

INSPECTION REPORT

BEACON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Willenhall, Walsall

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 131580

Headteacher: Mrs. D. Wharton

Reporting inspector: C.D. Loizou
18645

Dates of inspection: 10 – 13 February 2002

Inspection number: 248847

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Davis Road
New Invention
Willenhall

Postcode: WV12 5HA

Telephone number: 01922 710874

Fax number: 01922 493837

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. R.G. Richardson

Date of previous inspection: 26, February, 2001

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18645	C.D Loizou	Registered inspector	English as an additional language Science Information and communication technology Music	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9446	H. Griffiths	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
29989	P. Goodsell	Team inspector	Foundation stage curriculum Art and design Design and technology	
17686	G. Simpson	Team inspector	Educational inclusion English Physical education Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
21094	J. Brennan	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Geography History	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Beacon Primary School is near Willenhall in Walsall. Three years ago, the infant and junior parts of the school were two separate schools sharing the same building and site. The two schools amalgamated in 1999 and the current headteacher was appointed shortly before its last inspection in 2001. The school is above average in size and admits up to 60 pupils into its Reception class each year. The school also admits up to 78 part-time (39 full-time equivalent) children into its Nursery class. There are currently 270 pupils on roll between the ages of four and eleven and they are taught in ten classes and there are currently 37 part-time children in the Nursery. Nearly all of the pupils are white and have English as their first language with less than three per cent that speak another language. Other languages include European, Asian and Chinese languages. Attainment on entry to the Reception year is below the standards expected of four-year-olds. Twenty-two per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. Fifteen per cent of the pupils have special educational needs, which is average and less than two per cent have a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory education. The pupils achieve average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. However, by the end of Year 2, standards are below average in English and mathematics. The pupils make unsatisfactory progress by Year 2 in English and mathematics. The teaching is satisfactory overall and it is good in the Early Years Unit and in Year 6. The pupils could do better in writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2, where the teaching is unsatisfactory. National test results show that standards are rising since the school amalgamated. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and governors. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The children in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) and the pupils in Year 6 achieve well. By the end of Year 6, the pupils reach the standards expected for their age in English, mathematics and science.
- The teaching in the Nursery and Reception years and that in Year 6 is effective. In Year 6, the teaching is usually of high quality.
- The headteacher provides good and effective leadership. There has been a steady and significant improvement in standards in most subjects. The governors manage the school well.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good. Consequently, relationships, attitudes to school and the pupils' behaviour are good.
- Links with parents and the local community are good. Parents think highly of the school.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2.
- The quality of the teaching in Years 1 and 2, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Standards in geography and history across the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 2001 and was judged to be under-achieving. Since that time it has made satisfactory progress overall, with some significant improvements. This has been achieved

in a relatively short period of time. The key issues from the last inspection have been addressed, but in some areas, such as standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 2, there is still some work to do. The school has improved curriculum planning and organisation and this has had a positive effect on standards by the end of Year 6. The school has also been successful in improving and enriching the curriculum as well as the internal appearance of the school. Schemes of work and long term plans now guide the teachers' planning. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved and the school now has satisfactory procedures to monitor the progress of pupils with special educational needs. The governors actively monitor and support the work of the school with effective and systematic procedures in place to enable them to do this. Three months prior to this inspection, Her Majesty's Inspectors visited the school and commented on the satisfactory progress made in raising standards and eliminating under-achievement.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

well below average; in the lowest five per cent of schools E*

(The "similar" in the table above refers to the percentage of free school meals and not the size of the school.)

The 2002 tests for Year 6 show that the school's results were below the national average in English and science and above average in mathematics. English and mathematics results compare well with similar schools. Science standards have improved year on year and current standards confirm this sustained improvement as they are in line with those expected by the end of Year 6. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in Year 6 are currently in line with those expected in all three subjects. Mathematics standards are acceptable, even though they appear to be lower, given that more pupils this year in Year 6 are on the special educational needs register compared with last year.

The performance of the pupils in the national tests for Year 2 show that standards were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers' assessment in science showed average standards. Inspection evidence confirms that standards have improved in English but they are not high enough in mathematics. The teaching of mathematics in Year 1 and Year 2 does not demand enough of the pupils and is unsatisfactory overall. The pupils achieve satisfactory standards in speaking, listening, reading, writing and science by the end of Year 2 but could do better.

The school's improved curriculum and teaching enables the pupils to achieve the standards expected in all other subjects except in geography and history where standards are too low. There has been a satisfactory improvement in standards since the last inspection but more still needs to be done in those areas where standards are still below those expected, particularly in English and mathematics in the

infant classes. The pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils' attitudes to learning, to school and to each other are good. They try hard and enjoy learning, applying themselves well, often co-operating and learning from each other.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. This helps to create an orderly and positive learning environment. There were three temporary exclusions last year.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The pupils are independent and show maturity. Relationships are good. Older pupils support younger ones. The pupils enjoy helping each other and celebrating the achievements of others.
Attendance	Below average and rising. This is satisfactory but the rate of unauthorised absence is above average and this is unsatisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching is satisfactory overall and ranges between unsatisfactory and excellent. It has improved satisfactorily since the last inspection. The most effective teaching is in the Early years Unit (Nursery and Reception) and in Year 6, where the teaching is usually of a high standard. The unsatisfactory lessons observed were less effective than most of the teaching seen because they lacked challenge, especially for the more able pupils. The teaching of writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory, as is the teaching of geography and history across the school up to Year 5. In most lessons, the teaching of literacy and numeracy is effective, resulting in rising standards by the end of Year 6. The teaching is having a positive impact on the pupils' learning, although more could be done to improve the pupils' independent writing and numeracy skills in the infant classes. The teaching is usually well planned to meet the needs of the pupils in most subjects. Information and communication technology has improved well and is now taught satisfactorily across the school and good use is made of the school's much improved computer resources. The pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support in lessons and, as a result, make satisfactory progress. The school provides effective teaching for the small number of pupils who are learning English as an additional language.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory. Teachers provide an appropriate range of practical and relevant tasks and there are good opportunities for the pupils to use computers to support their learning. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. Geography and history planning is unsatisfactory. More able pupils in Year 6 are identified with particular aptitudes in English, mathematics and science and are provided with good and effective support.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The pupils receive satisfactory support. They are identified early and make satisfactory progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory assessments of their needs are made and they are supported well in lessons. Teaching assistants are on hand to support these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good and is supported by a broad range of activities in school and outside school times. Good provision is made for the pupils' personal development. The pupils are also developing a good understanding of life in a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a good level of care provided for all of the pupils. The school has satisfactory procedures to assess how well the pupils are doing. Teachers use these assessments to set learning targets for the pupils to achieve.

Good quality and regular information about the curriculum and school events is provided for parents and the school works closely with them. Parents are pleased with the range of work the school provides both in school time and after school hours.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership. The deputy headteacher and senior staff work closely with her to monitor lessons, pupils' work and their progress. The management of the school is well focused on improving standards and eliminating under-achievement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body provides good and effective support. They work closely with the school and its staff and have a clear understanding of their role in managing and supporting the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is satisfactory overall with some good features. The governors and staff have established clear priorities in the school development plan. It is underpinned by an effective process involving audits,

	monitoring progress and evaluating the pupils' performance in tests.
The strategic use of resources	This is good. There are targets which are matched to spending priorities. The school manages its finances well, ensuring best value for money when committing the school's funds.

The administrative staff are very efficient and always make themselves available to parents and visitors as well as managing the smooth running of the school and its finances. The school site is well maintained and managed and the building is used extensively by community groups every day.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children make good progress and like school. • The teaching is good and sets high expectations. • The consistency and amount of homework provided. • They feel comfortable approaching the school. • The school is well led and managed. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<p>The response from parents has been so positive that there are no significant areas which the parents say they would like improving.</p>

There are effective links and positive relationships with parents. The response from parents suggests that parents think highly of the school and a significant number have commented on the recent improvements. Inspectors agree with all the positive views expressed by the parents, except that the teaching could set higher expectations in some subjects and parts of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Inspection evidence shows that on entry to the Nursery the majority of children start with standards that are below those expected for their age. The good teaching throughout the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) ensures that the children make consistently good progress. By the time they move into Year 1 the majority of the children reach the early learning goals in personal and social development, mathematics, creative and physical development and in knowledge and understanding of the world. In communication, language and literacy progress is slower and fewer children reach the early learning goals particularly in writing. This is partly because of the low base of language development from which the children begin but also because, on occasions, teaching in this area is less focussed than it could be, especially in the early development of writing skills.
2. Standards at the end of Year 2 are below those expected in English and mathematics and in line with national expectations in science. Reading and writing standards by the end of Year 2 are below average and could be higher. Overall, the pupils in the infant years have made unsatisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics and this is largely due to weaknesses in the teaching.
3. Standards have improved recently in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. English standards show particularly good improvement because the teaching in the junior years is good in English and is very effective in all three subjects in Year 6. Reading is satisfactorily taught from Year 3 onwards and the Year 2 pupils who are taught in the mixed-aged class with Year 3 pupils make satisfactory progress in their reading. However, writing standards show greater inconsistencies up to Year 5, reflecting the need for a more effective writing policy from the early years that carries through to the end of Year 5. In Year 6, writing is taught well so that the standards achieved in national tests are in line with the national average.
4. The unsatisfactory mathematics teaching in Years 1 and 2 slows the pupils' progress considerably. Many Year 1 pupils are unable to recall number facts with confidence and by Year 2 the pupils are often confused when trying to apply number operations when solving simple problems, for example, money problems. English standards are greatly affected by the pupils' lack of speaking skills and limited vocabulary when they start school. But the teaching in Year 1 is not challenging enough and this affects the pupils' reading and writing skills so that many pupils are unable to write independently with confidence and they read familiar high frequency words in their reading books hesitantly. By the end of Year 2, the pupils still lack confidence when reading because they are not secure in their word building skills.
5. Both year groups in the mixed Year 2 and Year 3 class make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics because the tasks provided are more challenging and varied compared with those found in other classes where there are Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. From Year 3 onwards, teachers are catching up on work that should have been covered in previous years. This is especially the case in reading, writing and numeracy, where the pupils lack basic communication and mental arithmetic skills. They make satisfactory progress in their development of reading and writing in the junior classes, but writing standards improve more markedly in Year 6, where the teaching is particularly strong. Science standards are in line with those expected across the school because the school has improved the science

curriculum with greater emphasis placed on investigative and enquiry-based learning. By the end of Year 6, the pupils reach the standards expected in both mathematics and science and once again, the quality of teaching in Year 6 does much to raise attainment in these subjects.

6. In both the infant and the junior classes the pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They are well supported by teaching assistants, have good relationships with adults and other pupils and work hard. The pupils learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. They are well supported in lessons and, like other pupils, reach their targets which are clearly stated and monitored well.
7. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The pupils make satisfactory progress because ICT is linked to the work the pupils do in other subjects. The school has improved resources and teaching expertise so that more lessons involve elements of ICT across a range of subjects.
8. The pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education and achieve standards that are in line with those expected by the end of Year 6. In other subjects, except geography and history, the pupils achieve standards that are in line with those expected for their age by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is a good improvement on the last inspection two years ago, which judged that the pupils were under-achieving. However, in geography and history, standards remain below those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Both the geography and history curriculum and the teaching are unsatisfactory because there is inconsistent coverage of the programmes of study and teachers do not expect enough of the pupils, especially when recording their work and when researching the topics being covered. The school has focused much of its attention on improving standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The school has done well to raise achievement in most areas with significant improvements made by the end of Year 6. It has also identified areas for further improvement, particularly in raising standards in mathematics by the end of Year 2.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The pupils' attitudes to learning are good, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Behaviour and personal development, which were satisfactory last time, are now good. Attendance rates continue to be below the national average but are improving, although unauthorised absence remains well above average. Parents feel very strongly that behaviour and attitudes are good.
10. In its mission statement, the school aims to promote a culture of care and harmony and high standards of behaviour, together with a spirit of co-operation and mutual respect. The pupils' attitudes reflect the school's aims well. They are keen to come to school and punctuality is good for the majority of pupils, although a small number of families have problems with timekeeping. The pupils are thoughtful of others and know right from wrong. They are keen to take part in extra-curricular activities.
11. The pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They are well motivated, show good interest in their lessons and concentrate well. They listen well to their teachers and are eager to contribute to discussions. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson on text analysis, the pupils listened intently and were confident in putting forward their ideas. In a Reception mathematics lesson, pupils were very eager to be chosen to give examples and really enjoyed their teachers' pretended mistakes. Throughout the school, the pupils are keen to do well and value their teachers' praise and encouragement. They are capable of independent learning and can work

well in groups. In assemblies, they know how to respond appropriately. For example, they listened enthralled to a visiting speaker's vivid account of the story of David and Goliath.

12. The children behave very well in the Nursery and Reception classes. They soon get used to the routines of the classrooms. They hang up their coats, and take responsibility for their own belongings such as lunch boxes, library books, homework folders and physical education kit. The school has good arrangements in place for the children to start the school day and this means that they come into school happily and confidently. The children enjoy learning, listen well to the teachers, concentrate and try hard. Most persevere to complete a task before they move to a new activity. They play and learn well, both alongside one another and together. The good relationships that are formed with the adults who work in the classes help the children to make the good progress seen. The children are encouraged to take care of their own and the school's belongings and they are very good at putting away equipment and tidying up after activities.
13. The school functions well as an orderly community. The pupils know the rules well and feel they are treated fairly. They respond well to teachers' expectations of good behaviour and as a result, behaviour is good in lessons, assemblies and at playtimes and lunchtimes. The pupils move around the school in a very orderly fashion. They are very polite, friendly and helpful to visitors, for example, they are always careful to hold doors open and to offer help. Teachers offer good role models of courtesy and fairness. Relationships are good and the pupils are thoughtful of one another's feelings. Even very young pupils can take turns, as in a Reception class lesson on pushing and pulling forces where the children waited their turn before being chosen to choose a toy that could push or pull. Bullying is rare and the pupils and parents are confident that it will be dealt with quickly and effectively. There were three fixed-period exclusions last year and procedures were correctly followed.
14. The pupils' personal and social development is good. There are good opportunities for them to take responsibility and they take them seriously. They appreciate the rewards system and value the House system. They understand the values of other cultures through art, music, religious education and geography and show respect for the beliefs of others. The pupils who have special educational needs have good attitudes to school. Many are confident and self-assured members of their classes. They are keen to answer questions and to give their opinions. They come to school ready to learn, apply themselves well and get on well with other pupils.
15. Attendance rates last year were below average and unauthorised absence was well above national figures. This is due to a small number of families who have problems with attendance. Registration takes place quickly and effectively and ensures a calm start to sessions. The school is doing all it can, together with the local authority, to address the causes for the high rate of unauthorised absence from a few families.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. The teaching is satisfactory overall. In the Early Years Unit (Nursery and Reception), it is good and in Year 6, it is consistently of high quality. Of the lessons seen throughout the inspection, one in five lessons were of high quality, either very good or excellent. Half of the lessons seen were good or better and just over two out of five lessons were satisfactory. Just over one in twenty lessons were unsatisfactory and these occurred in both infant and junior classes. As a result of good and effective leadership since the last inspection, with clear policies and regular monitoring by the headteacher, teaching and learning are improving.

Expectations are higher than those found in the last inspection and the work planned for the pupils is now better matched to their capabilities. Teaching assistants are deployed to best fit the pupils' needs as they arise in lessons and this is most effective in the Early Years Unit. Good quality and culturally relevant displays, resources and visual aids are well used throughout school. This overall improvement in teaching has had a clear impact on raising standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Lessons are managed and organised well in the juniors and satisfactorily in the infant classes.

17. As a result of good and effective leadership since the last inspection, with clear policies and regular monitoring by the headteacher, teaching and learning are improving, expectations are higher than those found in the last inspection and the work planned for the pupils is now better matched to their capabilities. However, the school should now focus more attention on improving English and mathematics teaching in Years 1 and 2 and raising standards in geography and history. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subjects they teach, which enables them to have a clear idea of the learning outcomes of the lessons taught. These are shared with the pupils so that it is clear to the pupils what is going to be learned and what comes next. In Year 6, subject expertise in English, mathematics and science is used very well to raise standards. The headteacher and the two Year 6 teachers organise these lessons so that English and mathematics are taught by specialists. In science, the headteacher also takes a class to enable the Year 6 literacy teacher to take a booster class in Year 5 to improve writing standards. The headteacher also takes English and mathematics booster classes in Year 6 so that all three teachers teach smaller groups which enables them to provide work for the pupils which is closely matched to their abilities. The headteacher teaches 'booster groups' so that those pupils who are close to reaching the levels expected for their age are supported and monitored closely. This organisation and the teaching skills these teachers have, means that the teaching in Year 6 is highly effective.
18. The teaching is good in both the Nursery and Reception classes (the Early Years Unit), and very good teaching was seen in both areas. The consistently good quality of the teaching enables the children to make a good start to school and they make good progress and achieve well. A teacher, with the support of a teaching assistant teaches the Reception class. In the Nursery, nursery nurses have responsibility for teaching the children. The teaching in both the Nursery and Reception classes has a number of strengths. The classes are very well organised and the children very well managed. Where the best teaching is seen there is an effective use of questions and planned opportunities to use talk to promote and develop the children's language and communication skills. There is a good balance between teacher directed learning activities and those that the children can tackle independently. In an excellent literacy lesson the Reception class teacher provided a very good range of well-structured activities to promote learning in speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. She completed the lesson by extending the children's knowledge of sounds with a challenging and interesting activity to teach them the blend 'sh'. Throughout the Early Years Unit, the teacher, nursery nurses and the teaching assistant work hard to provide a productive, interesting and enjoyable range of activities so enabling the children to make good progress. Together they plan the activities carefully to ensure that there are opportunities for the children to have overall access to all the areas of learning. On occasions, this planning could develop more opportunities for the younger children to focus on literacy and numeracy learning objectives as there are some missed opportunities to follow up the introductory work by direct teaching of basic skills to groups or individuals. The school could usefully consider organising small group sessions in the Nursery class so that more focussed literacy and numeracy activities are gradually introduced.

19. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory in most subjects but unsatisfactory in English, mathematics, geography and history. Although the teachers in the infants follow the structure of the literacy and numeracy strategies when planning their lessons the tasks set in English lessons are often mundane and in particular do not sufficiently challenge the more able pupils. In mathematics lessons the work is largely unchallenging and tasks are not always well matched to the abilities of the pupils and some pupils struggle to understand basic numeracy skills. This was evident in a lesson for both Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. Here, the teacher did not set consistent expectations when the pupils drew two-dimensional shapes. Many pupils struggled with the concept of symmetry because it was not explained clearly enough. As some pupils became frustrated, noise levels rose and learning became unsatisfactory. Although infant pupils try hard and persevere with tasks, for example, when investigating numbers up to 100 and beyond by the end of Year 2, too little is provided by teachers to extend their understanding and workbooks show that the tasks set are often unchallenging with little scope for more able pupils to reach their full potential.
20. In the more effective infant lessons, teachers bring out the best in the pupils. For example, when Year 1 and pupils learned to spell out rhyming words and read aloud 'How Billy Duck learned to swim' using the big book and text. Year 2 pupils in the mixed age Year 2 and 3 class, enjoyed reading 'Hairy McClary' aloud and experimented with 'silly rhymes' which helped them to gain a greater understanding of word sounds. However, in mathematics lessons the work is largely unchallenging and tasks are not always well matched to the abilities of the pupils and some pupils struggle to understand basic numeracy skills. This was evident in a lesson for both Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. Here, the teacher did not set consistent expectations when the pupils drew two-dimensional shapes. Many pupils struggled with the concept of symmetry because it was not explained clearly enough. As some pupils became frustrated, noise levels rose and learning became unsatisfactory. Although infant pupils try hard and persevere with tasks, for example, when investigating numbers up to 100 and beyond by the end of Year 2, too little is provided by teachers to extend their understanding and workbooks show that the tasks set are often unchallenging with little scope for more able pupils to reach their full potential.
21. In the junior classes, the teaching is satisfactory overall and in Year 6 it is usually very good. Nearly half of the lessons observed were good or better, including nearly a quarter which were very good with one excellent lesson observed in Year 6. The teachers prepare practical and interesting tasks that motivate and sustain the pupils' concentration, enabling them to work hard and persevere with the tasks set. The literacy and numeracy strategies are implemented effectively and this has helped to raise the standards in English and mathematics. In nearly all of the lessons seen, there was a good structure so that time was provided for the pupils to ask questions and explain their methods. This was evident in the very good mathematics lessons seen in Years 5 and 6 when teachers built effectively on previous work to provide very good opportunities for the pupils to use a protractor and to identify different types of angles in two-dimensional shapes. In Year 6, subject expertise in English, mathematics and science is used very well to raise standards. The headteacher and the two Year 6 teachers organise these lessons so that English and mathematics are taught by specialists. In science, the headteacher also takes a class to enable the Year 6 literacy teacher to take a booster class in Year 5 to improve writing standards. The headteacher also takes English and mathematics booster classes in Year 6 so that all three teachers teach smaller groups. This enables them to provide work for the pupils which is closely matched to their abilities. The headteacher teaches 'booster groups' so that those pupils who are close to reaching the levels expected for their age are monitored closely. This organisation and the teaching skills these teachers have, means that the teaching in Year 6 is highly effective. In another effective Year 6

mathematics lesson, the teacher used very good techniques when associating pairs of numbers as co-ordinates and linked this to help the pupils develop a better understanding of linear graphs. More able Year 6 pupils are successfully using algebra to construct and solve simple linear equations. In English, the Year 6 teacher demonstrates excellent subject knowledge and sets high expectations resulting in a high standard of work from all the pupils who are grouped by ability. For example, when exploring narrative texts, the pupils have become more confident when looking for definitions of extended words and phrases. One pupil, through trial and error, could hazard a guess at the meaning of 'windcheater' and correctly arrived at a definition after discussion and when looking at the context of the sentence.

22. In other year groups, the teaching is mainly satisfactory with good features. Science lessons are practical and provide good opportunities for the pupils to enquire and plan their own investigations. In art and design and design and technology there has been good improvement to the curriculum and teachers' planning so that the pupils go through a consistent process of design, evaluation and modification. Their work is attractively displayed in the school's art gallery. However, like the infant classes, geography and history are not taught well enough so that the quality of teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. This is largely related to the lack of a consistency in teachers' medium-term planning so that teachers do not build on previous learning in the same way they do for other subjects. Year 5 pupils for example, when studying ancient civilisations, did not have enough information about Ancient Greeks to satisfy their curiosity when asking questions. The lesson did not build sufficiently on previous work so that the tasks were too fragmented and unrelated.
23. The teachers use satisfactory assessments to monitor the pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. Good use is made of homework so that the pupils show good attitudes to school work and tasks set for them at home. In most classes, there is effective marking of the pupils' work with helpful comments to help the pupils improve. Individual learning targets are set for all the pupils and these help to predict what levels the pupils will reach at each stage but for more able pupils in Years 1 and 2, targets could be more challenging, especially in mathematics.
24. The school has done well since the last inspection in improving the teaching so that standards have risen year on year since then. Most of the high quality teaching is found in Year 6, although compared with that found at the time of the last inspection, there are more good lessons and fewer satisfactory lessons. In the most effective lessons, the teachers provide challenge and enthusiasm for the subjects taught. In these lessons, resources are very well used to support and enhance the pupils' experiences. For example, in a very good English lesson in Year 6, the pupils were inspired by the enthusiasm of their teacher as they read and investigated different texts. In the Nursery and Reception classes, teachers assess how the children are doing with their reading and from these assessments they evoke thoughtful discussion about characters in stories.
25. The pupils who have special educational needs are taught satisfactorily. Teachers and teaching assistants are aware of the need to ensure that pupils keep positive attitudes to school and use praise and encouragement well to motivate the pupils. Help in class is most effective when it enables the pupils to participate in every part of the lesson. In some lessons the teaching assistants provide subtle support when the teacher is talking to the whole class. They rephrase questions so that the pupils better understand. The pupils are therefore ready for work that follows and are able to work within the class. This is not always the case and there are occasions when teaching assistants have too little to do while the teacher is talking to the whole class. When the pupils work in small groups outside the classroom the work is well

matched to the targets in their individual education plans. This is not always the case in whole class lessons. Here the pupils are expected to do the same work as other pupils and this is sometimes poorly matched to their targets. When this happens the pupils rely on teaching assistants to help them and if this help is unavailable they find some of the work too difficult. Teachers and teaching assistants provide satisfactory support for the small number of pupils learning English as an additional language.

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

26. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, which is balanced and broadly based. It includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and meets the statutory requirements of all subjects, although there are weaknesses in the provision for geography and history. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. This is an overall improvement since the previous inspection. The school has successfully addressed the key issues raised in the last report. Teachers have received effective training in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. English and mathematics lessons are planned according to the requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and this has resulted in lessons of a uniform structure, designed to meet the different ages and levels of ability. Lessons are now monitored, so that teachers' performance is under regular review. The pupils' work is regularly assessed, their progress is monitored and targets are set for future development. The time allocated to subjects has been analysed and rationalised. It is used more efficiently. Standards in English, mathematics and science have risen as a result of these developments. The decision to introduce specialist teaching and booster groups in Year 6 has been instrumental in raising the standards of the oldest pupils. In these lessons, exemplary planning and teaching meet the needs of all the pupils. There is a need to develop this level of planning in Years 1 and 2 so that work is better matched to the abilities of the pupils.
27. The school has adopted national curriculum planning guidelines, and adapted them to meet their needs. This has resulted in an improvement in long, medium and short term planning in all subjects, although there are occasions when planned learning does not match accurately the needs of all the pupils, especially in the infant years. Standards in art and design and design and technology have improved. In the short time since its last inspection, the school has rightly focused its attention on raising literacy and numeracy standards. This has hampered progress in some other subjects such as geography and history where standards have not risen sufficiently. The school's detailed assessment of its own performance means that it is aware of this weakness and plans to address the situation. Records are kept in all subjects, and provide good diagnostic information about progress. The school's homework procedure is well established. Homework is set regularly and recorded in a diary. Observed in practice, one very good lesson used the previous day's homework as its focus. A very good outcome because all pupils had completed it!
28. In the Nursery and Reception classes the children have good access overall to a broad and balanced curriculum that is well planned. The planning is linked to all the areas of learning and provides the children with a productive, interesting and enjoyable range of activities and this promotes the good progress made by the children. However, there are some shortcomings in the provision of a full curriculum for Foundation Stage children. On occasions, the planning could develop more opportunities for the younger children to focus on literacy and numeracy learning objectives, for example, by providing more opportunities for the children to engage in writing activities both teacher-lead and independently. Resources for outdoor play are

unsatisfactory. There is no dedicated outside area with suitable facilities for children to run, jump and climb or enjoy fresh air in an outdoor classroom. This limits their opportunities to develop independence, experience free choice of physical activities and use their imagination outdoors. All of the staff in the Early Years Unit (Nursery and Reception classes) work hard to compensate for this by making good use of the large indoor play area with the sandpit, dabble pool and role-play corner. The school hall is used for physical education lessons and the playground for wheeled toys and ball games.

29. The pupils who have special educational needs are taught alongside the class and on occasions in small groups for separate work. They benefit from the same curriculum as the rest of the school. This curriculum is added to by well-planned catch up lessons. The pupils with special educational needs are well represented in after school clubs and benefit equally from any extra activities the school provides.
30. The school's policy on personal, social and health education is being written at present, with a plan to introduce a co-ordinated programme after Easter. Currently, aspects are taught throughout the curriculum, for instance, through religious education and science. A very good example was observed in Year 6 during a discussion on moral dilemmas. Visiting theatre groups tackle aspects of health education, such as smoking and solvent abuse, as well as topics such as citizenship. The outcome of current arrangements is good. Consequently, the pupils are well balanced, self aware, courteous and relate well with one another. The staff and governors have taken the decision to teach sex education through a programme of personal, social and health education. Although the school promotes equal opportunities, aspects of its policies need further refinement, for example, how to ensure that when some pupils are withdrawn for specialist teaching say, in music or literacy support, that they are updated on any sessions they miss with the rest of their class. Extra curricular activities are good. Many interesting and challenging activities are provided for the pupils. Most available places are taken up with many clubs full to capacity. Clubs change every six weeks, so the pupils experience a breadth of experiences. Hence, they participate in artistic activities, such as choir, dance, art and drama, and sporting activities, like basketball and football, and technical activities, such as computers, cookery, chess and first aid.
31. A wide range of visits and visitors to the school also enhances the curriculum. Trips are organised to a variety of places, including Lichfield Cathedral, Mosely Old Hall and the Black Country Museum. The pupils also enjoy residential visits to Llandudno, Bryntisilio Outdoor Education Centre and France, all of which make a valuable contribution to personal, social and health education. Visitors to the school enrich the curriculum, by providing insights into their work and beliefs, for example, a dog warden and the animal lecture service. Community involvement in the school is good. Assemblies are led by representatives from different churches. Parents are very supportive, for instance, by helping to run the library, hearing pupils read and supporting teachers who take the pupils for swimming lessons in the infant classes. The school has developed good relationships with local businesses, which have, for example, sponsored the school's art gallery. The pupils are very involved in raising money for charities and often take the initiative in fund raising efforts.
32. The school works well with its partner institutions. Relationships are good and productive. Hence the school works with local schools on curriculum development. Transition to the secondary phase is good, resulting from a series of purposeful visits. This is further enhanced by one secondary school being available for Saturday morning activities.

33. The overall provision for the pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. The school's provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. School assemblies make a suitable contribution to this. The headteacher and visiting ministers use assemblies to raise pupils' spiritual awareness by telling enjoyable stories about themes such as becoming a good person and overcoming fear. Silence is used well during these occasions to help the pupils reflect on the meaning of the theme for their own lives. The development of spirituality in lessons is not planned for systematically but occurs incidentally. Teachers use these incidents to encourage reflection. For example, in a science lesson in Year 6 on dissolving substances, the pupils were absorbed by the way baking powder bubbled over a beaker. The teacher used this mood well to get a response from the pupils so that one boy said, 'it's like a volcano erupting.'
34. The school has a clear framework for helping the pupils decide right from wrong. The well defined behaviour code is consistently implemented and results in good behaviour throughout the school. Classrooms display rules which pupils have helped write and suitable rewards are given for behaving and working in the right way. Effort is usually rewarded with, for example, teachers choosing the pupils who have tried hard to receive an achievement certificate in a whole school assembly. Teachers take time to talk to the pupils about how they should behave rather than shouting at them in order to make them behave. This is developing good self-discipline in the pupils. Lessons provide opportunities for the pupils to consider moral issues such as bullying and the effects of drugs on individuals. In a very good religious education lesson in Year 6, the pupils were posed the moral dilemma of whether it was right for a parent to steal in order to fund a life saving operation for a child. Such occasions stimulate debate and help the pupils think more clearly about the moral dilemmas they face in their own lives.
35. Provision for the pupils' social development is good. The pupils are given suitable opportunities to work together and teachers stress the importance of teamwork. Older pupils carry out a range of tasks which helps the school community to run smoothly. Fundraising for a range of charities is a strong feature of the school. A good range of trips and clubs including residential trips at Years 5 and 6 provide further opportunities for pupils to learn how to get on together.
36. The school provides well for the pupils' cultural development. In religious education, the pupils study a range of other faiths and gain some insight into other cultures. Although the school does not have a special link with a school from a different cultural background it is largely successful in preparing the pupils for a culturally diverse society. Dancers and singers from a range of cultures, including Bhangra dancers and an Afro Caribbean gospel group, have visited the school to run workshops with the pupils. The development of the school's own art gallery provides a way of celebrating the work of artists within school and displaying their work alongside that of established artists, whilst in music, the pupils are introduced to the work of a range of composers. Opportunities however, are missed in some subjects, especially history and geography, to deepen the pupils' understanding of other times and other places.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school continues to be a caring community, as it was at the time of the last inspection. It has a warm and friendly atmosphere. Good procedures ensure the health, welfare and safety of pupils. Arrangements for child protection are effective. The headteacher is the designated person and has been recently trained, as has her deputy. Informal training is given to all staff.

Local guidelines have been adopted. Links with social services have been hampered because of frequent organisational and staffing changes in that department of the local authority.

38. The school has effective health and safety policies, with all statutory procedures in place. Three members of staff have been trained in first aid. Accident books are carefully kept. The pupils' medical conditions are carefully logged, although as yet they are not readily available to supply teachers. Fire and electrical equipment is checked regularly and fire drills take place each term. Risk assessments take place regularly and are undertaken for trips and visits. The conscientious site manager has good procedures for health and safety. The Internet safety policy is effective. Teachers follow good practice in design and technology, science and physical education. Supervision at playtimes is good and all supervisors have been trained in proactive play and safety. Security procedures are good.
39. Comprehensive policies underpin the good procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating bullying. School rules are clear and shared with parents through the home/school agreement. Good behaviour and hard work are rewarded through stickers and certificates and recorded in charts and the Praise Book. This, together with teachers' behaviour books, are monitored weekly by the headteacher. Sanctions are appropriate and parents are quickly involved in any difficulties.
40. The pupils have many good opportunities for taking responsibility. All have tasks within the class and older pupils help with assemblies, at lunchtimes, with the mobile tuck shop and so on. The pupils are keen to volunteer for House positions. The many school clubs make a good contributions to the pupils' personal development, as does circle time and elements of personal, social and health education. The pupils' personal development is monitored well, through class records, the Praise Book and annual reports to parents. The headteacher has held discussions and surveys of the views of Year 6 parents about school life.
41. The pupils with special educational needs settle into school well. Their needs are quickly assessed and appropriate provision made. The pupils' individual learning plans are well maintained and identify a small number of key improvements needed to move learning along. The school has made efforts to ask parents for their views prior to review meetings but not all the parents are as yet attending reviews. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is monitored largely through tests that are administered to the whole class. This reveals the rate of progress made in English and mathematics but there is less on-going monitoring of daily work in relation to targets in individual education plans and the school recognises this as an area for further development.
42. Attendance monitoring is satisfactory. Registers are checked weekly by the headteacher and administrative staff for patterns of lateness and absence. Letters are sent to parents on the second day of unexplained absence, but parents are not called on the first day. although the school has plans to address this. Awards are given for good attendance. The Educational Welfare Officer visits weekly and is active in pursuing families with attendance problems.
43. At the time of the 2001 inspection, part of the key issue to raise standards in English and mathematics was "to enable teachers to monitor and assess pupils progress more accurately in order to set targets for future development". Overall, this issue has been satisfactorily addressed as the assessment of the pupils' work and the use made of the information gathered shows an improving picture.

44. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science are now secure. The pupils' progress is beginning to be tracked from when they enter the school and appropriate targets are being set for the levels of attainment that the pupils should achieve as they move through the school. Recently an updated policy for assessment throughout the school has been finalised and agreed. Within this there is a timetable for regular and frequent tests and assessments throughout the school. The results from the range of standardised and external tests are analysed and they are being used more effectively to promote the pupils' learning. The analyses are used to group pupils and to set overall targets for each group to work towards. The way in which the pupils are made aware of these targets has recently been improved. The school has introduced a system of cards with the target information. These are kept in front of the pupils whilst they are working and this helps to remind them of what they need to do. However, for everyday use, some of these targets are too long term and need further refinement so that pupils know what they are going to learn next in smaller steps, as well as what they need to do to achieve the next level in their work.
45. Soon after entry to the Nursery class, baseline assessments are carried out to establish how the children compare with national and local levels of achievement. The tasks are checked at the end of the year and the results show the good progress made by the children. In both the Nursery and Reception classes there are good arrangements in place to check how well all the children are learning on a regular basis and whether they are making enough progress. The information gained is used to plan further work for the children; helping to promote the good progress seen. The children with special educational needs are identified at an early stage in the Nursery and Reception classes and good support is given to them. The good arrangements mean that they are included in and participate well in the learning activities planned for all of the children. This is a good improvement since the last inspection which identified at the time that the special educational needs of some children were not identified and well supported.
46. The school is using staff meetings and training days to develop teachers' skills in assessment. This is leading to a better and shared understanding of the processes involved and the ways in which assessment information can be used to promote the pupils' learning. This information from assessment has been particularly and effectively used in Year 6 and contributes to the good progress made by the pupils in that year group. However, it is not yet so well used in other areas of the school, especially in Years 1 and 2, and this is having a detrimental impact on progress as the pupils move through their infant years and, most particularly, in the progress they make in English and mathematics. In other subjects, procedures for assessing and recording the progress of pupils are in the early stages of development, although the school has begun to assess the progress the pupils make by using key objectives in every programme of study and topic being covered. The school has also identified the need to monitor and assess the pupils with special educational needs more regularly and is putting in place procedures to do this.
47. The reports to parents cover the progress made by their children in all of the areas of the curriculum and also have useful comments on their personal and social development. However, the reports vary in the detail that is given for what the pupils need to do next to make progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. The parents at the pre-inspection meeting and the response to the questionnaires were very supportive of the school and all that it does for their children. In a high response, parents raised no concerns and were very pleased with all aspects of the school. This is a

considerable improvement on the last inspection. The findings of the inspection largely support parents' positive views.

49. The school continues to have good links with parents. The information it supplies for them is good. The prospectus is attractively presented and written in a clear and readable style. The governors' annual report is also clear and easy to read, although it does not include information about progress since the last inspection and National Curriculum test results are confusingly presented. The Welcome Booklet for parents includes helpful information on helping children at home. Newsletters are frequent, lively and attractively presented. The parents are given advance information each term on what their children are to learn.
50. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. Homework diaries and reading diaries are used well as a means of dialogue between home and school. Annual reports are satisfactory. They offer targets for improvement, but these are not always specific enough to be helpful. They do not offer opportunities for parents or the pupils to comment. The home/school agreement has been signed by most parents. Homework is given regularly and appropriately. An appropriate number of consultation meetings are held each year and parents feel that teachers are always willing to talk to them informally about their children's progress.
51. Parent governors are active members of the governing body. A good number of parents help in school on a regular basis and more help with trips and visits. School concerts, performances and assemblies are well attended by parents. There is at present no Parents Association, but the school runs a good range of social and fund-raising events to buy equipment to enhance children's learning.
52. The school establishes a satisfactory partnership with the parents of pupils who have special educational needs. Efforts are made to involve them in regular meetings to discuss progress and future goals. This is done both through inviting parents to reviews meetings and through whole school parent evenings. However, some parents do not attend these reviews and this is an area the school wishes to explore further. The co-ordinator has produced an informative booklet for parents which gives them valuable background information about special education needs and makes it clear what to do if they have any concerns.
53. The school has good arrangements in place for the introduction of the children to both the Nursery and Reception class. These include home visits by the Nursery staff; good opportunities for the children to visit the classes; and meetings for parents. Useful information sheets are provided for the parents. The Early Years Unit sends regular and good quality newsletters, which keep the parents well informed about what is happening in the classes and what and how the children are learning. The teachers are available to the parents and carers to discuss any problems on a day-to-day basis and regular parents' evenings are arranged for the parents and carers to see and hear about the overall progress made by the children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The headteacher was appointed just before the last inspection two years ago. At that time inspectors judged that she had made a very good impression on the school with some positive signs that the school had the capacity to address its under-achievement. Since then standards have risen markedly by the end of Year 6 and this is reflected in the national test results. The headteacher provides good and effective leadership and management. She sets high expectations and has worked very hard in a short period of time to eliminate under-

achievement. This has been successful with improved teaching and learning in most subjects. The school's capacity to succeed and raise standards further is good.

55. The headteacher and staff are much respected by the pupils, parents, staff and governors. The senior management team focus and steer the work of the school to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Raising standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science has been the main focus for development. With good improvements to the teaching and the curriculum, the impact of these have had a direct bearing on the sustained improvement in standards by the end of Year 6 since the last inspection. All the staff and adults who have day-to-day contact with the pupils reflect the school's stated aims well. They work well together and they are committed to providing the best for all pupils.
56. The headteacher and senior staff have a good grasp and understanding of how to measure and improve standards. They assess how well the pupils are doing in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This enables them to measure the impact that the curriculum, planning and teaching have on standards in the national tests. Although curriculum co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning as well as pupils' work to assess how well they are doing, this needs to be a lot sharper in English and mathematics for Year 1 and 2 pupils so that standards rise and the teaching improves. During the difficult period when the school was designated as under-achieving, the headteacher and senior staff have directed all their efforts to raising standards. More could now be done to extend this to other subjects such as geography and history. The governors have set appropriately challenging performance targets to help them monitor how well the school is doing and, together with the headteacher, there are good links with governors to enable them to take direct action. There are good and effective procedures to help and support new staff.
57. Resources have improved considerably since the extension of the Early Years Unit and the introduction of the information and communication technology room. Good improvements have been made to the school's internal appearance with the introduction of the art gallery, the shared areas and the design and technology display areas.
58. The governors are knowledgeable and experienced and very committed to the needs of the school and its pupils. They provide good support and help the headteacher to manage the school. Formal and effective monitoring procedures ensure that governors are kept well informed by the headteacher and senior staff and, as a result, they have good understanding of the school's needs, strengths and weaknesses. The governors visit the school and receive regular reports from the headteacher. A number of governors regularly visit the school and work closely with the headteacher and staff. The governors' annual report to parents is thorough and well presented. The school development plan is used effectively to steer the work of the school. The school makes good use of ICT to manage and support the school's organisation and administration. The governors have a good understanding of cost effectiveness and apply sound principles when determining value for money when committing the school's funds.
59. The school has a good number of well-qualified teaching and support staff. There is an appropriate balance of experience and expertise and all staff are encouraged to develop their own skills through ongoing training. Support staff are valued as key players in the school's work. There is a well-developed commitment on the part of all members of staff to improvement. Administrative staff are very efficient and ensure that the school runs smoothly. They are available to parents and ensure that visitors are made welcome. The day-to-day financial management of the school is very efficient.

60. Provision for the pupils who have special educational needs is satisfactorily led and managed. The co-ordinator is organised and has ensured that clear systems are in place for the early identification of pupils who have special educational needs. This is an improvement since the last inspection. She ensures that procedures are followed and that records are kept up to date. She also ensures that teaching assistants are suitably deployed and liaises well with them on a day-to-day basis.
61. Financial management is good. The governing body delegates the day-to-day running of the budget to the headteacher. They keep a close eye on how it is spent and are involved in agreeing priorities for future spending. The headteacher targets spending carefully and with the able support of the schools' administrative staff, ensures that finances run smoothly. Suitable action has been taken to manage a small deficit in the current financial year. The school makes sure it gets the most for its money and the best price for goods and services. The school has made very good use of new grants available to improve school buildings, so that since the last inspection, the level of resources and condition of the building have improved considerably.
62. The teacher with responsibility for the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) is well informed, enthusiastic and hard working. She and her Early Years Unit staff share a clear vision of the needs for the provision and development of the curriculum for the children in the Nursery and Reception classes and consistently look to extend and develop their own expertise. They work closely together in the planning and delivery of the curriculum and take good opportunities to check and decide what needs improving. Since the last inspection, the Nursery and Reception areas have been amalgamated and reorganised. They have also been redecorated and the facilities and resources improved. The furnishing, decoration and displays in all of the learning areas are lively and colourful and the classrooms provide a very good variety of activities to support learning in all areas of the Early Years curriculum. A particularly interesting feature, which is well used, is the way in which the Reception class has separate rooms for literacy and numeracy activities. The school is aware of the need to develop a well-organised and resourced outdoor play area. This area of provision is currently unsatisfactory and affects the on-going development of the children, limiting their opportunities to develop independence, experience free choice of physical activities and use their imagination outdoors.
63. The school has an adequate number of staff to deliver the National Curriculum. Accommodation is good and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. The accommodation in the Foundation and Nursery is attractive, as it was at the time of the last inspection, although there are insufficient outdoor facilities for the play area for the children in the Early Years Unit. The site manager has undertaken extensive redecoration. He continues to be a great asset to the school and has followed his programme of classroom redecoration to the upper storey of the building with the help of other members of staff. Classrooms are of a good size. A new ICT suite has been added and the library is of a good size and well stocked. Corridors are now light and attractive and used well to display pupils' work. The junior corridor is especially striking, acting as an Art Gallery for the work of pupils and staff. Resources are good in ICT, music, science and religious education. They are satisfactory in all other subjects except history, where they are unsatisfactory.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. Now that the school has addressed the issues of underachievement and to build on the improvements made since the last inspection, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- **Raise standards by the end of Year 2 in English and mathematics by:**
 - improving the pupils' word-building skills to improve confidence in reading;
 - ensuring that the pupils' writing is improved and builds on the work done in the Early Years Unit;
 - providing more opportunities for the pupils to write at length and to develop their independent writing skills in all subjects;
 - providing more challenging problem solving activities for more able pupils in mathematics lessons.

(Paragraphs: 1-2; 4-5; 17; 19-20; 72; 82-91; 92)

- **Improve the quality of teaching in English and mathematics for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils by:**
 - planning work that is better matched to the abilities of the pupils;
 - providing more pace in lessons and challenging activities for all the pupils.

(Paragraphs: 2; 4; 8; 17; 19-20; 26; 90; 93-94;)

- **Improve the quality of geography and history teaching as well as providing a consistent geography and history curriculum that enables the pupils to build on previous work and learning.**

(Paragraphs: 8; 22; 36; 56; 116-119; 120-124)

OTHER LESS SERIOUS AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- **Improve attendance rates and, in particular, with the co-operation and support of the parents concerned, reduce the rate of unauthorised absence to bring it more into line with the national average.**

(Paragraphs 15; 42)

- **Improve outdoor play facilities for the children in the Early Years Unit (Nursery and Reception).**

(Paragraphs 28; 62; 75)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	66
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	38

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	12	19	29	4	0	0
Percentage	3	18	29	44	6	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	19	270
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	59

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	68

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.0

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.2

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	22	14	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	20
	Girls	13	12	14
	Total	28	28	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (83)	78 (77)	94 (97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	19	20
	Girls	12	12	13
	Total	26	31	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (80)	86 (94)	92 (80)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	17	28	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	15	13
	Girls	25	22	25
	Total	33	37	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (51)	82 (51)	84 (58)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	10	9
	Girls	24	19	20
	Total	32	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (51)	64 (49)	64 (47)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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	255	3	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	87

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
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	695,100
Total expenditure	688,814
Expenditure per pupil	2,159
Balance brought forward from previous year	-7,416
Balance carried forward to next year	-1,130

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	289
Number of questionnaires returned	108

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	34	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	43	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	43	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	57	5	1	2
The teaching is good.	61	39	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	46	10	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	32	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	25	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	38	56	5	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	64	35	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	39	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	44	3	0	5

Other issues raised by parents

Parents are very pleased with the way the headteacher has managed the school. They are especially appreciative of the changes made to the school and say that standards are much improved and teachers' expectations are much higher since the appointment of the headteacher two years ago. The parents say they choose the school because it provides a positive and supportive environment for their children. Many believe that this is a good school where the staff work hard to provide a wide range of interesting activities and opportunities for all the pupils.

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

65. There are currently 46 children in the Nursery, 27 attending in the mornings and 19 in the afternoon. The children enter the Nursery at the beginning of the term following their third birthday. There are 29 children in the Reception class, they move into this class at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. Both the Nursery and Reception are taught in an area of the school referred to as the Early Years Unit. The Nursery children are taught and cared for by qualified Nursery Nurses and the teacher responsible for the Reception children is responsible for the unit.
66. In both the Nursery and Reception classes the children come into school happily and confidently, the start to the sessions are calm, positive and productive. There are good arrangements in place for the day-to-day exchange of information between parents, carers and the school staff and for the children to leave school safely in the care of a known adult. The teachers and other adults get to know the children well, and soon establish very good relationships with them. This encourages the children to try hard and to behave well and contributes to the good progress made by the children in the Nursery and Reception class.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. The children enter the school with a range of personal, social and emotional development but overall it is below the level expected for their age. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes and the majority achieve what is expected by the age of five. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good, the teachers make sure that all the children have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and, as a result, they develop positive attitudes to learning. When they come into school, the children settle quickly and happily because they know the routines on entering the classroom. All the children enjoy the group register sessions when they take turns to be helper of the day. They select the day, date and weather cards and help to count the number of children present. Choosing a friend to go with them, they hold hands carefully and confidently take the register to the office together with the children from the other groups. These opening sessions are well used to give all of the children opportunities to share their thoughts and experiences with the teachers and each other.
68. In the Nursery and Reception classes the children are provided with good opportunities to work and play together; they persevere with tasks and behave very well as when they move between the activities during the free-choice sessions in the classrooms. They are kind and supportive to one another. There are good relationships between all the adults who work in the Nursery and Reception classes and the children. The children gain confidence in speaking to adults and to each other. Throughout the Early Years Unit the adults have high expectations of the children's behaviour and ability to take care of themselves independently and as a result their personal and social skills are developing well. The children take care of their personal hygiene and they gradually become more confident and capable when dressing and undressing for physical education sessions. In all the groups there are good opportunities for the children to develop independence and self-reliance; this is especially impressive when

the children take part in the role-play activities. There has been good progress in this area of learning since the last inspection.

Communication, language and literacy

69. Although there is a range of attainment, the majority of children enter the Nursery with below average language skills and some children's speaking skills are poor. In communication, language and literacy progress is slower than in the other areas of learning and fewer children reach the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year, particularly in writing. This is partly because of the low base of language development from which the children begin but also because, on occasions, the teaching in this area is less focussed than it could be. Overall, the teaching of early reading skills and opportunities for the development for speaking and listening are good. However, in both the Nursery and Reception classes, there are some opportunities missed for direct teaching of basic literacy skills to groups or individuals. In addition, in the Nursery the children do not often choose to write preferring the construction, small world or role-play activities. A more regular use of focused literacy sessions would help to redress this imbalance.
70. The skills of speaking and listening are developed well in adult-directed activities. The children are encouraged to join in discussions about what they have enjoyed doing. They begin to speak with confidence to adults and in front of the class. They listen carefully to the adults, answer questions and are beginning to express their points of view. During imaginative play they enjoy talking to each other and can adapt their speech to the role of receptionist in the vet's surgery or when enacting the story of 'Ten in the Bed' using puppets. In the introductory part of a literacy lesson, the children suggest a good range of words to describe the noises made by the animals falling out of bed, for example thump, crash, clunk, bump and whack. The children are often given opportunities to say what they are doing but they are not always given opportunities to discuss what they have learned.
71. The children listen well to stories. They enjoy looking at story and information books and concentrate well in the sessions that focus on language development. They respond to events in stories such as 'The Rainbow Fish' and 'Ten in the Bed'. In the Reception class the teacher develops and builds the children's early reading skills well through the sharing of books and stories and the teaching of phonic skills. The children in the Reception class know the individual letters of the alphabet by sight and sound by the end of the year. The majority of the children can recognise a range of words from the key words list by sight. They recognise, read, and by the end of the year, most can write their names. The most able children are able to read simple texts fluently; they make good use of pictures and contextual clues to help them tackle new words. All the children take library books home regularly to share with parents and carers and this makes a positive contribution to their achievement.
72. As the children move through the Nursery and Reception classes they begin to develop their understanding of the writing process. Throughout the Early Years Unit the children are provided with a range of activities to develop hand-eye co-ordination, pencil and crayon control. They are taught to form letters correctly. The classrooms have alphabet charts and labels to encourage the children to link letters and sounds and write words for themselves. When they are 'working' in the 'vet's surgery', they can explain that the marks they have made are to give details of the animals and what the problem is. In the Reception class, the children are encouraged to use a dictionary to find animal words they identify and write successfully the initial sounds but cannot yet spell out simple words independently. Overall,

there are satisfactory opportunities for the children to encourage them to write for a variety of purposes, but insufficient focused or sustained activities and this means that on occasions the process and progress of learning to write is slowed. The school could usefully extend the ways in which they build the children's confidence by modelling writing so that they learn that print carries meaning, and that it can be used to express thoughts and ideas. In addition, more occasions could be provided for the children to have opportunities to try and write for themselves. There has been satisfactory progress in this area of learning since the last inspection.

Mathematical development

73. The children enter the Nursery class with below average skills in mathematical development. By the end of the year in the Reception class the majority of the children have achieved the early learning goals in mathematical development. Throughout the Nursery and Reception classes the teaching is consistently good, and enables the children to make good progress in gaining mathematical understanding and skills. The teachers make the learning fun through games and use of the numbers in games and singing rhymes. This helps the children build confidence in counting and recognising numbers. The school could usefully consider extending the class and small group sessions, especially in the Nursery, so that more focussed numeracy activities are gradually introduced.
74. The children recognise and write numbers to ten and many can count to at least 20 and some confidently beyond. In the Reception class, the children understand how to add and subtract numbers up to ten and a few children can work successfully with higher numbers. They learn about patterns by creating and continuing sequences. They confidently recognise and explain the properties of a range of two-dimensional shapes. They learn that clocks tell the time and are beginning to recognise the meaning and use of the term 'o'clock'. There has been good progress in this area of learning since the last inspection.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

75. The children enter the Nursery class with below average experience of this area of learning. By the time they are five, most children are likely to achieve the level expected in knowledge and understanding of the world and overall the children make good progress because the quality of teaching is good in this area. Topics are planned to provide a good range of interesting and stimulating activities to support learning. There is a wide range of opportunities for the children to explore, use their imagination and experience play situations indoors, but those provided outside are not satisfactory as the children do not have access to a well equipped or stimulating outdoor play area.
76. The children find out about the different jobs that people do. For example, they enjoy a visit from local fire-fighters and learn about keeping safe from fire. The present theme in the role-play area is animal care. The area includes a veterinary surgery, a kennels and a shampoo parlour for pets. It is very well set up and equipped and the children make good use of it to experience the different facets of caring for animals and their needs. A lunchtime supervisor brings in her guinea pig and the children are able ask questions about its feeding and other routines. The children are being given a very good introduction to forces with a number of toys that need pushing or pulling to make them work. A good range of activities that encourage the children to think for themselves as well as experience practical situations extends the ideas of different forces. In response to the teacher's question, a child is able to

successfully select a toy that can be both pushed and pulled. The children enjoy the experience of using a piping bag to force the icing out onto cakes in an attractive pattern.

77. Throughout the Foundation Stage the teachers encourage the children to talk about family events and celebrations. They are beginning to understand the variety of religious and cultural beliefs and celebrations through stories and pictures and visits to places such as the Hindu Temple. The children learn how to operate the tape recorder and they become increasingly competent in using computer programs. They enjoy 'catching' fish by clicking, dragging and releasing them into the fish tank. Children from the Nursery confidently use a paint program to draw an outline of a fish. With some adult help they change the size of the brush and are then able to put in scales on the fish by clicking on different colours and placing them in the outline they have drawn. As part of the class project on fish, herring and trout are brought into the classroom and the children are amazed to examine their teeth, fins and scales. However, there are a few occasions when the questions asked by the adults do not enable the children to use more than one word in an answer and opportunities are missed to extend the children's vocabulary and language development in this area of learning. There has been good progress in this area of learning since the last inspection.

Physical development

78. The children generally enter school with below average skills in this area of their development. In the Nursery and Reception classes, their physical skills are well fostered especially through the indoor sessions. This means that most of the children reach the national expectations in this area of learning by the time they are five. However, resources for outdoor play are unsatisfactory, as the dedicated area does not have suitable facilities for children to run, jump and climb or enjoy fresh air in an outdoor setting. This limits the children's opportunities to develop independence and experience free choice of physical activities outdoors. The teaching in this area is good and enables the children to make the good progress seen because all of the staff in the Early Years Unit (Nursery and Reception classes) work hard to compensate for this. They make good use of the large indoor play area with the sandpit, dabble pool and role-play corner and use the school hall for physical education lessons. Outdoors, the children have occasional opportunities to use the wheeled outdoor equipment and to develop their skills in throwing and catching hoops and balls.
79. By the time they are five they can dress and undress themselves with some help with fasteners. When they have finished playing in the giant sandpit they are able to independently clean the sand off their feet and replace their socks and shoes. There are many opportunities to develop fine motor skills using paintbrushes, pencils and scissors, as well as through joining together pieces when completing jigsaws, tracks and construction kits. As they move by running, jumping, and hopping the children show a good awareness of space by not bumping into each other. They take care when they are playing not to act in ways that may hurt other children. They particularly enjoy using the large waffle blocks to build a variety of constructions. On one occasion the children made a large tower. There has been satisfactory progress in the provision for the physical development of the children since the last inspection.

Creative development

80. The majority of the children enter the school with below average attainment in this area of learning and they all attain or exceed the early learning goals before they leave the Reception class. The children enjoy a good range of experiences in art, music, story and imaginative play because the quality of teaching and learning is good. This enables the children to make the

good progress seen in their creative development. Since the last inspection, the Nursery and Reception areas have been redecorated and the facilities and resources improved. The furnishing, decoration and displays in all of the learning areas are lively and colourful and the classrooms provide a good variety of activities to support creative learning. The environment is interesting and the activities enriching. This provides good opportunities for the children's imagination to be stimulated.

81. The children paint with enjoyment and concentration. They know that colours can be mixed and that paint can be used to depict people and scenes and they like to talk about their pictures. Dry and wet sand is available for children to explore and use on a regular basis. The large dabble pool is used imaginatively as part of the wider topics being followed, for example, during the inspection children were fishing enthusiastically with nets for a variety of items. A good range of materials is provided for the children to use creatively; they cut, stick, and decorate their products with confidence and enjoyment. The children have good opportunities to explore the sounds that different instruments make. They sing well, they know and enjoy performing a range of songs and rhymes. Good resources for a variety of role-play situations are provided. This is especially the case in the veterinary surgery, kennels and pet shampoo parlour. The children enter enthusiastically into grooming the pets, making appointments and examining the sick animals. In the Reception class, the teacher gives the children very good opportunities to extend their learning through using the puppet theatre to enact a story they have listened to in the introduction to the literacy session. There has been good progress in creative development since the last inspection.

ENGLISH

82. Standards in English are below those expected by the end of Year 2 and in line with the national expectations by the end of Year 6. This is an improvement on both the results of the 2002 national tests and the standards at the time of the previous inspection. These improvements have come about because the school has addressed the key issues raised by the last report in 2001. The National Literacy Strategy has been adopted and teachers have received training in its implementation. Lessons are planned according to the requirements of the strategy and take account of the different ages and levels of ability. Completed work is assessed regularly, so that teachers are able to plot progress and set targets for future development. Lessons are monitored and teachers have been able to use the feedback to improve their performance. As a result of using the National Literacy Strategy, planned programmes of work to improve speaking and listening skills and writing, have been introduced. However, the impact of these has been more effective at the end of the junior years, and mainly in writing, by the introduction of specialist teaching and 'booster' groups in Year 6. The school's own performance review indicates that more improvements are needed in Years 1 and 2, and still more emphasis on speaking skills is needed throughout the school. Many opportunities are missed to teach English through other subjects of the curriculum, and vice versa. This is a weakness both in the delivery of the subject and in the response to a key issue from the last inspection. Group reading records have been introduced, which diagnose strengths and weaknesses, so that progress is monitored.
83. The pupils enter the school at a below average standard in communication, language and literacy. Although improvements are made, standards at the end of Year 2 are still below national averages. Improvements continue to be made in the juniors and this is accelerated in Year 6, by the introduction of specialist teaching and 'booster' groups. Hence, satisfactory progress through Years 3 to 5 becomes good progress in Year 6. There is no significant

difference between the performance of girls and boys. The provision of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and these pupils make sound progress.

84. The pupils' speaking skills are well below average by the end of Year 2. The pupils are willing to talk in discussion and to answer questions, but they often have difficulty in selecting the appropriate vocabulary. They have limited powers of expression, so that spoken responses lack clarity, as they struggle to explain their thinking. The pupils generally listen well in lessons. They also listen respectfully to one another during plenary sessions. By the end of Year 6, the pupils' speaking skills have improved, but are still below average. Although work on spoken English is currently better than that found in the last inspection, the pupils have not experienced a consistent approach over time, which develops and extends their knowledge and use of spoken language. Year 6 pupils enter into discussion with enthusiasm and confidence. They have interesting ideas and a willingness to express them, but lack a wide enough range of vocabulary to draw upon. Year 6 pupils listen well, and quickly understand what is required of them. They co-operate well in discussion groups.
85. Standards in reading are below average by the end of Year 2. More able pupils discuss their favourite books and give reasons for those they like. They talk about the characters, but hesitantly. Their reading is fluent and has good expression. They can interpret the underlying meaning of the text. Average and less able pupils lack expression, which indicates a lack of understanding. Word building is not secure and some pupils rely on picture clues to interpret meaning in the text. This leads to selecting an incorrect word, such as 'seed', when the word is 'stone.' None of the infant pupils talked to were clear about the difference between fiction and non-fiction. Too few pupils achieve above average reading standards by the end of Year 2.
86. By the end of Year 6, standards in reading are in line with the national average. The pupils discuss texts and authors in some detail, using appropriate vocabulary such as plot and character. They express preferences and give reasons for their choices. They discuss old fashioned and modern vocabulary, such as 'thus' and 'rifle', but don't always seek an accurate definition. However, they interpret characters' personalities in order to predict what will happen to them, for example, 'The sneaky character will come to a sticky end!' Occasionally, the books selected are immature. Poetry is popular, but only Lewis Carroll is remembered as a poet. They are familiar with a contents page, an index and a glossary, but sometimes mix them up.
87. Teachers analyse test papers to identify strengths and weaknesses. All the pupils have reading diaries, which record what they have read. In addition, teachers keep records of reading carried out in literacy lessons, which give good diagnostic information, used to plot progress and set future targets. The pupils have regular access to the school library, run by a volunteer parent helper. There is a good stock of fiction and non-fiction books. Information and communication technology is well used to support library skills.
88. In Years 1 and 2, standards in writing are below the national average, but are improving. A scrutiny of completed work shows that the pupils write in a variety of formats, such as stories, instructions, captions and reviews. They develop their stories in sentences, sometimes using full stops and capital letters. The pupils write at length, but this can become undisciplined and uncontrolled. By the end of Year 6 writing has improved and is in line with the national average. The pupils write for a wider range of purposes and use computers as part of the writing process. Specialist teaching and 'booster' groups have a marked effect in improving performance. Spelling, punctuation and grammar have all improved and pupils write in

paragraphs. Descriptive writing is better, although the use of imagery is limited. Handwriting throughout the school is inconsistent and varies from unsatisfactory to an acceptable style of writing. The quality of handwriting tends to rely on the expectations set by teachers.

89. Teachers regularly assess writing according to National Curriculum levels. This practice gives a clear picture of standards and progress. The pupils also gain an awareness of their own performance. Long and short-term targets are set and the pupils have their targets printed and always available. Marking is good and sometimes excellent. Older pupils are trained to mark their own writing against established criteria. The teacher then moderates this marking, so that pupils gain a good understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. This is an excellent process! The school's measurement of pupil performance indicates good progress being made.
90. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory. Overall it is satisfactory, with the strongest teaching occurring in the junior year groups. All teachers use the framework of the National Literacy Strategy. They prepare well for lessons, providing appropriate materials and resources. In the best lessons in Year 6, teachers, including the headteacher, have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They use appropriate language to question pupils sensitively about the text, and relate pupils' spoken answers well to their writing. The pupils are given time to assemble their thoughts when they respond, and are required to speak clearly and accurately. When analysing text, the pupils use highlighters to denote particular words and phrases, to which they can refer later, when making inferences and deductions. They are encouraged to record in efficient ways, such as bullet points. Relationships are very good and the pupils are eager to improve. They are delighted when they develop their writing and produce sentences like, 'I noticed a cold shiver go through the lad. It was difficult to tell him, but he needed to know.' When pupils have difficulty interpreting the text, the teacher perseveres with progressive questions designed to help them clarify their thoughts. Good discussions are promoted, even though pupils have limited powers of expression, at times. On some occasions, homework is very well used as the focus of the lesson. A feature of the good teaching is the clear procedures that pupils are taught to follow. These provide them with good guidelines, which they apply to future work. Teaching is unsatisfactory, as in an infant lesson, when the structure of the lesson goes awry and rigour and pace are lost. Pupils finish planned work too quickly, which indicates low expectations. At such times, the pupils become distracted and work noisily, because teaching methods neither stimulate, nor challenge. Most lessons benefit from elements of the very good teaching, but techniques need to be improved still further, in order to raise the overall standard across the school. For instance, there is a need to improve questioning skills, in order to develop spoken and written English.
91. The subject co-ordinator provides very good leadership in terms of management, organisation and subject development. She is also an excellent teacher, and sets a high standard. She has worked closely with the local education authority to establish a framework for improvement, which is having a positive impact on English standards. She monitors classroom practice and pupils' work, which has contributed to the improvement in standards. She has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She has prioritised accurately future developments, for example, in speaking and listening, and its relationship to writing. She is building up resources, so that all teachers have access to good resources when they need them. She has, for instance, introduced a computer program for improving narrative writing, which the pupils enjoy and to which they respond favourably. Spelling, phonics and writing videos also provide challenge and a variety of approach and these make a valuable contribution to the school's continuing professional development of its teaching.

MATHEMATICS

92. Standards by the end of Year 6 have improved since the last inspection and are now in line with those found nationally. Standards by the end of Year 2 however, remain unchanged and are still below the national average. The co-ordinator has seen to it that the National Numeracy Strategy is now in place, but the effectiveness of the teaching that underpins this varies considerably. The teaching in the infant years (Years 1 and 2) is unsatisfactory. Teachers are not confident and do not match work well enough to the pupils' differing abilities. As a result, progress, particularly by more able Years 1 and 2 pupils, is not good enough. In response to satisfactory teaching, the pupils make steady progress through Year 3 to 5. The pace of learning quickens markedly at Year 6 where good and often very good teaching demands a lot of the pupils who also benefit greatly from the extra lessons taught by the headteacher.
93. Teachers in the infants have mixed success when teaching the pupils to count orally. In a satisfactory lesson the teacher got a good response from the pupils ensuring that all were expected to answer questions about doubling numbers less than ten. But in another lesson, which also concentrated on doubles, the teacher aimed questions at only one pupil at a time so that by the end of the oral session only six pupils had answered a question.
94. In an unsatisfactory lesson on symmetry in Year 1, the teacher started the lesson by asking pupils what symmetry was. She was met by a chorus of pupils saying 'What's that mean?' Despite the fact that only two pupils could draw a symmetrical shape, the teacher glossed over the concept so that the pupils' understanding remained muddled. She provided a range of activities for different groups but the task set for the more able group was easier than that set for a less able group. They finished quickly and spent much of their time colouring. Another group struggled to complete work that was beyond them. The only group to make any real progress was the lower attaining group. These pupils set the practical task of folding shapes in half to discover whether or not they were symmetrical. Work in the infant workbooks shows that teachers rely too heavily on the pupils doing sums or filling in worksheets, providing little opportunity for the pupils to think for themselves. The pupils of different abilities often do the same work and this holds back the more able pupils. Summing up at the end of lessons is not done well. In one infant lesson, the pupils sat for twenty minutes with little to do but listen to each pupil in turn tell the teacher their answers.
95. Teaching improves through Years 3 to 5. Lessons run smoothly and the pupils complete the work set for them. This is not always challenging enough and, once again, the more able pupils in particular are held back. These pupils are sometimes given an extra challenge when they have finished their work but there are few occasions when they do more difficult work throughout the lesson. There is still a tendency to rely too heavily on worksheets and on finding the answers to sums and so the pupils do not find their own ways of solving problems. Teachers' questioning does improve. For example, in a good lesson on angles in Year 5, the teacher ensured that all the pupils had to answer by asking the pupils to tell their answers to a partner. Where the teaching is most effective it tests understanding by asking pupils to explain their thinking. This is done well in most junior classes.
96. The teaching in Year 6 is of a consistently high standard and most pupils make rapid progress. Thoughtful organisation means that the co-ordinator, a knowledgeable and enthusiastic mathematics teacher, uses his specialism to teach more able pupils and lower ability groups, whilst the pupils who are of average ability are given extra help in very well taught lessons

taken by the headteacher. These provide occasions in which the teacher is able to exploit the smaller number of pupils to give them more personal attention. They fit well with the work being done elsewhere in Year 6 and are closely tied to homework. Teachers are skilled at picking up mistakes made in homework and tackling them in the lessons. The pupils are given plenty of opportunities to explain their thinking. Teachers in Year 6 use the pupils answers well to help others learn. For example, the pupils set each other questions which also helps them clarify their thinking. On occasion these were harder than the teacher expected, indicating secure knowledge by the pupils.

97. The co-ordinator sets very high standards and his enjoyment of mathematics transfers to many of the pupils, particularly the more able pupils. He shows the pupils very clearly what they have to do and enables them to be more investigative in their approach compared to that seen in other year groups. For example, in a lesson on sequencing, the pupils were encouraged to predict how a number would grow and give a reason for their choice. The teacher then asked probing questions that tested the pupils' predictions and enabled them to carry out investigations for themselves to prove their point. A further facet that sets teaching apart in this part of the school is the ability of the teacher to link different areas of mathematics together. For example, work on fractions, percentages and decimals are joined together so that pupils can make links between one area of mathematics and another.
98. The pupils who have special education needs make steady progress. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils are given the extra help they need by teaching assistants and so make satisfactory progress. For example, in a Year 1 lesson the teaching assistant worked closely with a group of four pupils asking each individual questions and insisting on the correct use of mathematical vocabulary. This pattern of support continues through to Year 5 to ensure that progress remains satisfactory. Those who have special educational needs and who are part of the extra lessons taken by the headteacher make good progress because they are more involved in the lesson and the teacher takes full account of their needs.
99. There have been important improvements since the last inspection in the way mathematics is led and managed. The co-ordinator has ensured that the curriculum is much more structured and that teachers have a clear framework to follow which mirrors the approaches of the National Numeracy Strategy. Monitoring of teaching by the headteacher has identified the need to improve some teachers' ability to use these approaches more effectively. A major task for the co-ordinator was to put in place a system for assessing how well the pupils are doing. He has done this very successfully. Regular testing ensures that teachers have a good picture of where the pupils are. Results are used particularly well in Year 6 to group the pupils by ability. However, elsewhere not enough use is made of assessments to ensure that all the pupils are given work that suits them. The co-ordinator analyses test results meticulously and provides very good information to teachers on areas of mathematics that the pupils have been more successful in compared with others. These are being used to adjust the weighting given to areas of mathematics over the course of a year and to generate targets for individual pupils. These targets however, are not yet used to adjust the immediate series of lessons in a way that gives opportunities for the pupils to practice the elements of mathematics the targets relate to. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has a clear plan of action for the future. In partnership with the headteacher, this good leadership and management of mathematics means that the school is well placed to improve further with the most immediate priority being to raise standards further in Years 1 and 2.

SCIENCE

100. Standards in science are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have improved steadily over the last few years because teachers have improved the way that science is planned and this has provided greater consistency than that found in the last inspection. The pupils make satisfactory progress and the National Curriculum test results confirm that standards are rising in line with the national trend.
101. Standards by the end of Year 2, as measured by teacher assessments, are broadly in line with those expected, although the teaching at times can be mundane. Good work is provided to develop the pupils' investigative skills, although some pupils, particularly lower attaining pupils, struggle with their understanding of life and living processes, the properties of materials and of physical processes such as the behaviour of sound and of electricity. However, teachers' assessments demonstrate that by the end of Year 2, most pupils are likely to achieve the standards expected for their age, and in relation to their prior attainment on entry to Year 1, they have made satisfactory progress. Also, a large number of pupils who join the school have communication and language difficulties which hampers the progress they make. Increased emphasis on the development of investigative approaches to learning since the last inspection has lifted the pupils' achievement. In Year 2, for example, good opportunities were provided for the pupils to investigate fruits and to identify different seeds and in another lesson, the pupils investigated electric circuits before drawing conclusions. The infant pupils' progress is hampered by their below average levels of achievement in numeracy.
102. Standards by the end of Year 6 are in line with those expected. In Year 6, the pupils achieve very well in science and this is very much related to the high standards of teaching. In Years 3 to 5 there is steady but sustained progress. By the end of Year 3, the pupils are secure in their understanding of electric circuits and how electricity can be both a useful aid to everyday living and also a hazard. In Year 6, the pupils make very good progress as they are provided with thought-provoking and interesting challenges in their investigations. In a very good lesson observed, the pupils were required to investigate the breaking point of different carrier bags using sand bags made up into kilogram weights as a safety precaution. The groups recorded their predictions and estimations and then adapted their experiments when they encountered problems, such as too many bags would fill some carriers before reaching straining point. In another high quality lesson, the pupils investigated different types of electric circuit. They explored the characteristics of both series and parallel connections to try and make a combination of one or two bulbs light. The teaching in both these very good lessons allowed time for the pupils to learn from their mistakes and to refine their experiments using their knowledge and understanding of key scientific principles.
103. The teaching in the infant classes is satisfactory overall but more could be done to target more able pupils to enable them to reach their full potential. For instance, some effective lessons for Year 2 pupils enable them to experiment with say, electric circuits to produce a mock fire alarm. In a Year 1 and 2 lesson, the investigation of different types of fruit enabled the pupils to learn about the characteristics of plants and the life cycle that enables other fruits to grow from seeds. However, in some lessons, the teaching lacks pace so that, for example, in Year 1, the pupils queued up to test different materials to see if they were waterproof or not.
104. The teaching in the junior classes is satisfactory overall with the strongest and more consistent teaching in Year 6. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. Teachers provided good demonstrations of processes in action, one teacher for example, allowed the pupils to explore the effects of different substances when mixed with water. The pupils were amazed when they mixed baking powder and observed it over-flowing and expanding. In this

lesson, the teacher allowed the pupils time to explain why some substances dissolve in different ways and then asked the pupils to explain why some processes are reversible, for example, when retrieving salt based solutions. In most junior science lessons the pupils are highly motivated and show good recall of previous work, as for example, when the pupils used their electric circuits to explain why the intensity of light is greater in some circuits compared with others. Throughout, teachers put a high emphasis on the nature of fair testing so that nearly all the pupils are aware that only one variable can be changed in an experiment if causal connections are to be discovered. This understanding is reinforced and used to good effect in junior classes. The pupils also draw effectively on their background knowledge about living things and the qualities of materials.

105. The pupils achieve well over their years in the junior classes. A key to their success is the extensive use of experiments of various kinds to secure their knowledge and understanding in the required areas of learning. For instance, when questioned about the force of gravity on objects, the pupils were observed carrying out experiments to find out whether the way that weights are placed into carrier bags affects the outcome of the investigation. The initial questions and hypotheses set by the teacher were stimulating, capturing their interest immediately. The pupils record their predictions and, to keep the experimental process manageable, carry out the necessary investigations using a good range of resources.
106. Lesson planning is good. Boys and girls are equally motivated by the learning opportunities provided. Teachers, together with support staff, effectively draw the pupils for whom English is an additional language into class discussions and the learning process when these are available. All the pupils provide a helping hand, supporting each other and pointing out significant features in the experiments and assisting with entries on recording charts, so that good progress towards knowledge and understanding is made in spite of language limitations. Although these features of teaching and learning are evident across the school, the most effective teaching is more consistent in Years 3 to 6.
107. Leadership of the subject is good, leading to a balanced curriculum and good lesson planning, including the emphasis on enquiry approaches to learning. The curriculum also carries a strong focus on health education, supporting learning in aspects of personal and social education. The use of computers and information and communication technology is being enhanced, with an increasing use of programs and spreadsheets for older pupils. There is good use of community resources, for example, learning is supported by visits to parks and the local area. The on-going assessment of the pupils' progress, with its potential for finer tuning of learning opportunities, is improving well so that teachers are clear about the learning stages that their pupils reach to help them guide their planning.

ART AND DESIGN

108. The standards the pupils attain by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected in art and design. All the pupils have good access to the art and design curriculum and make satisfactory progress in knowledge and understanding, and in developing skills. At the time of the last inspection standards were found to be below those expected at the end of both key stages and the pupils were making unsatisfactory progress. The curriculum has been strengthened and good progress made since then in improving standards.
109. There are significant strengths in the art and design curriculum. In particular, the subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the pupils and helps to extend and enrich their personal development. The school has established an Art

Gallery in which the pupils' work is carefully and interestingly displayed. The gallery is valued and enjoyed by the pupils, parents, governors, and adults who work in the school. Year 6 pupils talk proudly of how the gallery has improved the environment of the school and how the pupils like the opportunity to display their work. Nearly all the pupils have an item on display and the exhibitions are changed regularly. The pupils can explain the techniques that they have used to achieve different effects, they talk knowledgeably and enthusiastically about their own work and that of other year groups.

110. In Years 1 and 2 the pupils use paper collage and crayon to produce striking self-portraits based on the style of Picasso. They make observational drawings of plant materials and shells using oil pastels, white chalk on black paper and coloured pencils. As the pupils move through Years 1 and 2 they have opportunities to use techniques such as weaving and decorating wire frames with wool and ribbon to produce interesting colour and textural effects. In Year 3, the pupils use a mixed media approach to develop a picture from a small drawing of, for example a leaf. They use crayon, paint, and collage to produce effective results. They make printing blocks using string and simple motifs and use them to create repeating patterns. Year 4 pupils use the Van Gogh painting of a chair as a starting point for designing and making a chair for a particular purpose or person. They decorate the chairs with paint, fabrics, ribbons, and feathers. In Year 5, the pupils are designing and making containers. They use a range of methods. These include using cardboard cylinders and clay pots to produce two different techniques. The modeled pots are painted in a variety of styles according to their designs. In Year 6, the pupils extend their printing skills by making more complex designs and rotating and translating the motifs to produce good effects. Using their knowledge of how hats change the characteristics of faces the pupils begin to design a hat for a particular personality. They find out how Clarice Cliff designed and painted her pottery and they use similar ideas to decorate paper plates.
111. The overall quality of teaching in art and design is satisfactory. The pupils have opportunities to experience and use a good range of media and materials. Occasional use is made of sketchbooks to practice drawing and to try new techniques. The teaching is characterised by good management of the pupils and well-organised resources. Throughout the school the adults value the pupils' efforts and this helps them to develop confidence and self-esteem when working on artistic projects. Since the last inspection the school has improved opportunities for the pupils to study different forms used by a range of artists. Good use is made of information and communication technology skills to create patterns and posters to support art and design work. In some year groups the work is linked to other areas of the curriculum, for example, the art form of Greek pottery as part of a history topic. The school is using the national guidelines for their scheme of work, this is well used to guide teachers' planning. It is helping to ensure that the pupils follow a structured programme to develop skills in the use of different media. However, the school should ensure that there are further opportunities for the pupils to use their imagination and experiment creatively in art and design sessions.
112. The management of the subject is good. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable about art and design. Together with the headteacher and other members of staff, she works hard to ensure that the art and design curriculum provided continues to improve. She helps colleagues to gain and improve skills and knowledge in teaching new techniques. Following each art and design topic, the teachers and subject co-ordinator evaluate how successful it has been and make suggestions for future improvements. The subject co-ordinator ensures that a core range of art and craft materials are provided for each class and that there is also specialised equipment available. The school makes good use of the

talents of visitors who are invited to teach different techniques and crafts such as the highly effective drawings made by the previous Year 6 with the visiting artist David Gunning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

113. At the time of the last inspection standards were found to be below those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6 and the pupils were making unsatisfactory progress. At that time, the school had just begun to use the national guidelines to strengthen the curriculum. Currently, these guidelines are now more firmly in place and good progress has been made in raising standards. The subject co-ordinator is effective in helping teachers to gain the necessary skills for teaching the design and technology curriculum. She also ensures that there are suitable and sufficient resources in place. These improvements have helped to raise standards so that currently, they are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. All the pupils have good access to the design and technology curriculum and they make satisfactory progress in the subject. The pupils are pleased with their finished articles and talk confidently about the processes they have gone through to produce them. The school makes good use of the art gallery in the junior corridor to display both art and design and design and technology work. The pupils value this opportunity and treat the displays with care and respect.
114. The Year 1 pupils work on the features of homes and during the second half of this term they will be constructing model playgrounds. Year 2 pupils build wheeled vehicles and work on a project to make a multicoloured coat for Joseph. As part of this work they take garments apart and are surprised by the shapes the different parts have such as sleeves. They design patterns for the fabric for the coat and consider how the parts will be joined together. Good work is seen when the pupils design and make kites of different shapes, sizes and materials. They test them to see which will fly the best and suggest reasons for why some flew higher and for longer than others. In Year 3, the pupils design and make photo-frames and 'mystical monsters' with moving parts. The Year 4 pupils produce storybooks and include pop-up and lever mechanisms to illustrate their stories. In Year 5, the pupils have opportunities to use design and technology skills when they are making chairs as part of an art and design project. Year 6 pupils design, make and decorate slippers. They evaluate the finished products and can say what they like about their design and construction and how or what they could change to make them better.
115. The teaching of design and technology is satisfactory overall. In most year groups the subject is organised into half-termly topics. In the one lesson seen there were clear learning objectives that the teacher shared with the pupils. The resources were well prepared, the teacher gave a clear demonstration and made appropriate safety points. All the pupils tried hard to carry out the task of disassembling the garments, they enjoyed the lesson and made progress in learning how parts of clothes fit together. However, throughout the school there remain areas for development in design and technology. For example, there is more scope for the use of information, communication and technology skills to be developed in the subject. In addition, the school should ensure that the work planned carefully builds on previous learning and that pupils are taught more directly the skills needed in measuring, marking, cutting and fixing various materials. The school is in the early stages of checking the progress the pupils are making in gaining skills and knowledge in design and technology processes.

GEOGRAPHY

116. Standards have not improved since the last inspection, and by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, they remain below those expected. Throughout the school, the pupils' progress is

unsatisfactory. An outline curriculum exists but is not implemented in a manner which helps the pupils to learn specific geography skills in a purposeful way. There has not been enough progress made to ensure that the pupils' learning experiences follow a logical order.

117. In the two lessons seen the teaching was satisfactory. Questions were used effectively. For example, in a lesson in the Year 3 and 4 class, the teacher questioned the pupils well about differences in Willenhall in the last fifty years. The pupils responded with interest and were able to suggest some important changes. The tasks in both lessons were imaginative. In Year 1, the pupils travelled to the television room as if they were departing from an airport to travel to France. Passports were issued and the pupils watched an in flight video about France. The pupils were captivated and it set the scene well for looking at differences between living in France and England. Unfortunately, in both lessons the teachers did not make the most of the level of interest they generated. In the lesson for Year 3 and 4 pupils, not enough time was given for the pupils to finish their work and the lesson rather petered out, whilst in Year 1, some of the follow up tasks were undemanding and the adults supervising them unsure about how to make the most of them. In one group for example, the pupils spent most of their time colouring in the French flag. Although the pupils clearly enjoyed themselves, they did not make enough progress and so had only a sketchy view of any differences between France and England by the end of the lesson.
118. In contrast to these lessons much of the work in the pupils' books does not make enough demands on the pupils. For example, in Year 6, the pupils wrote about differences in climate in parts of the world. These were not done in sufficient depth with some pupils writing no more than 'deserts are extremely hot.' This was no different from the work done by the pupils in Year 3 who described deserts in similar terms. The pupils' experiences largely consist of a series of individual lessons following a theme but there is no sense that work gets progressively harder over time. In particular, not enough thought is given to developing skills that are specific to geography and, in general, the pupils have too few opportunities to practice geography skills outside the classroom. The pupils often do the same work regardless of their ability and, for the more able pupils in particular, much of the work is too easy and holds them back. Little use is made of computers to study geography and not enough thought is given as to how geography might help develop the pupils' writing skills.
119. There has not been enough progress since the last inspection to raise standards in geography. In particular, little thought has been given to how different geography themes can be used to develop specific geography skills. For example, the key skills of interpreting and making maps are not planned for and, as a result, the pupils have poorly developed mapping skills. In Year 2 for example, the pupils found it difficult to point to England on a map of Europe and confused Zambia with Scotland! Teachers have no way of assessing how well the pupils are doing in geography and so are not sure about where to pitch the work. The co-ordinator does not check how high standards are and in general is ill informed about the strengths and weaknesses of geography in the school. The co-ordinator has no firm plans to address the unsatisfactory nature of geography and much remains to be done if the situation is to improve. The leadership and management of geography are weak.

HISTORY

120. Since the last inspection too little has been done to improve standards and, as a result, by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, standards are below those expected and progress is too slow. The teaching seen was satisfactory but much of what the pupils are asked to do is mundane.

In some classes the pupils do not do enough history and too little attention has been paid to the teaching of skills.

121. Much of the work in the pupils' books is of unsatisfactory quality. In many cases the pupils answer a series of questions to show that they have understood what they have read in a book or worksheet. There are few opportunities for the pupils to write at length or produce work in interesting formats and so history makes an unsatisfactory contribution to the development of pupils' writing skills. Occasionally the pupils are set more interesting tasks to do. For example, in Year 4, the pupils had been learning about Henry VIII and his six wives. In one lesson they had to match quotes made about Henry and his wives to the right historical character. The teacher however, did not make enough of these tasks to encourage pupils to explain the reason for their choice. Too often the teacher accepted an answer from the first person to put their hand up and moved on without checking that others understood or helped the pupils understand characters differing motives. So although pupils knew that Henry chose to remarry in order to have a son, few were able to say why this was so important to him or why Henry remarrying angered the Pope. Similarly, in a lesson in Year 5, the pupils were listing differences between the ancient and modern Olympics. This was a potentially interesting task that the teacher failed to make the most of. For example, the pupils found out that on the last day of the ancient games a sacrifice was offered to Zeus but there were no opportunities to discuss why this was done and no links were made between the events of ancient and modern Olympics. Learning therefore, remained very superficial.
122. The curriculum is poorly organised and results in some pupils not doing enough history. For example, some Year 2 pupils have only done one piece of history this year. Throughout the school the pupils are taught history through themes which are covered in one lesson a week for a varying number of weeks. Some classes choose to block geography and history so that they spend two hours a week on each subject over a half-term period. However, in some classes there is too little time for the pupils to explore these themes in sufficient depth. For instance, the pupils in Year 6 have been studying the life of John Lennon and whilst they have a reasonable knowledge of his life, they have a poor knowledge of what England was like during the 1960s and are unable to make any comparisons between life then and life today. Neither have they any understanding of the impact John Lennon had on England during his life. This is because the teaching concentrates too much on facts rather than considering how we find out about history or how events in the past influence us today or how history is made up of different people's opinions and that accounts of the same event may differ depending on people's point of view.
123. This concentration on short weekly history lessons results in learning being very fragmented. In many cases there is no development of work from one week to the next. The pupils may learn some more details about a particular period of history but the work does not get progressively harder or develop the pupils' skills in history. Much of what the pupils learn they find out from textbooks or worksheets and there are very few opportunities for the pupils to handle objects or to look at accounts of events written when they happen. Throughout the school pupils go on few visits which would help bring history alive. The pupils have occasionally used the computer to do some research but overall little use is made of the computer in studying history. In general history makes a poor contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
124. The situation in history remains very much the same as it was at the time of the last inspection. The policy has not been updated and the co-ordinator does not keep a close eye on what the pupils learn; so the pupils do not get progressively better at history. In these respects

leadership and management of history are unsatisfactory. There is much to be done if standards are to rise and if the school is to make history lessons part of an enriching experience for the pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

125. Standards in information and communications technology (ICT) are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. ICT is now well established and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. The most significant aspects of this improvement has been the establishment of a dedicated ICT room and improved resources. This has had a positive impact on staff development. The co-ordinator, who has recently left the school, was knowledgeable and has improved staff confidence with the result that the subject is well taught and supports the pupils' learning in many subjects. The pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, and the deployment of teaching assistants is effective, especially when working with special educational needs pupils and lower attaining pupils in the computer room.
126. By the end of Year 2, the pupils can use the keyboard and mouse with confidence to operate drawing programs and access stories and information. For example, they can find out about animals and their habitats. They can control programmable toys such as the 'roamer' and make them move in different directions. The pupils find working with computers exciting and stimulating. Year 1 pupils were observed using a special program that enabled them to label different parts of the body as part of their science topic. More able pupils can click and drag labels and type in titles to complete their diagrams. Throughout the infant years the pupils are now able to draw pictures using graphics programs and by the end of Year 2 they have a good understanding of the techniques used to combine text and graphics. For example, a record of previous work done shows that the pupils can use a graphics program to construct coloured patterns, which they are then able to copy, repeat and save and many pupils are able to use the relevant tools to be able to repeat the process when they return to their saved work.
127. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have refined their ICT skills and can search the Internet for relevant information on a specific topic and also retrieve information from CD-ROMs. Year 5 pupils were observed using a database program to refine and present information especially for a presentation about animals. This was well linked to the pupils' science topic and the teacher incorporated some challenging tasks for the pupils who were required to organise fields and type in specific categories so that the information entered could be interrogated after saving the file. The pupils responded well to the challenge and knew that it was important to distinguish numerical data from other information. In Year 6, the pupils made very good progress using spreadsheets to present and investigate information about modes of transport. The pupils used more advanced ICT skills to present their information graphically and were introduced to specific key skills that enabled them to organise graphs and charts and to modify the data entered into the original spreadsheet.
128. The pupils have good attitudes to ICT and they enjoy working in the computer suite and also using the machines in their classrooms. The youngest children in the Reception classes are making a good start and also have access to the ICT suite. The pupils generally behave well and they respect the equipment. All the pupils take pride in the work they complete and print out.
129. In the lessons observed, together with observations of ICT used in classrooms, and the scrutiny of the work saved in pupils' files or printed and displayed around the school, the

teaching is satisfactory because teachers have increasingly developed a clear understanding of how ICT can support the pupils' learning across a range of subjects. The school makes good use of the projector in the computer room which is used to demonstrate to the class using visual aids to ensure that all pupils can see what they are demonstrating. The resources in the ICT suite include a teacher dedicated computer which controls what the pupils see. Teachers are becoming increasingly skilled at using this facility which has improved the effectiveness of the teaching across the school. Good use is made of the school's interactive white-board which enables teachers and pupils to demonstrate and practice ICT skills more clearly. There has been a good range of training for staff and their confidence is increasing as they use the school's much improved ICT facilities. The headteacher has recently taken up the co-ordination of the subject, building on the good work done since the last inspection. A scheme of work is in place and the recording of pupils' work on disks is well established and this will form a basis for assessing skills and progress. Resources are good and the school ensures that they are used to the full.

MUSIC

130. It was only possible to observe a limited number of music lessons during the period of the inspection. These lessons however, along with an examination of teachers' planning documents and singing during assemblies, indicate that pupils make satisfactory progress in their music skills and achieve standards in line with expectations for their age by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Singing is well taught and, as a result, the quality of singing throughout the school is good. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress in music in relation to their prior learning and achieve well over time. The subject has improved well since the last inspection when music was judged to be unsatisfactory. Music provision is now satisfactory. Since the last inspection a significant number of pupils have chosen to learn a musical instrument. They are taught in school time each week by specialist tutors from the local authority's music service.
131. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 can produce their own simple compositions using chime bars and are beginning to follow simple musical notation to play high and low tunes with pauses or rests between different sections of music. The school choir sings to a good standard and the pupils have performed in public at special events and festivals organised by the school in collaboration with the authority's music service. The choir was observed during a very good assembly and there was accompaniment provided by pupils playing an instrument such as the flute and recorders. Solo performances by some older pupils, including one pupil who sang in front of the whole school, are of a very high standard.
132. Junior pupils have a satisfactory understanding of underlying rhythmic patterns in music and are able to follow the teacher in a number of clapping activities. The pupils listen to and appraise recorded music, for example, when Years 3 and 4 listened to the song, "Today is Monday", and then sang along with good use being made of xylophones to help the pupils distinguish differences in pitch. Opportunities are given for the pupils to accompany songs and tunes themselves with percussion instruments. The good progress in singing is helped by the music teacher's personal enthusiasm for the work in hand and the good working relationship she has with the pupils.
133. The quality of teaching in music throughout the school is satisfactory. Teachers plan, organise and resource their lessons well. They provide pupils with the opportunity to respond to both elements of the music curriculum, listening and appraising and composing and performing, though opportunities for pupils to listen to and appraise the music of accepted great classical

composers is somewhat limited and is an area for further development. Good opportunities are given for the pupils to consider music from other cultures and traditions. The school also benefits from the services of specialist music teachers from the local support service who contribute well to the development of instrumental tuition for the pupils, which includes brass, percussion and stringed instruments. The pupils meet as a whole school in order to engage in singing practice. Singing is now well taught, placing appropriate emphasis on breathing technique, articulation and projection, and the sensitive interpretation of lyrics. Pupils sing in a tuneful manner and with enthusiasm.

134. The subject is satisfactorily led by the music co-ordinator who has been influential in the raising of standards in music in the school. There are no formal or consistent procedures in place to assess music standards across the school. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as well as to the overall ethos of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

135. By the end of Year 6, standards in physical education are in line with national expectations. This maintains the standards achieved at the time of the previous inspection. Progress throughout the school is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are given support in lessons and also make satisfactory progress. No lessons were observed in the infant classes, but observations of the pupils at play, along with a discussion with the co-ordinator, verifies that these pupils, too, are attaining standards, which meet national expectations. The pupils are taught all of the elements of the National Curriculum.
136. The pupils are well co-ordinated and well balanced. When running in the hall they are aware of space and safety considerations. Throwing and catching skills are satisfactory, and the pupils develop increasing control as they get older. Year 4 pupils show good awareness when playing games, as they use space well, when passing, feinting and dodging. Swimming standards are also satisfactory, and all pupils receive lessons from Year 1, a very good provision. Consequently, standards this year have already exceeded those of last year. Year 6 standards in dance are good, as pupils not only learn to folk dance, they are able to compose their own dances. Morris dancing has been a notable feature of the summer fair. The school assesses its performance in other areas of the physical education curriculum as satisfactory, with a need to develop athletics and gymnastics further. All the pupils dress appropriately for lessons.
137. Since the previous inspection, the school has developed its curriculum by introducing 'Top Play' and 'Top Sport', initiatives which have broadened provision, for instance in basketball and rugby. Teachers have also received training. Grants of both money and resources have increased the scope of the subject. Teachers' records have been introduced, which enables the staff to measure progress.
138. Four lessons were observed. The quality of teaching and learning was very good in one, and good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory in the remaining lessons. The best lesson, in dance, engages the pupils' attention and enthusiasm. The lesson develops systematically and incorporates all the required elements, including practice, evaluation, review, refinement and performance. Consequently, the pupils make very good progress, are totally involved and exercise a very good degree of self-discipline, which in no way inhibits their enjoyment. In the unsatisfactory lesson, the teacher was not clear about expectations of behaviour and the pupils created an unacceptable level of noise. This, in turn, disrupted the pace and structure of the

lesson. A general weakness in the teaching is the assumption that skills teaching need not be matched to differing levels of ability. Hence, some pupils are required to practise skills at too simple a level. To their credit, the pupils often extend the teacher's expectations and, of their own accord, progress to more challenging tasks.

139. The co-ordinator is very well equipped to take the school forward and improve standards. She is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has a clear vision for future development. Resources are improving, especially of small apparatus. There is room for improvement of large apparatus. Some of the existing, defunct apparatus should be removed. Provision in terms of space is very good, as the school enjoys the benefit of two large halls and extensive playing fields.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

140. Standards in religious education are in line with expectations set by the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Years 2 and 6. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. The pupils are taught according to the programmes of study outlined in the agreed syllabus. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils describe prayer as 'talking to God'. They name the important events, which take place in church. They talk about other religions, especially Sikhism, and know that Sikhs have their own place of worship, but cannot recall its name. They know stories from the life of Jesus and have a satisfactory knowledge of both the Christmas story and the Easter story. They know that Jesus is the Son of God and realise that He is not the son of the Sikhs' god. An understanding of symbolism is emerging in both the Christian and Sikh religions. The pupils are prepared to talk about events, which are important in their lives. These usually concern their families, but they also include the wonders of the world, in terms of living creatures, flowers and trees, as well as sights, such as sunrise and sunsets, which indicates a growing appreciation.
141. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have an improved knowledge of Bible stories, from both the Old and the New Testaments. The pupils discuss Christianity, and make comparisons with Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism. They are aware of similarities and differences in places of worship, religious books, festivals, clothes and customs. Sometimes they become confused when linking a place of worship with the correct faith. More able pupils have firm opinions about the consequences of religious intolerance and racism. All the work covered promotes tolerance as the way to a peaceful life. They understand that prayer can take place at any time and in any situation. Standards will rise when more pupils are able to express themselves better. Too many pupils have difficulty in doing this and often do not know the appropriate words to express their ideas. However, indications are that the approach in Year 6, which concentrates on the exploration and expression of ideas and issues, designed to promote introspection and understanding, will result in a heightened ability to reflect, respond, explain and communicate.
142. The quality of teaching and learning observed was mainly satisfactory, but very good in Year 6. Teaching is at its best when good quality discussion is promoted by progressive questioning, which causes pupils to reflect, consider and express their opinions. In a good Year 5 lesson based on a study of places of worship, pupils are encouraged to describe how they feel in their own special place. This builds a very good spiritual quality to the lesson. Similarly, Year 6 pupils consider moral dilemmas related to hypothetical scenarios, Bible stories and their own experiences. Thus, they develop strategies to enable them to withstand, for instance, peer pressure. In both these lessons, pupils are given time to formulate their responses. In Year 6 especially, they consider alternative points of view. Sometimes lessons concentrate too much

on the acquisition of knowledge, to the detriment of developing understanding, and a more imaginative approach is required. The statement of a Year 4 pupil, when talking about the Creation; 'The first few days might have been longer, because God hadn't created the days then,' indicates pupils' innate ability to think deeply and pose original questions. This should be taken into account when devising lessons. However, teachers should not overestimate the pupils' ability, as happened in one Year 2 lesson, when the intention was good, but the example chosen was beyond the pupils' experience, and questions were too demanding.

143. The subject co-ordinator has a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. She is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has a clear sense of direction for the future. She has established a good collection of religious artefacts, relevant to all the faiths studied. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to places of worship. A visit to a local church during the inspection provided Year 1 pupils with a worthwhile experience.