lesson. They give opportunities for pupils to work in pairs, for example when researching Roman life using either books or the Internet. There are also opportunities to work in larger groups when, for instance, composing a piece of 'night' music. This variety of activity helps pupils to maintain interest and enthusiasm over each day and aids successful learning. Teachers also try to make learning more relevant to the pupils by linking what they learn in each subject. At the present time this is largely done by subject matter, for example pupils make mosaics in an art and design lesson which links with what they are learning in history. Although some work has begun to link work via what is being learned, for example using ICT research skills taught in dedicated lessons in other subjects, these links are not as systematic as they could be. Hence, the most is not always made of opportunities for pupils to consolidate skills learned in one subject by using them in another or to use the skills learned to facilitate learning in another subject.
20. Teachers know their pupils' needs well because they make careful assessments of what they know, understand and can do. The use of such information is much improved since the time of the last inspection and means that, by and large, pupils of different ages and attainments are given suitable activities to do in each lesson. On occasion, however, in subjects other than English and mathematics, a lack of precision in planning means that pupils are not sure enough about what they should be learning to do this to maximum effect. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good in English and mathematics and good in other subjects. The part played in this by well-trained teaching assistants is very positive. Teachers also are very careful to offer support as necessary in class. Pupils of higher attainment are also well catered for. Teachers are well aware of the need to correctly challenge such pupils, and are generally successful in so doing. The most successful and useful assessments made are those by teachers of Years 3 and 4 because they are more closely linked to precise objectives for what will be learned in the lesson. This enables the teachers to encourage pupils to identify whether they have learned what was aimed for in the lesson and to be aware of ways in which they could improve. This also makes the marking of work more helpful. Although conscientiously completed, marking is not always closely linked to what should have been learned and therefore is not always as helpful as it could be.
21. Time is generally used well in lessons. Lessons start promptly and pupils are expected to work at good pace and to complete a lot of work in the time available. Teachers make good use of the resources in the school to make lessons interesting. Good use of a range of materials in an art and design lesson, for example, gave pupils an opportunity to use clay as well as drawing materials in making representations of houses. The school has just acquired some 'interactive' whiteboards (a system by which information stored on computer can be projected onto a large white screen and changed or added to as part of the lesson). Although the teachers are still learning how to use these to their full potential, advantages are already evident in the way that teachers can prepare a lesson but then change and adapt it according to how pupils get on. Other uses of ICT are evident, for example the use of tape recorders to allow pupils to listen to and evaluate their work in music, but the subject co-ordinator is correct in identifying that this is an area of resource use that needs further work in order to fully exploit its potential in assisting pupils to learn. Satisfactory use is made of homework to extend the learning done in school. Pupils are expected to read and practise spellings regularly at home and other work associated with topics studied given on a more occasional basis.

22. The quality of teaching and learning in other individual subjects is at least satisfactory and is good in science, art and design, history, ICT and physical education throughout the school and in design and technology, music and religious education in Years 3 and 4.

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

23. The well-planned curriculum in the Foundation Stage is carefully constructed from the national 'Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage'. Provision is well planned with a wide range of types of activity that support the children's learning well.
24. The curriculum in Years 1 to 4 is suitably broad and balanced, made very relevant to the pupils, and effectively meets the statutory requirements for National Curriculum subjects, religious education and collective worship. It provides well for personal, social and health education and drugs and sex education. The time set aside for 'circle time' (pupils talking as a class about personal and social issues) contributes effectively to social and moral development.
25. As at the time of the last report, the curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education at both the end of Year 2 and Year 4. The setting of Years 3 and 4 into ability groups for English and mathematics has contributed to the raising of standards over the past two years by enabling members of staff to focus upon a particular range of abilities. This has resulted in all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the higher attaining pupils, being given work at the right level.
26. The strategies employed for the teaching of English and mathematics are good and are ensuring that pupils achieve well. In the past, the school correctly identified a need to raise standards in English. Consequently, additional time was given to the teaching of English and this has reduced the time available for other subjects. This time allocation has been successful and standards have risen in English. Links between subjects are not yet, however, consistently exploited. In some subjects, notably history, some teachers are beginning to forge close links with the English subject matter that has been recently taught. This good practice not only gives pupils opportunities to practise their skills, but also shows pupils that literacy skills have uses beyond the English lessons. This is not yet an established feature of all planning but, where it does occur, pupils gain benefits and understanding. In the same way, more consistent and systematic links between mathematics and ICT and other subjects would give pupils greater opportunities to practise and extend their skills and knowledge.
27. The school's promotion of equality of opportunity is very good. There is a sound understanding that 'equal' does not necessarily mean 'the same'. This results in all pupils being treated as individuals with their specific needs addressed. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' extra-curricular activities. Seasonal sporting activities are made available to both boys and girls. Other clubs include art and crafts, recorders, country dancing and computing.
28. The school provides very well for pupils with special educational needs. There are many well thought through procedures which guide practice, enabling pupils to make very good progress towards achieving their targets in English and mathematics and good progress in other subjects. All pupils are fully included in all school activities. Additional support by the special educational needs co-ordinator and teaching assistants is of a high quality and enables pupils to work alongside their peers in most aspects of their schoolwork. Where pupils are withdrawn from class for extra help, consideration is given not only to the quality and usefulness of this work but also what is being missed in the classroom. A good system for withdrawing pupils from different lessons on different weeks, and for ensuring that they do not miss the introductory part of each lesson, makes this provision very successful. Good resources and learning approaches are used daily to make sure that pupils enjoy their work. There are good links with the local authority support services and with community

schools. Good levels of training for staff ensure that individual needs are effectively met in most lessons.

29. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is good overall. There are suitable procedures to enable staff to identify pupils with particular talents in different areas of learning. As yet, this is most successful in identifying ability in academic subjects, but there are some instances, for example in music, where pupils with other talents are recognised and helped to achieve well. The school makes good use of the local authority provision for higher attaining pupils and the pupils gain from the headteacher's particular expertise in the field.
30. The school's links with the community to enhance the pupils' learning are outstanding and have strengthened even further since the last inspection. The school organises an impressive range of visits and visitors to support and enliven many subjects of the curriculum. The school holds very successful 'themed weeks' that involve interesting visitors or are linked to relevant trips out. Trips to places such as Hartlebury Castle Museum, Bishop's Wood and other sites charting the area's industrial heritage help bring history and science to life. Pupils have a very good understanding of different faiths because they have first-hand experience of their places of worship. Where at all possible the school arranges for pupils to walk to places of interest in Bromsgrove to strengthen their knowledge of their local area. The school values its important position in the community and is also quick to celebrate pupils' achievements outside school. In an assembly, for example, the headteacher and pupils applauded the award of Brownie and swimming badges. The excellent use of interesting visits and the strong links with the local area improve pupils' achievement because they make learning fun.
31. The school has very good constructive relationships with its partner institutions and particularly strong links with the other schools in the Bromsgrove 'Pyramid' (a group of schools that 'feed' the same comprehensive school). Sidemoor works together closely with the other first and middle schools to ensure learning is smooth and progressive as the Year 4 pupils move on to their next school. An annual planning day involving all schools in the pyramid is very useful in tackling and resolving teaching and support issues, so pupils benefit from a coherent and well-planned curriculum across all stages. Continuity of education is ensured through an agreement with the middle school regarding which aspects of the four-year programme of study, from Year 3 to Year 6, is taught in all the first schools in the town.
32. The headteacher and many members of her staff contribute very well to the educational community by sharing their expertise with other schools and national organisations. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and nursery class teacher have professionally supported other local schools and several members of staff have contributed to academic conferences and publications. Not only has this extended the staff's professional horizons and added to management expertise in the school, but it has also put a 'feather in the cap' for Sidemoor.
33. The provision for spiritual education is now very good, which is an improvement from the last time the school was inspected. There are opportunities for prayer and reflection in the assemblies that teach pupils the value of quiet moments. In the religious education lessons, there are opportunities to talk about feelings of sadness and joy, which encourages pupils to consider the way emotions affect them. Pupils are also taught that people belong to different faiths. They learn about the 'specialness' and importance of artefacts as they visit local churches, temples and synagogues. This is likely to bring them a greater understanding and respect for the way of life of others that should stand them in good stead as they grow older. There is specific provision to develop pupils' self-esteem. Pupils are actively encouraged to appreciate their own and others' talents, beliefs and achievements. They are taught to respect their teachers, each other and the other members of the school community. Empathy and compassion are encouraged through learning about the lives of others in subjects like geography and through the support of charitable events such as 'Children in Need'. An

understanding of beauty is encouraged through many areas of the curriculum including physical education, religious education, art and design and science.

34. There is improvement in the provision for moral education since the time of the last inspection and this is now very good. In the Foundation Stage the pupils are taught to accept the rules and conduct of the school and learn the difference between right and wrong. These are the firm foundations on which the rest of the school builds. The school consistently provides a clear moral code. The pupils are encouraged to see the importance of making right choices and taking responsibility before their actions. The positive response to the school's efforts is demonstrated in their attitudes to one another, to staff and to those who need help or support. The adults in the school community are strong role models and the pupils are actively encouraged to be proud of their school.
35. The provision for social education is also improved and is now very good. Relationships within the school contribute to a climate in which pupils feel happy and secure and relate well to each other and to adults within the school. They relate to visitors with confidence. A sense of community both in and out of school is encouraged. Pupils are encouraged to learn about and take part in a democratic process through the school council. Wider social responsibilities are cultivated through support for charities both local and national. Racial equality is expected. The school has a very good attitude of care. Older pupils have responsibilities around the school that they perform in a very mature and dignified way. Teachers enable pupils to recognise the value of taking responsibility within their class. The impressive range of school trips encourages social development. Personal and social education lessons and 'circle times' help to promote social awareness. The residential week organised by the school for the oldest pupils has a very good impact on the pupils' social development.
36. The provision for cultural education continues to be good. Pupils are encouraged to develop a good understanding of their own culture, for example taking part in many Christian celebrations throughout the year such as Harvest Festivals and Christmas concerts. Pupils are given contact with a range of cultural experiences including those of the major faiths, for example Year 2 pupils have visited a synagogue and visits are arranged to a Hindu temple. Another trip involves visiting all the churches in Bromsgrove. Pupils gain an awareness of several aspects of art and music in western cultures. Through local studies, pupils are developing a cultural identity in Bromsgrove as well as being well prepared for life in a multicultural society. Parents are very happy with the values the school conveys to their children.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school has very good procedures for the welfare and guidance of all its pupils. The genuine thoughtfulness and care of the staff is methodically organised into formalised procedures, so that monitoring and checking is thorough and accurate.
38. The school has improved its procedures for child protection since the last inspection and they are now very good. The policy is well written to reflect the school's own approach to the protection of the pupils in its care, rather than simply adopting the county model. Both the co-ordinator for special educational needs and the headteacher are the persons designated to liaise with the child protection agency. They undertake regular training and ensure that all staff in the school, whether teachers, assistants or lunchtime supervisors, are well aware of what to do should they have concerns. In addition, one teaching assistant has attended specific child protection training, because of her close contact with pupils in her support role.
39. Systems for ensuring the health and safety of the pupils are very good and have improved since the last inspection. Risk assessments are frequent, well documented and focus on all aspects of learning, both in school and out on trips. The school is quick to sort out any potential hazards. There is a good number of staff with first aid certificates. Lunchtime supervisors out in the playground are able to

deal with minor grazes and injuries on the spot, because they have useful bags containing basic first aid equipment. All injuries are carefully recorded, with especial attention given to bumps on the head. Parents find the weekly 'drop in' session with the school nurse very helpful to sort out child health queries and to allay any worries.

40. Overall, the school has good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Registers are very neat, tidy and clear. They are monitored daily by the school office staff and scrutinised carefully by the education welfare officer on her monthly visit. The school and the education welfare service work effectively and sensitively to support families who are having attendance or punctuality problems. The very effective monitoring of attendance has resulted in practically no unauthorised absence. There is, however, a higher than average rate of authorised absence, often due to the taking of term time holidays. The school is currently not giving a sufficiently strong message that absence in term time not only detracts from the pupils' learning, but also is disruptive to the teachers and to the other pupils.
41. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very effective and have improved since the last inspection. Much is due to the successful raising of the pupils' self-esteem and encouraging pupils to feel good about themselves. Another key element to the successful behaviour management is the consistency in expectations and in the treatment of inappropriate behaviour. All parties in the school know the simple and sensible rules. The behaviour policy is thorough and accessible by parents and pupils. The lunchtime supervisors are very well included in managing behaviour at lunchtimes because they have a very useful handbook and have regular meetings with the senior staff. Display around the school is used well to promote good behaviour and celebrate the best work and talents of the pupils. Strategies to promote good behaviour are relevant and appreciated by pupils. In the Years 3 and 4 classes, the pupils work hard and behave well so they can move up the colourful 'zone board'. They strive to have their name on 'glorious gold' and nobody wants to be on 'yukky yellow' for long! Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are exemplary and very much based on the same very effective principles underlying the promotion of moral development and behaviour management. Any incidents of inappropriate behaviour and pupils are very well supported, often with their parents' involvement, to understand what they have done wrong and how they can behave better. Personal development is monitored effectively via notes in box files in each classroom, enabling the teachers to report back perceptively to the parents on how each pupil has matured over the year.
42. Overall, there are good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and for acting upon these assessments when planning work. Children in the nursery and reception classes are carefully assessed and work is planned to match their needs. Attention is particularly focused on the early identification of children with special needs. Systems in English and mathematics are very good. Very good use is made of data, not only to set whole-school targets and inform planning, but also to identify particular individual needs and provide for these to ensure that all pupils make at least good progress. Individuals are also set targets in simple language, for example 'to remember to use a capital letter at the beginning of a new sentence', and these help pupils to targets their efforts efficiently. Pupils are well aware of these targets and work hard to meet them. Procedures for assessment in other subjects are satisfactory. Teachers set targets for learning for the end of each unit of work and they assess against these as work progresses, this helps them to plan subsequent lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. The school has effective links with parents. It enjoys the confidence of all the different communities that it serves. Parents are very appreciative of the school and all that it does for their children. Although the attendance at the pre-inspection meeting and the return of questionnaires was relatively small, those parents who did respond were almost unanimously supportive of the school. The parents

and childminders met at the school gates during the inspection were also very happy with the education and guidance provided. Parents particularly like the fact that their children look forward to coming to school and enjoy their time there. Many also commented that they are positively encouraged to be involved in their children's education and school life.

44. The quality of information provided to the parents is good. Since the last inspection, the school has increased the amount of useful detail to parents on what their children are learning. For example, the pupils in Years 3 and 4 bring home their work planner that, amongst other useful information, lets parents know what topics are being covered and their children's targets for each term. In many aspects the quality of the information provided is very good. The school has held a number of well thought of curriculum evenings to inform parents about the topics to be taught, as well as the procedures surrounding national tests and the transfer to middle school. The excellent school website provides a mine of information on all aspects of school life to parents and the wider community. The weekly newsletters are impressive in keeping parents up to date on what has been happening in the school, including sharing the celebration of the 'pupils of the week' and listing what letters and notices should have been received over the past week. A wide range of policies and documents are provided to parents in eye-catching colours and handy sizes to draw their attention to important information. Annual reports are of satisfactory quality overall and provide useful information on what pupils know and understand in the full range of subjects. Occasionally, however, they are not sufficiently clear in letting parents know how their children have progressed in each subject over the year. Parents have a good opportunity to add comments to the report, but they are not sufficiently updated on progress against past targets (as identified in the planners). Overall, parents are kept well informed of decisions taken by the governors, but there is insufficient initial consultation of parents on policies and developments that affect the whole school and its stakeholders to ensure the principles of best value are followed.
45. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at school and at home is good. The school is working very well to encourage parents to share in what their children are learning, as evidenced by the wealth of good quality information going home. There are suitable home-school agreements in place. Many parents respond well and support learning effectively by helping their children to learn their spellings and to do their other homework. However, reading diaries show that a significant number of parents do not regularly sit and share books with their children. The school is aware that parental support of reading could be improved and a 'Share' scheme is being introduced for Year 1 pupils and their parents next term. Parents are keen to see their children succeed and do well at school, but too many are not fully aware of how taking them out of school for two weeks holiday in term time impedes their children's learning and disrupts teaching.
46. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good. Parental expertise or 'an extra pair of hands' enhances many school activities. Several parents regularly help in the school with reading or organising resources, such as the Story Sacks. The numerous trips greatly benefit from parental help, as do the 'themed' weeks. During the inspection, a number of parents enthusiastically gave up their time to be involved in the various activities surrounding the Eid celebrations. The active friends' association organises successful social and fund-raising events. As at the last inspection, parents make a valuable contribution to the success of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. Both the leadership and the management of the school are very good. Over the time since the last inspection, this has enabled the school to improve in all main aspects of its work. Standards have risen and continue to rise. The headteacher leads the school very well. She has a very clear vision for the quality and style of education she feels the school should provide. Her quiet but determined management gives a very firm steer to the work of the school and the direction and quality of the improvements made. There are clear, explicit aims for the work and these are seen in all aspects of

school life. The headteacher has created a very strong team and is very well supported by all staff, in particular the deputy headteacher, the governors and the parents. The quality of this teamwork was clearly evident during the time that, firstly the headteacher was away from the school for a year and subsequently the deputy was absent for a term, both acting as headteachers for other schools. During this time, there was no reduction in the speed or quality of the improvements in the school, standards continued to rise and the quality of the education provided was seen by the parents to have been fully maintained. This strong team shows very good commitment and capacity to succeed in raising standards still further.

48. Responsibilities are well delegated. All teachers take a leadership and management role in co-ordinating one or more subjects. All subjects are well led, in that each co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the provision in the subject and has developed plans for its improvement. Each co-ordinator shows good management skills in the day-to-day management of the subject. For example, they ensure that there are appropriate resources and that staff have the support they need in updating their knowledge. As each subject becomes a focus for school improvement, co-ordinators have suitable opportunities to manage change and this they do effectively. In ICT, for example, the development of the ICT suite, the need for developing staff knowledge and latterly the introduction of the interactive whiteboards have been very well managed and standards in the subject have risen as a result. The development of mathematics and English have been similarly very well led and managed. The school actively and successfully seeks to manage the inclusion of all groups of pupils. The special educational needs co-ordinator is very efficient and effective. The management of the provision is thoughtful and thorough and ensures the good progress seen. There is equally thoughtful provision for pupils of higher attainment, including a few gifted or talented pupils. Good care is taken to track the attainment of boys and girls and some successful measures, for example, the improvement of the quantity of fiction books of interest to boys, have been taken as a result. Racial equality and harmony are very effectively promoted through the very good moral, social, spiritual and cultural education provided and through explicit and useful policies.
49. The monitoring of the school's work is good overall, and there are some very good aspects within this. Very good use is made of the data from assessments to check the progress of individuals and groups. Decisions about how to group pupils and where to give extra support are made as a result. There is a good amount of checking of the quality of teaching and areas for development are identified and acted upon. At present, however, there is no clear system for identification of strengths in the teaching and of how these will be shared for the benefit of other pupils. While co-ordinators and the headteacher look at teachers' planning on a regular basis, they do not look at this sufficiently critically and, as a result, there are considerable differences in the quality and the effectiveness of this planning. The work that is done in monitoring the work of the school is used very well in directing improvement. The school development plan is a good document that directs change well. Staff and governors are all suitably involved in the drawing up of the plan and in the monitoring of its outcomes.
50. The governing body fulfils its function well. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and are justly proud of its achievements. There is good contact between the governors and the headteacher and a good balance between support and challenge maintained. The governors successfully aim to be part of the school team. All statutory duties are met. The governors have set appropriate performance targets for the headteacher. Targets have also been set for other staff members and these relate well both to the focus for school improvement and their individual professional needs.
51. The financial management of the school is good. All funds are well targeted to supporting the identified focus for school improvement. Money, such as that on the ICT suite, has been very well spent. Careful thought is given to the commitment of money to projects, such as having a non class based special needs co-ordinator and measures identified for monitoring whether this has an effect on standards. Money from specific grants has been used well. The money for early literacy support, for example, has been supplemented by the school and standards in Year 1 have been raised as a

consequence. Although the headteacher and governors have an outline of future spending, there are not yet long-term forecasts in the form of a long-term financial plan, and this is a relative weakness. In many aspects the school applies the principles of best value well. Careful comparison is made with other similar schools, the school is self-evaluative and self-challenging and there are suitable systems in place for competitive tendering when new projects are planned. There is not, however, a regular system for consulting parents about their opinion of the school. Day-to-day financial management is efficient. The school office is well run and presents to visitors a positive first impression of the school. The school has not had a financial audit for five years, but the recommendations from the last audit have been put in place.

52. Resources for all curriculum subjects are at least satisfactory in terms of quality and quantity. They are stored efficiently with due regard to accessibility. Good use is made of the outside school environment for most curriculum subjects and a range of visits and visitors add significantly to the school's use of resources that enrich the curriculum and raise standards. The library is a used well and all classes receive a library lesson each week. It is used very well during lessons to enable pairs of pupils to carry out research using paper-based materials, CD-Rom and the Internet. Positioned centrally, it offers ease of access to all but the nursery classes. It is well appointed and stocked with attractive books that are reviewed regularly both for suitability and interest and for deteriorating condition. Whilst the Dewey system enables pupils to practise the retrieval of non-fiction books, fiction books are not in alphabetical order and pupils are unable to practise their alphabetical skills, for example to find a second book written by an author they have enjoyed. The school also has a very good range of 'story sacks' (bags of objects that can be used to illustrate or 'act out' a book) prepared by staff and parents, that help bring books to life for the younger pupils.
53. The adequacy of accommodation is good. The whole school is brightly and attractively decorated. Walls are well used for a very good range of display to celebrate achievement and inform about the curriculum. The classrooms are a good size, light, airy and conducive to effective learning. The whole school is well maintained by the caretaker and cleaning staff. The new ICT suite is well positioned in a secure room and provides a valuable opportunity for pupils to concentrate on information and communication technology and this has raised standards in ICT. The nursery has well-planned, purpose-built accommodation. Although the school works hard to include the youngest pupils in whole-school activities, the nursery class's physical separation increases the difficulty of this. The outside play area used by all pupils is small and separated from the main school, but this is carefully managed and provides a good place for play and for physical education.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In order to further improve the education provided by the school, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- (1) Improve the consistency of teaching by:
 - identifying in all planning, what pupils of different ages and attainments will learn over a unit of work and in lessons and monitoring this planning carefully;
 - ensuring that all marking is of the same high quality and show pupils very clearly how they can improve their work.(see paragraphs 17-18,20,83,89,91,98,107,117,132)
 - (2) Further develop links between subjects by:
 - identifying how literacy, numeracy and ICT skills will be extended and consolidated through other subjects;
 - identifying ways in which learning in other subjects can be linked together;
 - identifying in planning where and when these links will occur.(see paragraphs 6,7,19,21,26,76,84,90,102-3,119,132)

Other issues that should be considered by the school:

Improve the quality of handwriting and presentation of written work.
(see paragraphs 5,73-4,83)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	45
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	5	16	13	11	0	0	0
Percentage	11	36	29	24	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	182
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	31

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	14	37

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	20	16	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	16	18
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	32	31	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (69)	86 (79)	92 (77)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	18	18
	Girls	15	14	15
	Total	31	32	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (69)	89 (77)	92 (95)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	178	0	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	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 – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.7
Average class size	26.7

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	169

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	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	24
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	465,862
Total expenditure	448,573
Expenditure per pupil	1,985
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,289
Balance carried forward to next year	14,939

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	232
Number of questionnaires returned	42

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school.	62	38	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren).	64	29	2	0	5
The school handles complaints from parents well.	38	31	0	0	31
The school gives me clear understanding of what is taught.	45	50	5	0	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress.	50	40	8	0	2
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work.	48	45	0	0	8
The school encourages children to get involved in more than lessons.	52	48	0	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home.	34	45	2	0	19
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren).	60	32	0	0	8
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour.	55	43	0	0	2
My child(ren) like(s) school.	74	21	0	0	5

As a result of an administrative error, a previous version of the questionnaire was used to canvas parental opinion. The results of this questionnaire (given above) confirm the very positive opinions expressed by parents at the pre-inspection meeting and during the inspection.

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

55. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught in three classes. Those in their first year of schooling (three- to four-year-olds) attend part time in a nursery class. About half of these children leave the school to attend their neighbourhood schools at the end of their nursery year. Older children, those aged between four and five, are taught either in the reception class or in a class where they are taught alongside Year 1 pupils. These children begin the year attending either full time or part time depending on their age, with the youngest children attending part time for the first term. At the time of the inspection, about two-thirds of the reception children were attending full time. Staff have very good relationships with the parents. There is a two-way flow of information. Parents feel that they are well informed about the progress of their children and they know that their children are both happy and settled as a result of effective induction procedures. As at the time of the previous inspection, children are given an effective start to their education and a very sound basis upon which to build.

Personal, social and emotional development

56. Nearly all the children enter the nursery with immature skills in personal, social and emotional development. By the time they leave the reception class, most are attaining the national goals for this age child (the early learning goals). This shows good achievement and reflects the good teaching over the nursery and the reception years. A very positive feature of the teaching is the way in which children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can do. Teaching of personal, social and emotional development is very good in the nursery class where skills, such as an ability to listen in a group or to share toys are established. These skills give the children a very positive start to their education and the advantages they give to the children are evident in the good learning seen in later years. Routines are taught in the nursery and are carried over into the reception classes. They give children an increasing amount of independence and a great feeling of security. It is seen as important that children learn to 'get on' in school and in all three classes, children live up to high expectations and do this very well. Children are taught to look after themselves. They quickly learn such skills as washing their hands before snack. Their skills in clearing up after activities are impressive!
57. Reception-age children respond well to teachers' high expectations and can, for example, move between the two classroom areas for different activities with a minimum of problem or fuss. They are confident in all the different settings, for example working happily in the computer suite with a teaching assistant or with the whole school in hymn practice. Children are encouraged to choose from a variety of activities and to persist with those they have chosen. Children are given opportunities to learn about the way of life of others and to begin to understand that there are differences between the way people live. The wide range of interesting and stimulating activities that had been planned to celebrate Eid, for example, was used well to give reception children opportunity to make and taste food with which they were unfamiliar. The reception children also showed an enjoyment of new activities, such as putting henna Mendi patterns on the palms of their hands. Great care is taken by the nursery and reception teachers to ensure that the children mix together as part of a Foundation Stage group and this adds to the effectiveness of the education provided over the two years they are within this.

Communication, language and literacy

58. Communication, language and literacy are very well taught in the nursery class and well taught in the reception year. In all three classes, the children enjoy listening to stories and readily share books with

each other and with adults. All the adults use talk to good effect and are good, active listeners. They show children that they value their efforts at communicating. Adults encourage children to talk and are good at talking to the children as they undertake activities. Vocabulary is developed through exciting and stimulating activities, for example in the nursery class, children watched with awe as a star magically changed after being put into a box. This encouraged the introduction of adjectives such as 'shiny' 'large' 'rough' and even 'translucent'. It is the quality and range of such activities in the nursery class that make the teaching particularly good and enable children, some of whom have very weak language skills when they come into the school, to be able to make clear their thoughts. Children are shown how to use language in a variety of different situations. In the reception class, for example, a teaching assistant helped children to extend their language skills as they acted out the story of 'Going on a Bear Hunt'. With the skilful help of the teaching assistant, the children gained a better understanding of the characters in the book. They became actively involved in using language to describe what they were doing; copying the teaching assistant's example and answering her carefully structured questions.

59. Early reading and writing skills are taught well. Children in the nursery are encouraged to enjoy books. Children will choose to sit down with a book, turning the pages, sometimes sharing, sometimes on their own. There is even a book box in the 'outdoor classroom'. Children's attention is drawn to the written word when books are shared with an adult and there is good use made of labels in all areas of the classroom and the outdoor area. This good practice is continued in the reception class. In the bear hunt activity described above, for example, the teaching assistant encouraged the children to turn the pages in the book, in order to understand the sequence of the story and to refer to the pictures to help them read the words. Most children in the reception classes understand the concept of a word and are beginning to get clues about the text from pictures. Children in both the nursery and the reception classes have opportunities to practise 'writing'. In the nursery class these are rightly planned to be part of other activities. A child in the nursery spent a sustained period of time making vertical marks on a blackboard outside whilst others made 'lists' at the writing table. These good opportunities to develop writing skills continue in the reception year. Overall, all children achieve well in communication, language and literacy over the nursery and reception years but, as they start from a low base, few are set to meet the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

Mathematical development

60. Mathematical development is well taught in both nursery and reception classes. In the nursery class, good emphasis is given to children learning to count, initially by rote and then by counting objects. Counting is made interesting by the provision of a wide variety of different things to count. All children were, for example, entranced, leaning forward, open mouthed as the teacher opened a succession of gold boxes to reveal a number of brightly coloured Christmas tree stars. The children were enthusiastic to join in and count the stars. The teacher reinforced the need for accuracy, 'careful counting', as the children volunteered the names for the numbers. Good use is also made of number songs and rhymes to help the children to remember number names and to understand number order. Good opportunities are given to consolidate mathematical learning in the 'free choice' activity time. Children, for example, chose to count the door numbers that were nailed to the fence, touching them as they went and then singing the song learned during the lesson, all quite independently.
61. Good teaching in the reception classes was evident in the teachers' effective knowledge and understanding of how to teach mathematics to young children. This enables them to structure the children's learning so that they make good progress. There is a good mix of direct teaching and practical activity, for instance the notion of 'pairs' was taught and then consolidated by a practical activity in which the children sorted and counted pairs of socks. The children were confident and enthusiastic to join in and talk about the activity. Methods for doing number work mentally are taught well. Older reception year children, for example, were very clearly taught a strategy for working out

doubles of numbers under five. Good use is being made of ICT to assist mathematical learning. Children learn how to control a remote control toy and higher attaining children can already program this with a set of instructions to move it to find a matching sock. Most reception children know the names of basic shapes but others confuse cylinder and sphere. Children achieve well in both the nursery and reception classes and about half are set to achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning by the end of the reception year. Although their progress is good, their attainments remain below average, because of their low initial attainment.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

62. This aspect of children's development is well taught in both the nursery and the reception classes and children make good progress and achieve well. Because many elements of learning about the world are language based, however, and pupils' language skills are weak, attainment is still below average at the end of the reception year. Work is planned effectively to extend the children's knowledge about the world through a wide range of activities. Work is often focused around a theme and this helps children understand the relevance of what they learn. At the time of the inspection, the children in the nursery were learning about light and dark. They had been provided with a wealth of experiences. One boy, for example, was entranced with the house shape that he had made in the shadow theatre and asked everyone to see, whilst others were fascinated with the mirrors and plates of brightly coloured beads. The teacher helped the children make links in their learning as she talked about the reflections that they had observed in the puddles the previous day as she showed them how beads are reflected in a kaleidoscope. The children marvelled at the brightly coloured moving shapes and began to move them independently. In the reception classes, children are given opportunities to develop their sense of curiosity further. They investigated, for example, the way bubbles are formed and burst with a great deal of interest! Children in all three classes are helped to develop the language of time through careful use of time vocabulary such as 'before' and 'a long time ago'. Their sense of place is extended through good use of the local environment, for instance in taking well-planned walks about the school grounds and the neighbouring area.
63. The teaching of skills in information and communication technology is good. Children in the nursery show an interest in using computers. One child used a simple paint program to create a mass of uncontrolled lines whilst another used the mouse to operate the sound on a story program. By the time that they reach the reception class, children are beginning to learn how to program a toy and to use the tape recorder successfully. In a clearly planned activity to teach children how to 'log on' to the computer the children were confident and interested, responding well to the clear instructions of the teaching assistant, but needed help with finding the keys.
64. Well-planned activities in all three classes provide children with an awareness of other cultures and beliefs. They listened well as the teacher told them about the Advent calendar and they enthusiastically took part in acting out the Christmas story in the outdoor shed. Children learn nursery rhymes and songs that tell of other religions, beliefs and festivals such as Diwali and Hanukkah. As a result, many know and can name which candle must be left alight in the Hanukkah Menorah. Children in the reception classes learn about Eid, taking part in a wealth of activities from dressing up in traditional clothes to making sweets and having henna Mendi patterns on the palms of the hands.

Physical development

65. Overall, the teaching of physical development in lessons is good in both nursery and reception classes. Children are given plenty of time to explore and refine movements. In the nursery, for example, children pedal their wheeled toys, learning to manoeuvre them in the small outdoor area. Sometimes they collide but they are ready to learn how to avoid this. For example, during the inspection, the teacher suggested a strategy that the children used successfully. A climbing frame provides opportunities for large-scale movements such as climbing over, under, through, around and in

between. The teacher demonstrated a very good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum as she linked language with movement. She provided the words, and the opportunities for children to use these words, as they played on the equipment. They followed her good example saying “I want to go through” or “I want to go under”, learning language as well as physical skills. There is good provision for reception children to practise and develop a wide range of skills as they climb ladders in the hall, balance on beams and experiment with different ways of moving and making different body shapes. In all three classes, good opportunities are provided for pupils to learn to use tools and equipment, and skills are well taught. When using play dough, for instance, children in the nursery show that they are starting to use a range of tools and techniques safely whilst in the reception class children show increased competence as they cut out different sizes of circles in a mathematics based activity. Pupils learn well in all aspects of their physical development and by the end of the reception year, most reach the national goals set.

Creative development

66. Teaching of this aspect is good in both nursery and reception classes. The very rich learning environment provided by the light and dark topic in the nursery provided children with a wealth of creative experiences with many different materials. The story themes used in the reception classes are equally effective in this. Teachers’ sensitive interventions encourage children to gain experience in using a wide variety of materials and techniques. They learn, for instance, to use paintbrushes with water to paint one another’s shadows, whilst others make marks on blackboards. Their skills improve significantly, but many continue to need the assistance of an adult to remind them of the correct way of using equipment. In addition, children’s general lack of maturity is evident in the outcomes of their work in the art aspect of their creative development. Teachers encourage children to make choices, for example in the nursery class, choosing between gold and silver tinsel to weave in and out of the wire mesh of a hanging basket. Children are encouraged to use one object to represent another as they take part in ‘pretend’ play, in the nursery, for example, by using torches inside a big black and pretending it is the ‘dark, dark wood’ or struggling through the swirling snow, the mud and the forest when acting the ‘bear hunt’ in the reception classes.
67. Children are taught to sing and to play simple instruments. In the nursery, children join in favourite songs. They whisper and then increase the volume and follow the rhythm clapped by the teacher. They show an interest in the way that musical instruments sound, playing well with them even when independent of an adult. In a well-constructed reception class music lesson, well-chosen rhymes focused the children’s attention on speed, beat and rhythm. Careful questioning assisted the children in choosing a suitable instrument to represent an animal as an accompaniment to a spoken rhyme. Children make good progress in their creative development and most will achieve the early learning goals in the majority of the skills involved in this aspect by the time they enter Year 1.

ENGLISH

68. Standards in Year 2 and in Year 4 are overall average but with a growing number of pupils who are above average. Despite fluctuations in the standards attained by individual year groups in the intervening years, standards have risen since the last inspection. In 2000, standards were low and pupils were achieving poorly. Owing to a determined effort to improve attainment over the past two years, standards in Year 2 national tests have improved more than they have nationally. This rate of improvement is continuing and standards are rising throughout the school.
69. Pupils’ speaking and listening skills are overall below average when they enter the Year 1, although there are pupils whose skills are above this level. All teachers give pupils good opportunities to talk and to express their thoughts and ideas. They do this by asking clearly stated questions and by insisting on whole sentence replies rather accepting single word answers. This approach was demonstrated effectively in a Years 3 and 4 music lesson. The teacher demanded descriptive

language that enabled pupils to show their understanding of the mood, which the music they were composing was planned to evoke. Equally, pupils are helped to understand that it is expected that they will listen carefully to what their teachers are saying. This they do, resulting in the teachers' instructions being quickly understood, and enabling tasks to begin without undue delay. A feature of many lessons is that teachers seek opportunities to help pupils to expand their vocabularies. This good practice was evident during a Year 2 lesson where the story being followed included the words 'bellowed' and 'scurried'; these were carefully explained.

70. Owing to the very good relationships that exist within the school's community, pupils benefit from being able to talk to the teachers and other adults in social situations at break times and whilst moving along the corridors. The well-informed teaching assistants play a large part in helping to develop and encourage speaking skills, for example during a Year 1 role-play session of scenes from the Little Red Hen. Groups of pupils from Years 2 and 4 demonstrated their awareness that differing speech patterns are expected in particular situations during interviews with members of the inspection team. They obeyed the conventions of discussion by listening politely to their friends whilst waiting for their turn to speak. By Year 4, pupils' speaking skills are of average standard.
71. Pupils' reading standards are varied in all classes, covering a wide span of ability but overall are average by the time pupils leave the school. The above average readers usually have personal collections of books and often accompany their parents on family visits to the local library. They receive active encouragement to read at home and are heard to read regularly from an early age. The teaching of reading has been a priority in the school for a number of years; this has resulted in a steady improvement over time. When hearing pupils read, it was clear that by Year 2 the majority have been taught the skills of how to read unknown words. Pupils are taught phonics (the link between sounds and letters) systematically. They learn the sounds that single letters and groups of letters make. All but the weakest readers can put sounds together to do this. These pupils have not yet grasped the notion of looking at the whole word before beginning to sound out individual letters. There are also some weaknesses amongst a number of the average standard readers in the use of expression when reading. Although pupils often have good knowledge of punctuation, being able to say what to do when a comma is met, what a question mark or exclamation mark signifies and how speech marks indicate speech, they too often fail to use these clues when reading. The result is a flat, though technically accurate, delivery.
72. Learning about books and reference skills is effective. Pupils have good knowledge of how to gain information about a book from 'reading' the cover. By Year 2, they can give the author, illustrator, title and show the blurb. Pupils demonstrate use of the contents page and use the alphabet to find information by accessing the index. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction text, but are less sure of how to find a book on a particular subject in the library. By Year 4, pupils have added use of the glossary to their skills and use alphabetical understanding well when consulting dictionaries and thesauri. Higher attaining pupils can retrieve a non-fiction book using the school's Dewey system, and skim and scan for information using key words.
73. Standards in writing are average. Pupils are taught to form accurate individual letters from an early age. Whilst the presentation of work is sometimes of a high standard, by the end of Year 2, this is not a universal feature of pupils' workbooks. Some pupils do not grip their pens in a conventional manner and this can have a detrimental effect on their neatness and standard of presentation. By Year 2, the majority of pupils have secure knowledge that each sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. At this time, the higher attaining pupils are seeking to interest the reader with the use of descriptive words to describe characters and scenes. They write in the present and past tenses, for example, when describing a visit to a Victorian schoolroom and of their feelings during the experience of undergoing a Victorian lesson. This quality writing already has a beginning, developed middle section and an ending. Pupils' books show that most can spell commonly used words accurately.

74. By Year 4, the use of a cursive, joined style often has the effect of appearing to spoil presentation as pupils are still coming to terms with mastering their new skills. Also developing effectively is the understanding of the need to interest the reader. Pupils actively consider whether their first choice of word can be bettered and are beginning to form alternative versions from which to make a final choice. In a Year 4 lesson, when pupils were challenged to find alternative verbs, the original, "He ran across the field", caused suggestions including, "He dashed swiftly" and "He rushed aggressively" as pupils realised that an adverb could further increase the appeal to their readers. The use of poetic writing and imagery is also developed strongly, for example, "Devil snowstorms spurt out rainbows". Better writing can include accurate punctuation, use of paragraphs, new dialogue starting on a new line, writing in the first and third person and quite obvious attempts to gain and hold the reader's attention. The national guidelines for literacy are followed closely in planning and this results in pupils benefiting from experiencing a range of types of writing for different purposes as they move through the school.
75. The quality of teaching and learning in English in Years 1 and 2 is good. It is very good in Years 3 and 4. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Planning for lessons throughout the school is thorough and, owing to a careful use of assessment and recording procedures, pupils of all abilities receive tasks that challenge them, and enable them to make at least good progress. Pupils with special educational needs achieve in line with their peers because their needs are assessed and suitable tasks are planned for them. The well-informed teaching assistants who support them in class further successfully promote the learning of this group of pupils. During the inspection, it was clear that higher attaining pupils are receiving tasks that properly challenge their ability. As a result they learn well. The marking of pupils' work is regular and positive, offering encouragement and praise that is restrained and realistic. This means that when a particularly good piece of work receives a higher level of praise the pupils know that a significant improvement has been accomplished. Marking is usually used effectively to indicate areas of weakness that need to be addressed.
76. Pupils are managed very well. Daily routines are established so that there is little loss of time between activities. Classroom relationships are very good and this factor contributes to the pupils' very positive attitudes to learning. When called upon to do so, they co-operate in a friendly, sociable manner when sharing equipment and materials and they willingly collaborate within groups. Behaviour is also very good, in part owing to pupils' attitudes, but also because the pace of lessons is generally brisk leaving no time for off-task activities. The planning for the use of English in other subjects is not yet complete. There are, however, examples of relevant and well-managed planning, for example in history lessons. Having learned about the past tense, pupils in Year 2 were given opportunities to demonstrate their understanding by writing about the past following a visit to Hartlebury Museum. Similarly, in a Years 3 and 4 lesson, pupils were expected to use their reference skills, to find information from a variety of books and other secondary sources, before talking to their classmates about what they had discovered. This very good practice needs to be adopted as efficiently for all subjects. The use of ICT also requires expansion, for example, to enable pupils to carry out first drafts on screen before subsequent editing and redrafting.
77. The decision to teach pupils in Years 3 and 4 in three ability groups is working effectively in enabling teachers to plan for a concentrated range of ability and for members of each set to receive inputs and tasks focused upon their particular requirements. As a consequence, the overall quality of teaching and learning in English in these two year groups is now very good. Pupils with special educational needs, for example, are gaining from receiving whole lessons devoted specifically to their needs. This includes individual attention to speaking and listening and to reading. Higher attaining pupils are also well catered for and, in addition, benefit from being included in the group formed by local schools to offer enrichment experiences to pupils identified as gifted and talented. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs and those with higher attainment make very good progress in line with their peers. Although the results of testing have shown differences in the attainment of boys and girls,

during the inspection no significant whole-school differences were noted. Teachers are aware of possible differences and are providing reading materials and tasks focused on areas of interest to boys.

78. The quality of leadership and management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator receives very good support from the headteacher and the literacy support governor. She is knowledgeable and experienced, keeps up to date with the requirements for the subject by regular attendance at in-service training and by reading. She enjoys the active support of her colleagues, all of whom show a determination to raise standards. The analysis of the statutory and optional tests is good. Weaknesses in reading and reading comprehension have been addressed for some years; two years ago, following a decline in writing standards, consideration was focused on raising standards in this area also. These twin priorities have resulted in improvement above the national trend so that standards are currently at average levels. Whole staff involvement with decision-making is a good feature of the school and gives each member a clear insight into why changes are made. The portfolio of assessed and levelled examples of pupils' work is an example of staff involvement in a process that gave all staff understanding of what each level of attainment should include. The co-ordinator is freed from classroom duties in order to carry out necessary monitoring duties that include the inspection of planning, scrutiny of work in pupils' books and visiting classrooms in order to encourage high standards in teaching and learning.

MATHEMATICS

79. Since the time of the last inspection, standards in the end of Year 2 national tests have risen at a faster rate than they have nationally. Inspection evidence shows standards in both Year 2 and Year 4 are currently average. The school uses its analysis of assessment data well to identify areas of weakness and set challenging targets for its pupils, and this is helping standards to rise. The subject is now taught in attainment groups (sets). This has had a positive effect in driving up standards. It is proving particularly effective in Years 3 and 4 and pupils are currently making very good progress and achieving very well. Both lower and higher attaining pupils are identified and their needs met through the system of setting and through extra support in small groups. Across the school, as a result of the good support that they receive from teachers and teaching assistants, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. There is no discernable difference in the progress of girls to that of boys.
80. Good use of the National Numeracy Strategy has had a positive impact upon the quality of the teaching and learning and, consequently, upon pupils' rates of progress and levels of attainment. The strategy has given structure to the scheme of work and ensures that that pupils are building on previous learning as they progress through the school. Lessons are well planned and clear learning objectives are shared with pupils. All pupils know what is expected of them and try hard to do their best. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. There are classes where pupils are eager to contribute, are excited and interested in their learning and take great delight in achieving the correct result. The presentation of pupils' work is variable. In some work seen, there is a lack of care where pupils have drawn shapes without a ruler whereas in other classes, careful accurate measurements are made.
81. Number is well taught. By Year 2, pupils are competent in using small numbers when adding and subtracting. They can use their knowledge in practical situations, such as giving 'change' in problems involving 'shopping'. They calculate mentally with reasonable speed and begin to explain how they have worked something out. In the top set, Year 4 pupils accurately use number facts and strategies that they have learned in order to solve problems and multiply and divide with two- and three-digit numbers. They have a quick recall of multiplication tables and know and understand the correct terminology. Middle ability pupils can add two-digit numbers but this takes them some time to accomplish and this lack of speed reduces their overall attainment.

82. At the time of the inspection pupils in Year 2 were working towards a more secure understanding of two- and three-dimensional shapes. They know the terms 'cuboid', 'cylinder' and 'cone'. Most pupils can name the shapes when given the properties, however some lower attaining pupils remain confused. Scrutiny of work shows that Year 4 pupils measure accurately with standard and non-standard measures. They calculate the perimeter, for instance, of the school hall both by simple measurement and by adding the measurements of each side. They can find the area of simple and more complex shapes by counting the squares within their boundaries. Cross-curricular links are made with information and communication technology as Year 4 learn to use Carroll and Venn diagrams to display information and to extract information from bar graphs.
83. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in Years 3 and 4 where the quality of teaching is consistent between lessons and between classes. This ensures that pupils learn very well. In other year groups, although good overall, the quality of teaching is less consistent and this is reflected in the overall good learning and good rate of progress of pupils in these classes. Greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the subject, through sharing the very good and sometimes excellent practices seen in some lessons, should help to further raise standards. In particular, expectations need to be consistently high and the requirement for greater accuracy and neater presentation needs to be more rigorous. Marking and neat presentation are also areas where good practice needs to be shared as these are also not used consistently well throughout the school. Mathematical terminology is used well by teachers, but the words are often not on display or directly referred to in the lesson. Doing this would further increase the pupils' mathematical vocabulary and help them to learn to spell the words accurately when recording in their books.
84. Teachers plan lessons well using the strategies recommended nationally. The mental session at the beginning of the lesson is well devised to meet the current needs of pupils. In a Years 3 and 4 middle set lesson, for example, there was good concentration on speed because this is an area with which the pupils experience difficulty. There is good direct teaching of the work that pupils will be expected to complete during the lesson and this enables them to 'get on' and complete their work with satisfactory accuracy. The Years 3 and 4 teachers greatly benefit from having the use of an interactive whiteboard that enable them to channel pupils' thinking and learning very directly. Other resources, for example wipe-clean boards and pre-printed number cards, are used well to add variety and interest to lessons. Although ICT is sometimes used in the teaching of mathematics, this is not yet fully planned for and therefore not fully utilised.
85. Teachers' enthusiasm for mathematics is well communicated to the pupils, who report that they like the subject. They concentrate well and, because relationships between them and staff are excellent, they try hard, in part to please staff. Small group work is very productive and some very good teaching on the part of teaching assistants was observed. This has a particularly positive effect on pupils of lower attainment and those with special educational needs.
86. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has been successful in leading in-service training for teachers and teaching assistants and this has ensured the good quality of teaching overall. Data, both from formal testing and from ongoing assessments, has been well used to ensure that the education provided is directly targeted at increased pupil success. The decision to place the Years 1 and 2 pupils into sets for mathematics, for example, has been taken as a result of the known profile of attainment of these year groups. This very good use of data is paying off in the form of increased standards. The co-ordinator continues to check the quality of the education provided and has good plans for further improvements.

SCIENCE

87. Standards of attainment are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. There is some variation between year groups but given the attainment on entry, pupils achieve well.
88. Throughout the school, there is a good emphasis on practical work and learning through experience. By the end of Year 2, pupils can talk about what they have done and learned. They describe the way some everyday materials change when heated while others explain how a switch can break a circuit. During the inspection, a group of Year 2 pupils made and detected sounds. Whilst many pupils successfully explained their work, understanding and using the correct scientific language, a significant minority continued to find this difficult. Pupils in Year 4 have a good knowledge of fair testing. During a lesson seen, they were testing different materials to see which are good thermal insulators. They were able to demonstrate they knew that, in order to create a test that gave them the information they wanted, that they had to keep factors, other than the material they were testing, constant. Pupils took accurate measurements, recorded results clearly and drew reasonable conclusions. Year 4 pupils have a secure knowledge of the required aspects of science, for example knowing the way muscles work, aspects of growing and aging, forces and the way things move and that magnetism is an example of a force. Boys and girls achieve equally well.
89. Overall, the quality of both teaching and learning is good throughout the school, although considerable variation is evident in the quality of teaching in lessons, with some lessons being satisfactory and others being very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge that they use to ensure that information is clearly and accurately explained. The school has an appropriate scheme of work, based on national guidelines, that shows clearly the way in which it is expected that pupils will build skills, concepts and knowledge. This assists the good progress seen. Teachers' medium- and short-term planning is satisfactory. It takes into account the pupils' previous experience and identifies how they can build upon existing knowledge and skills. Some planning is, however, more effective than others. The best lessons seen were underpinned by planning that identified the expected learning for different groups of pupils in the class. As a result, in these lessons expectations of pupils were appropriately high for all pupils regardless of their attainment. Conversely, in a minority of lessons with weaker planning there were occasions when the higher attaining pupils were not fully challenged and did not learn as well as they might have done. Overall, satisfactory arrangements are made for assessing the pupils' work, with adequate evidence being kept to identify pupils' current attainment and the progress they have made. The school is about to begin to use a new system of recording that draws closer links between what is taught and what is assessed. This system has the potential to improve the overall quality and consistency of the planning, but is, as yet, untried.
90. In all classes, pupils are very well managed. As a result, their behaviour is very good and they work well with others in carrying out activities. They are very aware of safety procedures and obey these. There is a good balance of the teaching of knowledge and of practical activity. Pupils show considerable interest in the subject, displaying consistently good attitudes and enjoying the practical work in particular. The excitement generated by their discoveries contributes well to their spiritual development. Most lessons move at a brisk pace and this means that pupils are able to complete investigations or other work within the time allowed. Lessons are made more interesting and effective by the good use of the school's resources. As well as suitable equipment and books in the school, in the grounds there is a 'wild area' with bird tables and a pond. These are used well, particularly in Years 1 and 2 and greatly enhance the pupils' understanding of the natural world. Science is taught as a largely practical subject. This is very effective in harnessing pupils' interest and making sure that they work hard and concentrate well. Pupils say they enjoy science "because you do things". They had detailed recall of the practical activities in which they had been involved, for example working with magnets and making parachutes. However, too little written work is completed to ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunity to make good progress in how to record their work. Where it is done, the quality of this written work, and its usefulness in providing pupils with a reminder of what they have learned, is often marred by poor presentation. There are some

links made between science and other subjects, but these are not yet formalised and as a result, opportunities are missed. The written work undertaken by the pupils, such as that relating to reporting on practical activities, provides only limited support to the school's initiative in literacy. Counting and measuring activities, in various aspects of the subject, give some support to the school's work in numeracy. ICT is currently little used to enhance the work in science.

91. In many ways, teachers make sure that pupils have an understanding of what and how they are learning in science. Teachers regularly share the objectives of the lesson with the pupils and take care to reinforce the objectives during the lesson. In the best lessons, pupils' understanding is promoted by well-focused questioning. Short review or 'plenary' sessions come at the end of lessons and reinforce and support good learning. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. Marking is positive but generally lacks any points for development or links with literacy targets.
92. Teachers provide well thought out support for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils make good progress as a result. Concepts and activities are carefully explained and teaching assistants are well deployed in supporting pupils who have a need. Teaching assistants are careful to explain what is required and have themselves good knowledge of scientific vocabulary with which to do this. Pupils respond very well to the encouragement given. Good provision is made for pupils who achieve particularly well in science by linking with other schools to provide special activities.
93. Learning in science is further enhanced by work outside the regular school lessons. Scientific activities are included during the Year 4 residential trip. Pupils visited the Black Country Museum. This not only gave them information about scientific aspects of the industries of nail making and glass manufacture but also enabled them to engage in a discussion as to whether it was a science or a history visit, thus clarifying their understanding. Year 3 have a 'Challenge Week' and are provided with interesting science challenges. The scientific challenges are supported by parents and these links mean that they are more able to help their children by providing some similar challenges at home.
94. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is experienced and has a clear knowledge of what is needed for the successful teaching of science. She is keen and interested and supports her colleagues well. The teaching of science is managed well with the effective whole-school emphasis on practical work a significant feature. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable about the position of science in the school and has good plans for its further development. The quality of the education provided is checked in a satisfactory way by observation of teaching and the collection of samples of completed work. The co-ordinator receives teachers' planning but is not yet sufficiently critical to ensure that all is of a high standard.

ART AND DESIGN

95. Standards in art and design throughout the school are average and meet the expectation set out in the National Curriculum. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and their achievement in both two- and three-dimensional work is good. Pupils in Year 2 show good observation skills when engaged in fieldwork sketching of houses around the school. They demonstrate the ability to translate their sketches into soundly modelled clay tiles, paying close attention to details. Paintings of their own houses demonstrate satisfactory draughtsmanship skills and bold use of brushwork. In a history-linked lesson, pupils used drawing and collage techniques effectively to depict Victorian children playing. On a similar theme, they used good observational skills to copy games being played in Breughal's 'Children's Games'. Their use of pastel faithfully copied colour and texture. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge of how to mix colours and how to mix shades and tones.

96. The sketchbooks of Year 4 pupils show that continuing progress is made in observational drawing. They pay increasing attention to detail and quality, for example when using a range of pencil grades. There is further evidence of pupils' sound skills of observation of original techniques as they arrange the coloured paper squares and rectangles on their interpretation of Roman mosaics. Pupils have had experience in a wide range of materials and media and can talk with suitable knowledge about their work in each.
97. The quality of teaching and learning in art and design is generally good. There is good practice in supplementing teachers' knowledge by bringing additional expertise into the school, for example a parent who is able to show clay techniques. A good feature of lessons is the teachers' awareness of opportunities to enhance pupils' vocabulary, especially with the acquisition of technical language. The deployment of well-informed teaching assistants gives pupils opportunities to discuss and evaluate their work. Pupils enjoy art and design activities. They respond well to the interesting activities that are planned for them. They settle quickly, listen carefully and try their best to follow instructions. They co-operate well in sharing equipment and materials and often encourage one another by praising work being undertaken. All these positive attitudes help the pupils to learn in a satisfactory way and play an important part in their moral and social development.
98. There is good practice in teaching techniques associated with a particular medium, for example the use of watercolour washes whilst studying Monet's 'water lily' series, and this helps pupils to learn a range of techniques. The study of famous artists is, however, largely confined to that of western European painters. This is a limiting factor on pupils' cultural development. Lesson planning is sound but too often identifies what pupils will do rather than what they will learn. Because there is no clear identification of how and when skills are to be introduced and built upon as pupils move through the school, teachers are not precisely aware of what pupils should be accomplishing by the end of Years 2 and 4. This is currently inhibiting a further rise in standards. Sketchbooks are used effectively for drawing and painting, but opportunities are missed to use writing to record what is done or learned, for example to record the proportions of paint that are put together to obtain a particular colour. Art and design activities are well linked with other curriculum areas and this helps make them relevant to the pupils.
99. The subject is well led and is managed in a satisfactory way. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has suitable opportunities to carry out classroom observations to check standards of teaching and learning, and has provided good informal support for teachers as a result. The checking of planning, however, has not been sufficiently evaluative in pointing out ways it could be improved. Resources are good and include a growing number of computer programs for research, designing, drawing and 'painting' and these are used well.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. Pupils in Year 2 attain standards that meet those expected in the National Curriculum. By Year 4, pupils meet these expectations and in some respects exceed them. Their attainments are a little above those seen in many schools. Skills and knowledge are carefully taught and pupils given good opportunities, often linked to work in other subjects, to design, make and evaluate products. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with higher attainments, make good progress and achieve well. Standards in design and technology have been maintained since the time of the last inspection.
101. No lessons in design and technology were taught during the inspection period so evidence was gained from talking to pupils, looking at products made in previous terms, photographic evidence and through teachers' plans. Year 2 pupils, although unsure what design and technology was, talked well about a wide range of objects they have made. Pupils have a secure knowledge of the design and make process. They described clearly a visit made to a park to look at objects in it and then the designs

they drew for making a shoebox 'park' of their own. They have knowledge of the characteristics of different materials and how this governs the techniques you use when making with them. They know, for example, that different glues are used for different purposes and that joining fabric is best done by sewing. They have secure knowledge of different mechanisms, for example describing a good range of ways in which a toy can be made to move. Pupils are less secure about ways in which they could evaluate and improve what they make.

102. Year 4 pupils have developed a more sophisticated approach to designing and making. They clearly describe the whole process, sequencing well the stages of making a product. In this, their understanding is above average. Pupils talked about the process to design and make a purse they are currently beginning. They know that research into different types of purses is the first stage of such a project and that this enables them to make a better product. They have already undertaken the designs of these purses and these were of sound quality. They are aware of the best ways of cutting out and joining their purse, stressing the need for care in the latter so that money would not fall out. They knew that the process would end with evaluating their purse and that they would need to identify ways in which they could improve what they had done. They too have good knowledge of techniques for shaping and joining materials and described a good range that they have undertaken in the past. They have a widening idea of mechanisms, for example they described (with considerable enthusiasm!) making the eyes of an 'alien' move by using air pushed through a tube. Pupils in both Year 2 and Year 4, however, were unable to describe ways in which they have written down either lists of materials they intend to use for making what they have designed or the process they intend to use. This is a relative weakness.

103. Although no lessons were seen, it is clear, from the pupils' ability to describe the process they have undertaken and what they have learned, that the quality of both teaching and learning are good. Good subject leadership has ensured that teachers have good understanding of the complete nature of the design and make process and this has enabled them to successfully teach pupils to be confident in describing and undertaking it. The pupils' enthusiasm for 'making things' is evident and has been successfully communicated and nurtured by the staff. Good use has been made of the resources available to ensure that pupils have had opportunity to experience working with a wide range of tools and materials. The planning of design and technology to link with other subjects is a good feature of the work as it increases pupils' understanding of the way such skills are used in a range of contexts in 'real life'. Links are made between design and technology and other subjects, but these are not yet formalised and this means that opportunities to include, for example writing in design and technology, are sometimes missed.

GEOGRAPHY

104. No lessons were observed during the inspection because geography and history are taught alternately within a two-year rolling programme. This is designed to ensure that pupils in the mixed-age classes do not repeat work. Along with the other first schools in the town, the school has a scheme of work that ensures that all pupils enter middle school with a common set of knowledge and experiences. This good practice ensures that this transfer disrupts learning as little as possible. The evidence available from teachers' planning, work completed in other years and discussions with pupils supports the judgement that pupils have made good progress and have, to date, attained average standards, from their below average base at the end of reception.

105. Year 2 pupils have generally sound geographical vocabulary. They use this confidently when describing natural features to be seen in a landscape. They have equally sound knowledge of directional language, used to describe directions to places in the school and the local environment. They state the names of the countries that make up the United Kingdom and have satisfactory knowledge of some European and worldwide countries, sometimes offering an indication of their location, for example "across the Atlantic Ocean." Their fieldwork experiences have given them an

understanding of a park as a community facility and enable them to recognise and to name correctly a range of housing types.

106. Year 4 pupils also demonstrated sound geographical language as they described how they mapped and supplied a colour-coded key for features within the school grounds. They have a developing sense of location and the need for relationships between some features within an area. They have firm opinions about the possible effects of environmental pollution and of how the immediate environment of the school might be improved. From work undertaken during the Year 3 'Challenge Week', they are able to talk about some differences between natural and man-made features in a landscape, using the idea of similarity and difference to point out, for example, how a river differs from a canal. They know eight compass points and can use a two-figure reference to find locations on an A to Z street map.
107. Although no lessons were seen, it is evident from the quality of the pupils' learning that they have received at least satisfactory teaching. Pupils have been given good opportunities to gain knowledge and skills and have been enabled to do so in at least a satisfactory way. Pupils' enthusiasm for geography is evident and is as a result of the practical and realistic way in which they have been taught. The pupils who were interviewed showed keen interest in the subject matter and had enjoyed the fieldwork that had been undertaken. Year 4 pupils are looking forward eagerly to attending the residential visit to Bristol, knowing that much of the work is geography based. All pupils enjoyed demonstrating their geographical vocabulary and giving their opinions on the local environment. Teachers' planning reflects the breadth of the pupils' learning well, but currently is not as strong in showing clearly how skills and concepts are to be systematically developed over time.
108. The subject is currently receiving satisfactory leadership and management. The co-ordinator, who is newly appointed to the post, is well qualified to lead the subject. He has already taken stock of what needs to be done in order to raise standards further. He is, for example, aware that whilst skills and concepts are being taught there is no overall guide to aid teachers to plan easily and to assist them to identify where links with other subjects could be made, for example in the teaching of co-ordinates in mathematics. There is a well thought out intention to analyse the units of work and to assign skills and concepts to each in order to improve this situation. Assessment of geography is currently left to individual teachers and is based on the outcomes of taught units. There is, as yet, no system for pulling these assessments together to provide information about the overall progress of individuals, groups or classes in gaining geographical skills and concepts. Resources are sufficient and relevant in the main, however, some are out of date, for example some political maps show countries that no longer exist.

HISTORY

109. Pupils make good progress throughout the school and the majority attains average standards. This is similar to the position found at the time of the last report at Year 2. At that time, Year 4 pupils were ahead of national expectations. Since then, however, the national emphasis on literacy and numeracy has meant that less time can be devoted to history and standards are, therefore, not as high. Teaching, in the time available is, however, good and enables pupils to achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils and are supported well by teaching assistants.
110. In Year 2, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the lives of people, in the past through very meaningful first-hand experiences. They have visited Hartelbury Museum where they experienced what it was like to be a Victorian school child. This was skilfully reinforced when the pupils went on a local history walk to compare Victorian houses with modern ones. In the lesson following the walk, the teacher showed a clear grasp of the subject as she successfully built on the pupils' learning by asking significant questions, providing key vocabulary in written form and using

clear photographs. In Year 4, pupils learned well as they worked together to carry out research and present findings on an information poster. The teacher's good questioning ensured that the pupils understood the need to look at more than one source of information. They are also aware that sources of information offer not only facts but opinions. Pupils sorted information sources into 'most likely', 'likely' and 'least likely' sets using content and index pages and websites effectively. Pupils have a sound knowledge of some historical information, for example the story of Romulus and Remus and some basic aspects of Roman life. During the tasks, pupils make good progress in their investigation and recording skills. Pupils are interested in the work so their behaviour is good and they work collaboratively and co-operatively within good relationships. The teacher made effective use of discussion at the end of the lesson to enable pupils to evaluate their work.

111. As part of the 'Bromsgrove Agreement' which plans coverage of history for Year 3 and 4 pupils throughout the town, the school covers one topic one year and two the next. This is done through the lessons devoted to history but is extended and reinforced through work in other subjects. In English, for example, pupils read some texts with historical content. Discussion with pupils from Year 2 and Year 4 revealed that as a result of this pupils retain a good knowledge and understanding of the topics they study. In addition, many are enthused by the subject as a whole and some follow up by researching independently long after the school topic has ended. This is actively encouraged in the school and plays a part in the successful education of the higher attaining pupils. Two girls who really enjoy history had, for example, followed a television programme about Tutankhamen and then read books about the archaeologist, Carter. They showed that they had an appreciation that television interpretations reflected the context in which they were made, the evidence available and the intentions of those making the interpretations, for example they said that Brutus had "allegedly stabbed Caesar twenty-four times".
112. The school makes good use of local museums such as the Black Country and Hartlebury Museums. They have extended visits to Bath to discover more about the Romans and have visiting actors in to recreate the past. They have theme days and also invite ex-pupils and local tradesmen such as a nail maker to help pupils understand the past and the history of the immediate area. This first-hand experience successfully underpins the learning of skills and knowledge undertaken in school. Assessment is in the form of broad assessments against the end of unit statement and is ongoing in lessons where teachers use their good questioning skills to assess pupils' understanding. This enables teachers to plan subsequent lessons at an appropriate level.
113. The leadership and management of the subject are both good. The subject manager monitors the quality of teaching and learning and so is aware of the standards of attainment within the school. She has introduced ways in which the school can augment the limited time allocated to history to good effect.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

114. Standards in Years 2 and 4 are average. Pupils attain the expected level, although their attainments are higher in the aspects of ICT that they have studied recently. Pupils are now making good progress and achieving well. Standards are rising steadily as teachers become more secure in their own knowledge of the ICT curriculum and the best ways of teaching it. Very good subject leadership has ensured that teachers and teaching assistants have had the training, support and encouragement to do this and ICT is now being well taught throughout the school. There is, however, some variability in the teaching that, if improved, could help to raise standards even faster. Although standards remain average as they were at the time of the last inspection, changes in curriculum requirements have placed extra demands on schools and the successful maintenance of standards shows that there have been good improvements in the provision.

115. By Year 2, pupils are comfortable with the use of computers and a range of other equipment. They can write and amend their work and begin to be able to present work, for example poems, for display or for other purposes. They have, for example, written thank you letters after a visit to a local synagogue. With help, they were able to put these into a conventional format. They have begun to understand the usefulness of computers, for example in producing neat labels for a toy display. Pupils have also used simple art programmes to draw, for example, a water scene in the style of Monet. The examples seen were of good standard. Pupils have had opportunities to research, for instance accessing a website to gain information during a pond dipping topic and, although needing prompting, could explain how this was done. Records show that pupils have undertaken work in control technology and attained satisfactory standards at the time. The pupils spoken to, however, were unsure of both this work and how computers are used to display data because it was a considerable time since they had done this. Pupils know how to operate a tape recorder to both record and to play.
116. Year 4 pupils manage their own work on the computer, saving and retrieving what they have done with ease. They can use computers to present work, integrating text and pictures successfully. Pupils have, for example, written newspaper articles about their ongoing sports project using both text and photographs taken with the digital camera. Pupils undertake research using databases and the Internet. They can use e-mail and show a particular enthusiasm for this type of communication. As with Year 2 pupils, aspects of control technology are less secure because pupils have not studied this aspect of ICT of late. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they often have additional opportunity to use computers during the work they do in English.
117. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. There are, however, pockets of very good practice in some classes and areas for improvement in others. Teachers are now teaching skills in ICT well. There is an insistence on pupils learning to be independent in their use of computers that is ensuring that they now remember work and are able to translate learning from one aspect of ICT to another. This means that pupils attack work confidently and enthusiastically. Teachers have high expectations of what will be achieved and pupils try hard to live up to these. Teachers' planning, however, is not always sufficiently clear to ensure that they communicate clearly to pupils what standard they are expected to reach in a lesson. This means that on occasion, younger or lower attaining pupils struggle to do something that is beyond their present competence because this is the expectation for older or higher attaining pupils. This leads to progress that is only satisfactory. Teaching is most successful where there are clear objectives for different groups of pupils identified in the planning and where these are simply and effectively communicated to the pupils.
118. Good support is given to pupils during lessons. Lessons are well managed so that pupils have good opportunities to use computers. Careful thought is given to the pairings of pupils so that they can, on occasion, support each other. They show themselves very capable of doing this. This makes a significant contribution to their moral and social development. Teachers are very careful when grouping pupils to ensure that boys and girls work together. There is no evidence of differences between the attainment or progress of boys and girls. The increase in equipment is assisting teachers to teach the curriculum more effectively. The ICT suite is used well, both by teachers for whole classes and by teaching assistants with small groups. The teaching assistants teach groups of pupils, including some with special educational needs and some with higher attainments well and this makes a significant contribution to the progress of these pupils. Opportunities are provided for pupils to use a wide range of equipment including the digital camera, tape recorders and calculators.
119. The subject development plan shows that work is underway in the school to ensure that the use of computers is fully integrated into work in other subjects. The results of this are already evident in improved standards. However, because there is no overall plan of opportunities and because teachers' planning in other subjects does not always show when ICT will be used, work remains to be done. At the present time, pupils have forgotten some of what they have learned, for example in

control technology, because there has not been clear identification of when this could have been consolidated in other subjects. The work completed in integrating ICT in other subjects and the clear vision and understanding of the subject coordinator, however, places the subject in a very positive position for further development.

MUSIC

120. Pupils in Years 2 and 4 attain standards that are in line with the expectations identified in the National Curriculum and achieve in a satisfactory way. However, in some aspects of music, for example composition and appraisal, pupils in Years 3 and 4 attain higher than average standards and overall, they achieve well in music. Pupils sing in a satisfactory way. In Years 1 and 2, pupils know a good number of songs of different types, including hymns and traditional songs. They sing with good control of volume and pitch. In Years 3 and 4, pupils continue to expand their repertoire and can shape a song by controlling dynamics and phrasing. They begin to be able to maintain a separate line by the singing of rounds. Through the good use of music in assembly and in music lessons, pupils learn to listen with attention and to identify differences in different types of music. Pupils are given good opportunities to perform in both class assemblies and school productions. Throughout the school, pupils are able to practise, improve and perform for these occasions.
121. Year 2 pupils could talk about the music they were currently listening to in assembly and give a simple evaluation of the type of music they had heard that day. Older pupils were able to talk about different effects in different music they had heard, and could talk well about how music can influence the way you feel. Pupils throughout the school play tuned and untuned percussion instruments correctly. Younger pupils, however, struggle to remember what they are called. The good attention given to the composition of music is paying dividends, especially in Years 3 and 4. Year 2 pupils select instruments from a limited choice to create effects and, with the teacher's help, they can structure a piece of music to illustrate a story. For example, they created music to illustrate the building up and dying away of the storm in the story of Jonah, and did this competently. Pupils are not able to compose pieces independently of the teacher because they have not been given any opportunity to do so. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were able to select and use instruments to use in their composition of short pieces, with a good understanding of how to create the effects they wanted. In a lesson seen, they worked very well in groups to put together sounds to illustrate a 'night seascape'. Pupils put together sounds that firstly increased in texture and dynamic and then died away. They recorded what they were doing by using symbols of their own invention and were able to read their 'score' to reproduce what they had composed. Their attainment in this aspect of music is above average.
122. An after-school recorder club and some instrumental tuition make a satisfactory contribution to attainment in music, especially for those pupils who show ability. The school identifies pupils who show potential and, on occasions, has financially supported them. A good number of pupils attend recorder and keyboard groups and show developing skills in both playing and reading music that add to the standards they attain in lessons.
123. Teaching and learning in music are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 and 4 where teachers are able to use good subject expertise well to promote learning. The co-ordinator has led and managed the subject well. A sensible decision to use a mixture of radio broadcasts and a national scheme has assisted teachers who are less confident in the teaching of music to teach in at least a satisfactory way. Lessons are well prepared and resources, including a range of taped music and musical instruments, are used well during lessons. The management of pupils is particularly good and this encourages pupils to try hard and do their best. Teachers try hard to enthuse pupils about the subject and pupils show this enthusiasm in lessons and when talking about their work. Teachers use good strategies to include all pupils, including those with special educational needs, in the activities. This teaching enables pupils to make satisfactory gains in learning the basic skills in singing throughout the school and in all aspects of music in Years 1 and 2. The teaching of composition in Years 3 and 4

is particularly effective. It enables pupils to gain well in this aspect and also enables them to gain a good vocabulary to use when describing their work. It also gives them good skills in listening to the music of others and an understanding of the effect the composer is trying to achieve.

124. The school has a suitable range of resources to ensure that pupils have opportunities to learn in each aspect of the music curriculum. Teachers, for example, make good use of tape recorders in lessons to record compositions so that pupils can listen and identify ways to improve their performance. The use of computers to assist teaching and learning has not been fully explored, however. This has been identified by the subject co-ordinator as an area for improvement.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

125. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Achievement is good throughout the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection when pupils in Years 1 and 2 were only making satisfactory progress. Key factors in promoting this improvement are the good leadership and management of the subject. Pupils now attain above average standards in gymnastics, swimming, dance and games. The majority of Year 1 pupils have developed the ability to balance in various ways. They are able to hold a position and then make it part of a movement. Subsequently they develop these movements into good quality linked sequences. The quality of movement developed in the gymnastics is transferred to enhance dance skills where, with music as a stimulus, pupils move imaginatively with differing speeds, levels and direction. By Year 2, pupils have learned a range of movements and balances in both gymnastics and dance. They are able to combine these movements to make a sequence that they are able to practise and perfect. They are able to talk about their work and are aware of how they can improve. They also have knowledge of how to play some simple games and know some tactics, for example, how to dodge a partner when playing ball games. Year 4 pupils have developed ball skills above those expected for their age. They have knowledge and skills in a number of different ball games. The skills they displayed in learning basketball, for example, demonstrated that they have good control of a ball. They throw and catch well. They are able to decide where to place a ball and do so with some accuracy. During a game at the end of a lesson, pupils worked with quiet concentration and enjoyment, effectively employing the skills they had learned. By Year 4, most pupils swim well in excess of 25 metres, the expectation for pupils leaving Year 6.
126. Teaching and learning are good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Lessons are appropriately planned with a suitable format, which includes warming-up and cooling-down activities. Work is well matched to the pupils' attainment. There has been good in-service support and staff have benefited from initiatives such as 'Top Sport' training. The teachers' knowledge of the subject is good. In the best lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are high, and consequently the pupils successfully improve their performance. Pupils evaluate each other's work and this helps them to understand how to improve. On occasions when lessons are only satisfactory, expectations are more limited and are not as effective in helping pupils to raise standards. Work in physical education assists pupils in practising and improving their speaking and listening skills. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, there was good use of language enabling pupils to learn the appropriate vocabulary for gymnastics as well as consolidating their knowledge of prepositions such as 'under' or 'through'. Because teachers offer a variety of activities and teaching styles, and conduct most lessons at a challenging pace, pupils enjoy their lessons, are very well behaved and try hard. Very good dance lessons were seen during the inspection, which pupils enjoy. In discussion, a group of Year 4 pupils described dance as the most enjoyable part of physical education. In all lessons, discipline is good and this allows lessons to run smoothly without interruptions, thus enabling pupils to learn well. Skills are taught well and are acquired systematically by pupils. A good range of resources is used to add interest to lessons. Higher attaining pupils are encouraged to join clubs and sports organisations with which the school has contacts and this enables them to make good progress.

127. The subject has been well led. The coordinator has ensured that there is a wide and interesting curriculum. As a result, activities include basic teaching in golf, tennis, cricket, and rugby. The curriculum is further enriched when pupils take part in the local Country Dance and Sports Festivals. Older pupils have opportunities to experience sporting activities such as canoeing on the River Avon. In-service training has helped teachers improve standards. Good use is, for example, made of local initiatives such as the District Council Sports Project. This gives teachers the support of an expert instructor to assist them to teach games. A lesson was observed that was part of this project. In this lesson, pupils were taught basketball skills. The lesson proceeded with pace and rigour becoming both an enjoyable and stimulating learning experience for the pupils and very good in-service training for the teacher.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

128. Standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 4 are above those given in the locally agreed syllabus for pupils in these age groups. Pupils' achievement is good, which is an improvement since the last inspection.
129. By the end of Year 2, pupils are aware of Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. Pupils understand that faiths have various ceremonies and special occasions. They can, for example, explain the importance of Diwali to Hindus, and the festival of Eid to Muslims. During the inspection, reception and Year 1 pupils were taking part in activities associated with Eid that gave them good basic knowledge about the festival. A display around the hall showed the festivals of light in different religions, giving pupils an understanding of the similarities between faiths. From the Christian perspective, pupils were preparing for Christmas with the first of the candles being lit on the school's Advent wreath. They understand the symbolism of the candles on the wreath. By Year 4, pupils have extended their knowledge of Christianity and have added good knowledge of the Hindu faith. The school is successful in developing pupils' understanding of different faiths. Visiting speakers and trips to religious buildings, including the visit to the six churches in the town, play a significant part in this provision. The work undertaken successfully supports all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
130. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with very good examples being observed during the inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge and, through clear instruction and a careful use of questioning that involves them all, pupils, including those with special educational needs, are able to make good progress. There is careful use of the correct terminology used in different faiths and most pupils show confidence in using the appropriate terms. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus and all areas of work are adequately covered. Lessons are well planned and what is to be learned in the lesson is explained to the pupils at the start, and reiterated during the lesson. Good use is made of first hand experiences. Year 2 pupils, for example, visited a synagogue and related artefacts were part of a very good display in the classroom. Because they have been well taught, pupils could explain the symbolism of each object. Direct teaching is also used effectively. For example, the work on Judaism was well extended by a lesson on how God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses. Pupils learned about each commandment and its importance in the lives of the Jewish people. Years 3 and 4 enjoyed a very good lesson, aimed at improving their understanding of Christian beliefs and the life of Jesus, by showing how Mary is a key figure in the Christian story. Mary's feelings were discussed and pupils were happy to try to answer the teacher's challenging questioning that stretched their thinking well.
131. Pupils' personal development is very well promoted in many religious education lessons. The lesson about Mary's part in the Christmas story, for example, started with a candle being lit on the Advent wreath, the electric lights were put out and a quiet calm established before the story of the Annunciation was read from St. Luke's gospel. This gave a good sense of spirituality to the lesson.

Additionally, the teacher developed the story of the Annunciation through the painting 'The Annunciation' by Fra Filippo Lippi. This lesson was a good addition to the pupils' cultural development. Pupils say they enjoy the subject, find it interesting and many provide a variety of thoughtful answers and observations in lessons. Teachers encourage pupils to consider those who are less fortunate than they are. Pupils have made generous contributions to charities and gifts at Harvest time. This caring attitude pervades the whole school.

132. Much of the work in religious education in the school is oral. Few opportunities for writing activities are provided for pupils and so religious education provides only limited support for literacy. Opportunities for greater links between subjects are often missed, for example the staff currently make only limited use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning in religious education. In the limited amount of written work done, pupils do not always take enough care with the presentation of their work. Teachers mark work regularly providing very positive comments, but rarely give points to help pupils improve their work.
133. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and well qualified to lead her subject. Her continued commitment has helped to ensure that the subject has a high profile in the school with the appropriate emphasis in the curriculum. Assessment procedures are in place and help in the planning of lessons. There is a school portfolio of assessed work relating to the levels of attainment specified in the locally agreed syllabus. This is a useful resource for teachers in their pursuit of high standards. Resources are good and used well.