

INSPECTION REPORT

WALLBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Coseley, Bilston

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103783

Headteacher: Mr M Ullah

Lead inspector: Mrs B Matusiak-Varley

Dates of inspection: 12th - 14th January 2004

Inspection number: 258292

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Primary |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 262 |
| School address: | Off Bradley's Lane Coseley Bilston West Midlands |
| Postcode: | WV14 8YP |
| Telephone number: | (01384) 818 985 |
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| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mrs Kerrie Heather |
| Date of previous inspection: | 7 th June 1999 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Wallbrook Primary School is an average sized school catering for pupils aged four to 11. It is situated in Coseley in the north of Dudley, West Midlands. It has 262 pupils on roll. The school faces many challenges due to the poor socio-economic backgrounds of many of its pupils. The area has a high crime rate and many parents do not have sufficiently high expectations of their children's academic performance, as reflected in their low attendance levels. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, at 23 per cent, is above average. Most of the pupils, 94.4 per cent, are of white British backgrounds. Approximately 5 per cent of pupils are of mixed race, comprising black British Caribbean and mixed white Asian. Three pupils are in public care and two pupils are asylum seekers who have English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is low (4 per cent). The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including statements, at 18 per cent, is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need, at 4 per cent, is below the national average. The school is part of a learning link group with local Dudley schools (North Dudley Learning Partnership), and has very good connections with Coseley Sports College. The school is currently participating in the Learning Link Partnership aimed at developing family learning. The school received its Activemark for sports and Effective Early Learning Award in 2003. In 2001, it received an achievement award and has recently been awarded its Investor in People status.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|--|
| 19938 | Bogusia Matusiak-Varley | Lead inspector | Science History Provision for pupils with English as an additional language |
| 11084 | Jane Hughes | Lay inspector | |
| 27426 | Terry Aldridge | Team inspector | Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Mathematics Design and technology Physical education |
| 11642 | Carol Parkinson | Team inspector | English Art and design Geography Provision for pupils with special educational needs |
| 22157 | Mike Roussel | Team inspector | Information and communication technology Music Religious education |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Wallbrook Primary School is a satisfactory school with many strengths, offering a good quality of education. It is a sanctuary from the turbulent lifestyles of many of its pupils. It faces many challenges due to the poor socio-economic backgrounds of most of its pupils. Although standards are well below average in English and mathematics, pupils' achievements are good overall. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. The school is well led and managed and provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English, mathematics and science need to be higher at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils' achievements are good in information and communication technology (ICT), geography, history and religious education, and are very good in physical education and art and design.
- Provision for children in the single-aged reception class, and those who have special educational needs and English as an additional language, in mainstream schools is good.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, with several examples of very good and excellent practice; it is better in the juniors than in the infants.
- Support staff make a valid contribution to pupils' learning but, at times, in lessons pupils with special educational needs would benefit from following the same work as their peers.
- The school does not make sufficient use of data from assessment to plan the next steps of pupils' learning, higher-attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and assessment is not sufficiently well developed in science and some foundation subjects.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning, behave very well and are leaving the school as confident, well-rounded individuals.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and there is very good provision for extra-curricular activities.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are good.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory and is below the national average.

Since the last inspection of 1999, improvement has been satisfactory. Key strengths have been maintained, such as the good quality of teaching, partnership with parents and care of pupils. Most of the key issues have been addressed and strategies are in place to develop boys' achievement in English and mathematics through good assessment procedures, although this data is not yet used rigorously in planning. Standards in English, mathematics and science are not as high as judged previously because the academic profile of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 has changed considerably, with many pupils across the school experiencing learning problems.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | all schools | | | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 |
| English | B | E | D | B |
| mathematics | B | E | E | D |
| science | B | D | E | C |

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 6.

National test results of 2003 and inspection findings show that overall standards are well below national averages in mathematics and science and are below average in English by the end of Year 6. Many pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 find learning difficult due to their very low attainment on entry. The school does everything it can to compensate for their gaps in learning and, overall, pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science are good. In art and design and physical education, by the end of Year 6, pupils exceed national expectations and achieve very well. In ICT, geography, history and religious education, pupils' achievements are good and national expectations are met. Attainment on entry to the reception class is very low in relation to that expected of children nationally in these areas. Children achieve well in personal, social and emotional development and their achievements in all other areas of learning are good, but they do not attain the early learning goals in all areas of learning. In communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development, children enter Year 1 with standards that are well below those expected of children of this age. Their learning difficulties, lack of vocabulary, weaknesses in sentence construction, limited learning experiences and low levels of literacy and numeracy prevent them from reaching higher standards. By the end of Year 2, standards are well below national averages in English, mathematics and science, and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Standards have risen year on year and the school has put into place many systems to ensure that standards rise. It will take some time for these to take full effect and for their impact to be seen in the end of key stage national test scores. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and pupils' personal qualities are well developed, resulting in very good attitudes and behaviour. Attendance is below the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is good overall with very good and excellent features in the upper juniors. In these lessons, all pupils achieved very well. Basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are taught well. The use of literacy and numeracy in other subjects is satisfactory; ICT is used well to support learning. Pupils in the infants make satisfactory progress; in the juniors, progress is good because of better teaching. The curriculum is good and enriched with very good extra-curricular activities. Partnership with parents is good and parents appreciate what the school has to offer.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher is effectively supported by the deputy and senior staff and he has created good teams which are constantly evaluating their practices. The headteacher manages change well and is adored by his pupils. The school's involvement in local initiatives is helping to raise standards. Governance is good and the school is a focal point for the community. The school complies with all statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils and parents view the school positively. Pupils are very proud of their school. Parents are pleased that their children are happy and feel well informed on all aspects of school life.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Raise standards in:
 - English – speaking and listening, reading, writing, spelling;

- Mathematics – problem-solving, using and applying mathematics across the curriculum;
- Science – experimental and investigative science and recording findings in a variety of ways;
- Improve the quality of teaching in the younger classes in the infants;
- Develop rigorous assessment procedures in science and foundation subjects and ensure that data from all assessments are used to plan the next steps of learning, especially in challenging the higher attainers;
- Review the withdrawal from class arrangements for pupils with special educational needs; and
- Raise attendance levels.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

In spite of standards being well below the national average in English, mathematics and science, pupils' achievements are good overall. The achievements of pupils who are above average attainers are inconsistent but are satisfactory overall. Whilst there are areas for development, the school has a firm handle on what needs to be done. Standards are rising and overall, based upon pupils' prior attainment, the school is now well placed to raise standards even further. Achievement in the mixed age Reception/Year 1 and Year 1/Year 2 is satisfactory but overall pupils' achievements are better in the juniors than in the infants.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- National test results of 2003 show that, in comparison with all schools, overall standards have been well below average.
- In comparison with similar schools nationally, attainment at the end of Year 6 has been above national average in English, average in science and below average in mathematics.
- Inspection findings show although standards are well below national averages in English, mathematics and science, pupils' achievements, with the exception of higher attainers, are good in relation to their prior attainment.
- There are weaknesses in pupils' skills of experimental and investigative science, speaking and listening, writing, problem solving, and using and applying mathematics across the curriculum. The headteacher is aware that these need to be resolved.
- Pupils' achievements are good overall in the Foundation Stage in personal, social and emotional development, they are very good and children attain the early learning goals in this area of learning as well as in physical development and creative development on entry to Year 1.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well.
- Pupils' achievements are better in the juniors than in the infants because of the better quality of teaching.
- Higher-attaining pupils make inconsistent progress but overall, their achievements are satisfactory.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' achievements are good in ICT, geography, history and religious education and pupils attain average standards. In physical education and art and design, standards are above national expectations and pupils' achievements are very good.
- Pupils' weak skills in literacy and numeracy prevent them from attaining higher standards.

Commentary

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 13.8 (15.0) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| writing | 12.2 (13.5) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| mathematics | 15.4 (16.4) | 16.3 (16.5) |

There were 37 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 25.6 (24.1) | 26.8 (27.0) |
| mathematics | 24.1 (24.5) | 26.8 (26.7) |
| science | 26.9 (28.0) | 28.6 (28.3) |

There were 44 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. The 2003 national test results show that, in comparison with all schools nationally by the end of Year 2, pupils attained standards in reading, writing and mathematics that were well below national averages. By the end of Year 6, pupils attained standards that were below national averages in English and well below national averages in mathematics and science. Too few pupils attained the higher levels in both Year 2 and Year 6 in these subjects.
2. In comparison with similar schools nationally, by the end of Year 6, pupils attained standards that were above average in English, below average in mathematics and in line with national averages in science.
3. In the infants, there was no significant difference in attainment by gender and, over three years, the performance of pupils fell below the national average but the school's average National Curriculum points score for all core subjects was above the national trend. In the juniors, girls did better than boys in English, but this was not evident during the week of the inspection as the school had already put in place effective strategies to raise boys' attainment, for example through the successful implementation of ICT. In the juniors, too few pupils attained the higher levels and this depressed test scores.
4. The school sets challenging targets in English and mathematics which it missed by only a few points because several new pupils arrived in Year 6 just prior to the national tests and as they were of below average ability, they did not succeed in gaining average standards. The school faces many challenges in raising standards, for example:
 - The school draws its pupils from a severely disadvantaged area where there has not been a tradition of expecting high standards of academic work from children.
 - Many pupils are socially, financially and academically disadvantaged as there is much unemployment and many single-parent families in the area.
 - The area has high levels of crime and substance abuse.
 - In 2003, in Years 5 and 6, 48 per cent of pupils had special educational needs and were below average attainers.
 - The number of pupils entering and leaving the school at times other than normal admission and departure is high (30 per cent). School records show that many pupils who are above average attainers leave the school before taking their Year 6 tests.
 - Pupils have many barriers to learning, which are:
 - Poor literacy and numeracy skills, and attainment on entry to Year 1 that is well below average, in spite of the overall good progress made in the Foundation Stage.
 - Pupils' general knowledge is weak and not many pupils have experienced stimulating learning experiences at home.
 - Pupils have short concentration spans; they quickly forget what they have learnt and struggle with applying their previously learnt skills to new tasks.

- The pupils’ use of language is weak; a large majority of them confuse tenses, have very limited vocabulary and struggle to explain their thinking.
 - Attendance rates are too low. Holidays are taken in term-time and there are still families who do not send their children to school regularly.
 - The school has experienced problems retaining staff because of career promotions and this has resulted in a lack of continuity of leadership and management in various subjects.
 - Recently the school has devoted a lot of time to analysing the best way forward by using data from assessment to raise standards. Strategies are now firmly established and there are good assessment procedures in place but as yet, their use to match work to children’s needs is not fully embedded in practice by all staff. The school has recognised this as an area for improvement and plans are underway to ensure that there is a consistency of approach.
5. Inspection findings show that the school has good systems in place to analyse how different groups of pupils perform, and data clearly shows that standards are rising. At present, pupils’ achievements are better in the juniors than in the infants because of the better quality of teaching. In the infants, the best teaching is in the single-aged Year 2 class, where pupils make good gains in learning. In the other classes, achievement is satisfactory overall.
 6. Overall, all groups of pupils achieve well. Those with special educational needs and English as an additional language are very well supported by support staff but at times, pupils with special educational needs would benefit from not being withdrawn from lessons to work on their individual education plans, as they miss out on valuable explanations given in class. Pupils who are higher attainers make satisfactory gains in learning over time, but there is room for even more challenge.
 7. Pupils’ competence in literacy, numeracy and ICT, although below average, enables them to access the curriculum, but weak recording skills, especially in English, prevent them from achieving even higher levels. Pupils know a lot more than they can write and, when supported by ICT, they quickly get their ideas into print.
 8. Pupils’ progress is good overall from one key stage to another. However, this is not fully reflected in end of Year 2 and Year 6 test results due to the high levels of pupil mobility, especially in Year 6, and the high proportions of special educational needs and below average attainers. Standards are well below national averages in English, mathematics and science by the time that pupils leave Year 6. In Year 2, standards in speaking and listening and writing are well below national averages; in reading they are average, but pupils struggle with explaining what they have read. Nevertheless, they make good gains in learning how to segment and sound out words correctly. By the end of Year 6, because many pupils have special educational needs and are below average attainers, standards are well below average in speaking and listening, and reading and writing; spelling is weak.
 9. In mathematics, by the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are well below national averages. By the end of Year 2, pupils have good knowledge of number bonds, shape and space, but struggle with simple problem solving. They are making good progress in developing their skills of mental mathematics and are encouraged at all times to explain their thinking, which they find difficult. By the end of Year 6, pupils have grasped the basic rules of number operations but their skills of problem-solving are weak, many average attaining pupils in Year 6 still do not know their times tables, and above average attainers struggle with explaining how they arrived at answers, especially when working out percentages. However, they are making good progress in plotting graphs, as seen in the Year 4/5 science lesson.

10. Standards in science by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are well below national averages. Overall, pupils' achievements are good but they are better in the juniors than in the infants, because in Year 1 there is insufficient emphasis placed on the progressive development of scientific skills, such as hypothesis, prediction, observation and evaluation, which restricts pupils' progress. The school has identified that there has been a weakness in experimental and investigative science, which it is now addressing. The best rates of progress are in Year 4/5 and in Year 5/6, where the quality of teaching is consistently good or better. Pupils still struggle with evaluating their findings in relation to their predictions, but they have sound knowledge of setting up experiments, fair testing, life processes, grouping materials, electricity and types of forces. Year 5/6 pupils are fascinated by the composition of rocks and know which ones are permeable. Higher attainers could be challenged further with more effective use of assessment.
11. Standards in ICT meet national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils are achieving well, applying their skills well in other areas of the curriculum.
12. In religious education, by the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils meet the expectations of the locally-agreed syllabus and all groups of pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. However, they know more than they can write because of their weak literacy skills. Pupils know that all major faiths have holy books and places of worship, and some of the pupils' prayers seen on display reflect a deep understanding of the spiritual element of everyday life, whereby only God's intervention can make things better.
13. Pupils' achievements in art and design and in physical education are very good and standards of work seen during the week of inspection are above national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
14. In history and geography, pupils attain the national expectations for Year 2 and Year 6 and their achievements are good. This is partly attributable to the very good range of visits and visitors which enhance learning.
15. No judgements were made in relation to design and technology and music, as insufficient lessons were seen.
16. Overall, standards since the last inspection are not as high, with the exception of ICT where they have improved because of good teaching and good quality resources. This is because the proportion of pupils who are below average attainers and those who have special educational needs is significantly high in Year 2 and Year 6. Furthermore, pupil mobility in the juniors is a contributory factor to the low standards. Nevertheless, pupils' achievements have improved and are now good. The use of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory, whereas the use of ICT is good. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **very good** attitudes to learning and their behaviour is also **very good**. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **very good** overall. Attendance rates are **below** the national average. Pupils are punctual.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils like school and participate eagerly in the many interesting activities.

- The very high standards of behaviour create an orderly and purposeful learning environment.
- Staff provide pupils with very strong role models and opportunities to mould their personal, and especially their social, moral and cultural, development.
- Not enough pupils attend school regularly.

Commentary

17. Many Wallbrook pupils change personality as they walk through the school doors. Although cheery and boisterous, they are also focused and, above all, keen to participate in everything on offer, especially on Wednesday when the infants follow the plan to review activities. Some arrive early to enjoy the fun of breakfast club and almost all come into school on time ready to learn. Pupils are justifiably proud of their school and talk warmly about the staff and their friends. They think that their headteacher is “ace” (a very special person). They agree that they like school and their parents confirm this. Pupils know what to expect from staff and the school often acts as a ‘comfort blanket’ for children who flourish in its familiar surroundings. Most children are very confident and there is never a shortage of hands going up to volunteer answers in lessons. This is because pupils know that their opinions are valued and that adults in school listen to their views.
18. Standards of behaviour are equally strong because pupils know what is expected of them and they live their school lives by the clear moral code set by teachers. There have been no exclusions from school. Pupils have ample opportunity to discuss the rights and wrongs of different actions during personal, social and health education lessons or in whole class discussions and these regular opportunities help them to make the right choices in their lives. They also learn to shoulder responsibility for younger members of the community and most relish playing an active part in the daily life of the school. There is a tremendous number of monitorial roles for pupils to fill and they do this very capably. The school recognises when pupils make concerted efforts to improve an aspect of their work or demeanour through headteacher awards presented weekly in assemblies. Pupils are very proud to receive these awards and, during the course of the day, many of them remind their headteacher how interesting their learning has been.
19. Some teachers are particularly gifted at firing pupils’ imaginations. In Year 5, for instance, in a very good science lesson, the class teacher encouraged her pupils to approach issues from different starting points, asking questions such as ‘Are there mountains under the sea?’. Pupils in Year 6 have the joy of learning from a teacher who brings lessons alive with her enthusiastic approach and secure subject knowledge. She knows exactly how to bring these pupils to a fever pitch of excitement, as in a lesson on the theme of Pop Art. Having carefully hooked the pupils on to the theme with fascinating personal recollections of her own artist father, she then toyed with the children’s emotions ‘Wait ‘til you see what we’re going to do today..... Are you looking forward to it? What do you think it might be?’. Finally, she revealed a colourful Warhol example of what they were going to produce themselves and they were bowled over. She conveyed her love for the subject, not only through her enthusiastic delivery, but also in the painstaking preparation for a lesson in which she combined the use of digital technology with pupils’ own artistic endeavour to great effect. At such times, teachers gain the highest accolade from pupils – they do not want the lesson to end.
20. Provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Acts of collective worship provide very good opportunities for pupils to reflect upon spiritual matters, such as enabling pupils to understand that every problem has a solution. Very good opportunities are provided in history lessons for pupils to gasp in amazement at the way life has

changed. For example, in the Year 4/5 class, pupils were enchanted by the way rock and roll affected the development of music.

21. Provision for moral development is very good. Pupils are involved in setting out their class rules and have a very keen awareness of injustice. Pupils support one another in resolving conflicts and know that by getting on with one another, the world becomes a better place. Older pupils understand the concept of reconciliation and try very hard to ensure that the youngest pupils are looked after very well at playtimes.
22. Provision for social development is very good. The school council is actively involved in ensuring that pupils are not left out during playtimes. Very good opportunities are provided for group work, and the school's personal, social and health education curriculum enables pupils to understand that caring for our environment is a global concern, and that teams are stronger than individuals.
23. Provision for cultural development is very good. Pupils learn that they play a valuable role in the local community and the wider world through consistently strong input from all the adults working in the school. Constant reference is made to the way people like to be treated and how everyone can help to improve the lives of others. The Comenius project has allowed staff to learn more about life in other countries and awareness of this multicultural dimension is reflected in pupils' attitudes and opinions in school. This is particularly important in a community with such an ethnic mix. The school's success in the sporting field, through the Activemark Gold Award also provides pupils with many sporting outlets and this helps them to learn more about teamwork and co-operation, both much needed social skills. Many opportunities are provided, through the religious education curriculum, visits and visitors, to learn about the cultural mix of multicultural Britain.
24. Unfortunately, some pupils miss out on chunks of the good teaching at this school because they do not come to school regularly. Attendance falls consistently below the national average and is unsatisfactory; this has an impact on children's learning. Parents are conscientious about bringing their children to school on time but too many allow their children to take off time that they can ill afford, during the week. These pupils experience a disrupted curriculum and fall behind in their learning. The school has only just been given some strategies by the fairly new education welfare officer to improve attendance figures through targeted tracking of regular absentees. This will concentrate the minds of parents who still fail to recognise the vital importance of regular attendance at school for their children.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data: | 7.4 | School data: | 0.3 |
| National data: | 5.4 | National data: | 0.4 |

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the school provides a good quality of education for pupils. Teaching and learning are good and the school provides a good range of learning opportunities which are enriched by very good extra-curricular activities.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good, with examples of very good and excellent practice. Teaching is better in the single-age reception and Year 2 classes and the juniors than in the other classes. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall and are good in English and mathematics.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good overall with examples of very good and excellent teaching seen. As a result, pupils learn well. The best teaching is in the single-age reception class and the Year 2 class, it is consistently good or better in the juniors. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall.
- Teaching in the mixed reception/Year 1 class and in the Year 1/2 is satisfactory, but could be better especially in using assessment data more rigorously in moving pupils on in their learning.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good and support staff make a very valid contribution to pupils' learning, resulting in pupils being able to participate fully in the curriculum.
- Very good examples of learning were seen in the older classes of the juniors.
- Opportunities for developing independence are not fully established and some plenary sessions are not sufficiently focused on developing pupils' learning.
- Whilst satisfactory overall, assessment procedures are good in English and mathematics, satisfactory in science but variable in foundation subjects.
- The use of assessment, whilst satisfactory overall, is inconsistent, resulting in higher attainers not always being sufficiently challenged.
- Assessment in some foundation subjects is not yet well established.
- In some classes, such as Years 4 and 5 and Years 5 and 6, ICT is used very well to support pupils' learning.
- An effective start has been made at setting targets and in the juniors, pupils know what they must do to improve. However, this is less well developed in the infants.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 52 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 1 (2%) | 8 (16%) | 27 (52%) | 16 (30%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

25. The quality of teaching is good overall, with examples of very good and excellent practice seen in the single-age reception class and the oldest classes in the juniors. During the week of inspection, one excellent lesson was seen in art and design, eight lessons were very good, 26 lessons were good and 15 lessons were satisfactory; there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils learn well, in spite of their many barriers to learning. The good quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection but there is still room for improvement in ensuring that assessments are developed in foundation subjects and that information gathered from assessments is used to plan the next steps of pupils' learning.

26. The quality of teaching in the mixed reception and Year 1 class and in the Year 1 and Year 2 class is satisfactory overall, but at times, pupils are not sufficiently challenged, especially in their independent activities, when their work is not planned well enough. Too few opportunities are provided for them to become responsible for their learning, to organise themselves and to choose their own resources for learning, restricting their rates of progress.
27. In some classes, plenary sessions are not sufficiently well developed to enable pupils to identify what they found easy and difficult and frequently, teachers run out of time and plenary sessions do not take place. Nevertheless, the teaching of basic skills is good, explanations are clear, resources are well prepared and good opportunities are provided for group work. However, teachers' planning, whilst satisfactory overall, does not identify rigorous opportunities for speaking and listening, resulting in pupils still finding it difficult to explain their learning.
28. The teaching of the children in the Foundation Stage of learning is good with the best teaching seen in the single-aged reception class. In the other class, too few opportunities are provided for children to learn using their senses, especially in developing their writing skills. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and the very small minority of pupils with English as an additional language, have well-defined individual education plans, which are closely adhered to by support staff, but too often pupils are withdrawn from lessons to work on their targets and miss out on the 'fun' in the classrooms. Nevertheless, they learn well and access the curriculum appropriately. A particularly good example of progress was seen in the Year 4 class, when a support assistant modelled story-writing for a group of pupils with special educational needs. Her insistence on sticking closely to the learning objective of developing a coherent story line enabled all pupils to achieve well in spite of their many learning difficulties.
29. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use a range of different strategies to keep pupils interested in learning, knowing that they have short attention spans. Two very good science lessons were seen in Years 4 and 5, and in Years 5 and 6. In Years 5 and 6, pupils were totally absorbed by the class teacher's explanations of rock formations. Her very good use of ICT fired up pupils' imaginations and they were longing for more information about the formation of rocks. The class teacher had them spellbound by her very good explanations and questioning, and pupils did not hear the bell go for break but were busily writing down websites where they could access more information. In an excellent lesson in Year 6 in art and design, based on Andy Warhol's work, the class teacher explained that the creative process starts when you put pencil to paper and personalise your own drawings. Pupils gasped in amazement when she shared her father's painting with them, and made very good gains in learning. In Years 4 and 5, pupils used ICT well to log data about the freezing and boiling points of water.
30. Time is generally used well but, occasionally, teachers run out of time to enable effective plenary sessions to take place. The marking of pupils' work is satisfactory, but at times insufficient attention is paid to the correct spelling of subject-specific words, resulting in unacceptable spellings of essential words. Teachers and support staff are aware of the need to tackle this problem.
31. The teaching of literacy, numeracy and ICT is generally good across the school. Planning is satisfactory and learning intentions are appropriately shared with pupils so that they are clear about what is expected of them. A particularly good feature of the teaching of the literacy strategy is guided reading. Teachers have really come to grips with the intricacies of teaching reading and pupils are making good gains in developing their comprehension skills. The teaching of phonics is good and pupils are starting to apply their skills well to reading words

that they are unsure of. However, they do less well in their writing, where they struggle with identifying spelling patterns in both the infants and juniors.

32. In mathematics, the teaching of mental mathematics is good and teachers help pupils to identify strategies they need for solving problems. From a very low starting point, pupils learn well and teachers ensure that every lesson builds upon what has been learnt previously because they are fully aware of the difficulties pupils have in retaining information. At all times, teachers check their pupils' understanding to see if any modifications need to be made to their teaching to enable pupils to learn at a faster rate.
33. Independent activities in English and mathematics are occasionally not sufficiently well structured, restricting opportunities for pupils to learn independently. All pupils have full access to the curriculum and equality of opportunity is good.
34. The management of behaviour and use of support staff are very good and contribute not only to pupils' good involvement in lessons, but develop their very good attitudes to learning.
35. Assessment is satisfactory overall, but it is better in English and mathematics than it is in science and foundation subjects. In these subjects, teachers have a clear understanding of knowledge that pupils cover, but not the subject-specific skills they acquire. This restricts progress. Pupils know their targets and what they need to do in order to improve, but as yet, the rigorous use of assessment data to move pupils on in their learning has only just been implemented and is applied inconsistently. Whilst it is satisfactory overall, it still needs to be more rigorous as this restricts the progress of higher attainers, who could be achieving more. Homework is given consistently and its use is satisfactory. Pupils love taking work home, especially pupils in the juniors who undertake a variety of research activities for study at home.
36. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and the good quality of teaching has been maintained.

The curriculum

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 meets statutory requirements and provides good breadth and balance. The school's provision for opportunities that enrich the curriculum is **very good**. Accommodation is **good** and used well. The quality of resources is **good** overall, with some subjects being very well resourced.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good quality of the provision for children in the reception class which led to the award of the Effective Early Learning Accreditation in June 2003.
- There is very good support for enrichment and learning outside the school day.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The very good links with Coseley Sports College have raised the quality of the physical education curriculum and led to the Activemark Gold Award, with pupils attaining above average standards.
- There are weaknesses in planned opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, and expectations of what different groups of pupils should achieve are not clear enough in relation to identification of subject-specific skills.
- Accommodation is bright and welcoming and used well.
- Resources are good and used effectively to support learning. The recent introduction of interactive whiteboards is improving the quality of teaching.
- Links with four other European countries through the Comenius project (cultural and professional links with other European schools) has led to improved cultural understanding.

Commentary

37. The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements, including provision for religious education which meets the requirements of the locally-agreed syllabus. The curriculum for reception-age children is good, maintained since the previous inspection. Good plans are in place, which successfully incorporate all the areas of learning that should be taught before children enter Year 1. Lesson planning is adequate, and children have access to a wide range of interesting activities and learning experiences which provide a good balance between skills development and play. This results in a broad, stimulating and varied curriculum. Pupils have access to a suitable range of wheeled vehicles in the outside play area but there is no current provision for permanent outdoor equipment such as climbing frames. The school has identified this weakness and there are plans to improve the accommodation for outdoor play. The school achieved the Effective Early Learning accreditation in June 2003.
38. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is generally planned well to ensure all subjects are adequately covered. It is soundly monitored by subject co-ordinators and strengths and weaknesses are identified. Good policies and guidelines are in place for all subjects and are regularly reviewed. The school makes effective use of national guidance in science, personal and social education and foundation subjects and local guidance in physical education, to plan for continuity and progression. Except in physical education, where planning is on a yearly basis, long-term guidance is based soundly on a two-year cycle to cater for the mixed-age classes. Whilst short-term planning is often good, medium-term planning is not always precise enough as it does not identify subject-specific skills to be taught and expectations of all groups of pupils in the mixed-age classes. At times, this results in teachers relying on whole-class teaching, where pupils' work often differs in outcome. The rigorous matching of tasks to meet pupils' needs would enable the rates of learning to be even faster. Subject co-ordinators monitor planning on a termly basis and produce subject action plans. The school provides good opportunities to

develop skills of citizenship and personal, social and health education and this contributes well to pupils' personal development. Across the school, there are very good opportunities and resources for cultural development, through involvement in the Comenius project, with good pen-pal links with schools in Finland, Italy, Romania and Spain.

39. The school has adopted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and these are satisfactorily established. In numeracy, mental/oral and final sessions are not always used as well as they could be to develop speaking and listening skills. In Years 1 and 2, there is a heavy reliance on commercial scheme worksheets. The use of numeracy in other subjects of the curriculum, such as science and design and technology, has been soundly addressed. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge in problem-solving activities in mathematics and science. Overall, the use of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. However, there are weaknesses in opportunities provided for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. The links between speaking and listening and reading and writing are satisfactory but need to be developed further. The school has focused on raising standards in literacy and this is beginning to improve standards. For example, the use of drama in lessons is having a positive effect on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Literacy skills are soundly developed in other curriculum subjects, such as science, religious education, history and geography. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory and good links are developing with other subjects. The school has very recently improved its ICT provision in Years 3 to 6 with interactive whiteboards which are used effectively. However, in some lessons, computers were not always used sufficiently to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Sound opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their numeracy skills, with good examples seen in science in the juniors and, whilst satisfactory overall, more could be done to develop pupils' skills of using and applying mathematics in subjects such as geography. All pupils have good access to all of the learning opportunities offered by the school.
40. Curriculum time is used effectively in the reception class and Years 1 and 2 in an activity known as 'Plan, Do and Review'. Every Wednesday afternoon a wide range of activities, linked to a theme, is provided for all children and pupils to mix with others, older and younger than themselves, and work with adults other than their class teacher and teaching assistant. During the inspection, activities linked to the theme of 'Hickory Dickory Dock' included making models from recycled materials, computer activities, food technology, outdoor play activities, mask-making, puppet theatre, board games and puzzles. These activities are very popular and effective in raising self-esteem, developing decision-making, confidence, personal and social skills and speaking and listening as children and pupils report back on return to their classes about what they have been doing and show their work. Careful records are kept to ensure all undertake a range of activities during the half-term.
41. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils are well looked after. There are good systems and clear procedures in place which closely follow the code of practice on the identification and assessment of pupils, and good quality individual education plans are provided for pupils, which are used effectively. The code has been carefully and effectively implemented by the efficient special educational needs co-ordinator, and pupils are involved in the full range of school activities. However, whilst the school's explanation for withdrawing pupils from classes - to work on their individual education plans - is well founded and convincing, there is nevertheless the need to review these arrangements as too often pupils miss out on the good and exciting learning opportunities offered in class.
42. The school provides very good support for learning outside the school day, and participation in the arts and other activities. There is a very good range of clubs for all age groups, visits and

visitors to the school, with a residential visit for Year 6 pupils. These activities make a very significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development, as well as developing their learning in various subjects. The school places a high emphasis on providing good opportunities for playing a musical instrument, especially brass, which enables instrumentalists to develop their talents. A strength of the school is the provision for physical education and links with Coseley Sports College. Staff from this school make regular visits to Wallbrook to share expertise and work with all staff which has resulted in raised standards in physical education and national recognition with the award of the Activemark Gold in July 2003.

43. There are sufficient teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum and support staff are effectively deployed to maximise the learning of all groups of pupils. The accommodation is clean and stimulating and allows the curriculum to be taught well with accessibility for pupils with disability. Classrooms provide adequate teaching space and are well organised, providing an attractive learning environment. There are spacious grass and hard-play areas with an environmental area, 'Seagull Bay'. There are two library areas which enable pupils to undertake their own research. There are good quality resources in most subjects which are used well to support pupils' learning.
44. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The breadth and richness of curriculum activities have been well maintained. The school has improved the range of extra-curricular activities and extended the physical education curriculum with its links with Coseley Sports College. Cultural links with other European countries have been developed through the Comenius project which has benefited both pupils, through pen-pal links, and staff, through professional and cultural exchange.

Care, guidance and support

There are **very good** systems to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Staff offer **satisfactory** support, advice and guidance to pupils. There are **good** opportunities for pupils to be involved in the work and development of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and staff are most conscientious in their duty of care for all the children.
- Staff act as very good role models for pupils and set very high standards.
- Adults' very clear understanding of the influences on pupils' lives outside school help them to bring out the best in children while in school.
- All the staff work as a team to create a comfortable and attractive learning environment for pupils.
- Parents greatly appreciate the carefully crafted induction programme for reception children.
- Pupils play an active part in the way the school develops.

Commentary

45. Staff are committed to making this a secure and pleasant place where the whole school community can go about their daily business with confidence. Governors support the headteacher well and everyone plays their part in making the school a clean and safe place to be. Health and safety procedures are well known by staff and pupils, careful first aid arrangements are in place and children know who to go to with problems. Pupils say that everyone is very friendly at school, teachers are very supportive and they feel they are listened

to. Lunchtime supervisors are well briefed and make an important contribution to pupils' wellbeing and social development.

46. As the adult designated responsible for child protection, the headteacher is diligent in this aspect of care. He regularly attends seminars and has built up a very strong knowledge base on issues of particular relevance to the local community. He is very careful to pick out training that will improve teachers' understanding of their pupils' needs; he passes on the 'latest thinking' from outside agencies on a whole number of pertinent issues. Pupils in public care receive their correct entitlement. The school enjoys a well-deserved good reputation in this field because the headteacher builds very supportive links with carers.
47. The Reception teacher gives great importance to the first few weeks a child spends in school. To this end, staff make home visits and establish productive relationships with parents. Family members and carers are encouraged to stay and play with children when they first come into school. Their pre-visits enable them to adjust more readily to the school environment and, by and large, they settle very well. Parents like the free flow of information and daily interaction with staff in reception and, rightly, feel very well informed about how their children are getting on and how they can help them.
48. Similarly, careful arrangements are made for the oldest pupils to have a clear understanding of secondary school life before they leave Year 6 and this helps them to adjust far more easily to such a completely new learning environment. The provision for support and guidance is satisfactory.
49. Pupils have regular opportunities to discuss school life and to make their own mark on what happens there. The school council has been a feature for some time and pupils feel it is an effective body through which they can influence some school policies, such as lunchtime arrangements. Pupils are free to comment on any aspect of school life and adults take time to explain why different decisions have been made. The high quality of care has been maintained since the previous inspection.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **good** links with parents and **very good** links with the local community. Previously-planned educational and support programmes for parents, families and the community are still to be implemented. The school maintains **very good** links with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school recognises the benefits of a positive home-school partnership and encourages parental involvement in children's learning.
- Aspects of the school's work with parents, such as the regular newsletters, are still not sufficiently 'finely-tuned' to have the maximum impact and influence parental response.
- Parents are committed fundraisers for the school and provide additional learning resources for pupils in lessons.
- Well-considered links with the local community ensure that pupils experience a rich curriculum.
- The school makes the most of its very close links with local schools to raise pupils' achievements.
- There has been a disappointingly slow start to the extended family services programme due to problems with personnel.

Commentary

50. Parents are happy with the school and found little of concern to report to inspectors. They particularly like the pastoral care shown by staff, the quality of teaching, high expectations of staff, and the induction arrangements for children when they first start school. Above all, they are delighted that their children are happy and that they love coming to school.
51. The school works hard to inform parents about school life and to involve them in what their children are doing. Although parents here are happy to occupy the 'traditional' parental role in school, through attending parents' meetings, open days and special assemblies and productions, many parents at Wallbrook are lagging behind other parent bodies in their levels of commitment to their own children's learning. A small number of parents make a regular commitment to help in classrooms. Parents' pre-inspection responses to the questionnaires were positive but few took the time to meet with inspectors and many are reticent about entering into any meaningful dialogue with staff. This makes it difficult for the school to move on to the next stages of home-school partnership in spite of the school's best efforts to involve parents as true partners in their children's learning.
52. Staff produce good quality information for parents about school life and the progress their children make. Evaluative end-of-year reports provide parents with a clear overview of what their children can do. However, some parents would like briefer reports and more detailed curriculum information during the year. The school tries very hard to meet the needs of parents but needs to look at 'fine-tuning' the presentation of information so that parents are engaged by the literature and not turned off by too much dense text.
53. The school parent-teacher association makes a strong contribution to the life of the school through the opportunities it offers for social interaction and the amount of money it raises for school resources. The headteacher is very appreciative of the time and effort this small band of parents spends organising events. Parent governors also make an extremely valuable contribution to the life of the school, both of their time and ideas, and they enter into many fruitful discussions with the headteacher and staff.
54. A comprehensive range of community links has built up over the years and staff put these to good use to enrich pupils' learning experiences. Pupils are able to visit a local engineering outlet, a supermarket and historical buildings, and there are also fruitful links with a local building society. Regular visits are made by local clergy and pupils participate in a variety of local initiatives such as the recent 'Pride of Place' initiative for which the school won a Mayor's award. The nature club was also commended for its hard work in maintaining the school environment.
55. The local sports college provides a very good 'bridge' for pupils as they leave primary school and move into secondary education. Tremendous levels of support in sports coaching really help pupils to improve their performances and heighten their confidence. Ongoing links with a special school enable one of their pupils to integrate regularly with Wallbrook pupils, and this offers all the children great benefits, not least teaching tolerance and a greater understanding of the differences between people that exist in the world. Local colleges send students on placements to the school and staff are eager to learn from the latest information to come out of training colleges.

56. The headteacher and governors have a very strong commitment to the introduction of extended family services at the school. Working since 2002 with other local schools as part of a curriculum development group, there has been a strong desire to engage disaffected families in all aspects of school life. Everyone involved has spent considerable time and effort to establish what local community needs are and how local schools can start to address these issues. Unfortunately, following the drive and determination of the initial co-ordinator, in the past year three 'Learning Link' co-ordinators have taken up posts and then resigned through no fault of the school. Inevitably, this has frustrated the school's attempts to start a structured programme. However, the school remains part of the local 'Learning Link' cluster and will continue with its plans this year. A small number of courses were set up and run by Dudley College at the start of the scheme in response to parental demand. These were in the fields of literacy and ICT. Despite a promising start and an enthusiastic response from parents, their interest soon waned and the courses tailed off after a few sessions, due to parental apathy. Historically, local authority run courses have suffered similar fates. Following a term's deliberate 'sabbatical' from the issues surrounding extended provision, along with other local schools the school's governing body plans to reintroduce the scheme later in the year.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good, overall**. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is good, as is the quality of management in the school. The governance of the school is also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and systems for self-evaluation are good.
- The headteacher and his deputy work well together.
- Governors are fully involved and informed, with good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- There is very good leadership in the Foundation Stage and good leadership of special educational needs.
- The school is well managed and effective.
- Good monitoring of teaching and learning in classrooms is carried out by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, helping to raise standards.
- The implementation of performance management is good.
- The school is rich in data, but this information is not used sufficiently well by the co-ordinators to plan for the next steps in pupils' learning.
- Finances are well managed and used effectively to support pupils' education.

Commentary

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | | Balances (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Total income | 684,134 | Balance from previous year | 62,430 |
| Total expenditure | 683,515 | Balance carried forward to the next | 63,049* |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,609 | | |

* The above average carry over figure is already accounted for in relation to building works and refurbishment.

57. The leadership and management of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors are good. The headteacher, governors and all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, work hard and

are committed to the school and its success. This has resulted in a strong shared ethos in which both parents and pupils are valued partners. There is a determination to improve academic standards but, because of the high mobility of pupils in and out of the school and the high number of pupils with special educational needs and below average attainers, this has not been easy. However, in a drive to raise standards, the school has changed booster classes from after-school to in-school provision, which has increased the attendance at these classes and is now having a positive effect on standards. Furthermore, in an aim to raise standards, the headteacher and deputy headteacher carry out regular monitoring of the teaching and learning in the classrooms. This is well supported by the governors' monitoring of the work of the school. The headteacher richly deserves the admiration of his staff and pupils. He has everyone's best interests at heart and strives constantly to give his pupils the very best start in life. He is very supportive to parents and has a relentless drive to raise standards, constantly questioning parents about why they do not send their children to school regularly and explaining the effect this has on learning. Knowing how his pupils struggle with learning, he has ensured that ICT is used to enhance classroom teaching. This is having a very positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning.

58. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school but, due to staff mobility, especially of senior staff, he could not move forward with this vision. However, on the appointment of his present deputy, who supports him well, he is now able to move forward and together they make an effective team. For example, the analysis of the 2003 standard attainment tests undertaken by the headteacher and deputy headteacher has led to targets being set to raise standards overall. Good leadership is given by the deputy headteacher with the focus on the mathematics rolling-programme for the setting of targets in an aim to raise standards. Leadership is very good in the Foundation Stage and good for pupils with special educational needs. However, a number of subject co-ordinators are new in the responsibility post and are also non-specialists and lack experience and knowledge about the leadership and management of their subjects. They receive good help and support from the deputy and overall, the leadership and management of subject co-ordinators are satisfactory.
59. The school is well managed and resources are targeted effectively. Teachers in training are well supported. The school development plan is focused appropriately on raising standards and performance management systems are good. Non-teaching staff are deployed well, are clear about their roles and need little direction. The school administration is well organised and efficiently run by the administrative officer. The newly-qualified teacher in the infants is receiving good support from the deputy headteacher who is the induction tutor. Considering the number of changes involving key staff, the smooth running of the school is indicative of good management of change.
60. Governance is good. The governing body is well informed, very supportive and fully aware of the current challenges faced by the school. Governors and staff work hard and clearly have the best interests of the school at heart. All governors are involved in sub-committees, are linked to a subject area and also attached to a class. Governors follow the same class throughout its time in the school and when the class leaves, the governors start again from the early years. The chair of governors is very involved in the day-to-day life of the school and has regular weekly meetings with the headteacher. Governors are involved in the construction of the school development plan and have good knowledge of the strengths and areas for development, due to their total involvement in school development planning. As well as setting appropriate performance targets for the headteacher, governors are aware of how the targets for other staff are linked in to development planning. The governing body meets all statutory requirements.

61. The management of special educational needs is good. Support staff are effectively deployed and there is good evidence of teamwork throughout the school. The school is committed to providing equal opportunities for all of its pupils.
62. The financial management procedures are good. Finances are evaluated appropriately by the governors and the key issue for financial management in the last inspection has now been fully addressed. The local education authority internal audit confirmed that the school does not have any significant weaknesses. Governors are well aware of the budget position and the needs of the pupils. Large amounts of expenditure are carefully analysed and the school makes full use of available expertise. The school gives sound value for money.
63. The high standard of leadership and management identified in the previous report has been maintained.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

64. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**. The Foundation Stage is very well managed by the co-ordinator who is a very effective practitioner. Assessment procedures, using the recently-introduced foundation profile, are satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection has been **satisfactory**, with the standard of teaching and provision maintained. The school achieved the Effective Early Learning accreditation in June 2003.
65. Children are admitted into school in the year in which they are five. Most children have previously attended one of the local nursery schools. Older children enter the reception class in September for one term and then usually transfer to a mixed reception/Year 1 class in January, where they join the younger Year 1 children. Younger reception children enter in January and remain in the reception class for two terms until transferring to the Year 1 class in the following September. At the time of the inspection, 15 children had already attained their fifth birthday. There were 28 children in the reception class, of which 23 had been in school for four days or less. There were ten reception children in the mixed reception/Year 1 class who had been in the class for only a week. Well over half of these pupils are below average attainers and one-third have special educational needs (SEN).
66. Induction procedures are very good and include visits to nurseries that send children to the school, home visits, pre-visit story-times, and afternoon sessions with the reception teacher. Assessments are made on entry to reception and show that most children enter with standards that are very low in all areas except personal, social and emotional development, creative development and physical development where they are below. Most make good progress throughout reception but many are still well below expectations in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world when they move to Year 1. They attain the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, physical development and creative development, and achieve very well in these areas of learning. The quality of teaching is variable. Whilst it is good overall, the very best examples are seen in the reception class.
67. Weekly and daily planning is adequately undertaken within the six areas of learning, although it is not always sufficiently linked to the recognised 'stepping stones' which lead to the early learning goals. Staff in both classes provide a good range of interesting and relevant activities which are well matched to the children's needs. All children achieve well because the teaching is consistently good in the single-age class, with examples of very good teaching. In the mixed reception/Year 1 class, the quality of teaching is good overall but is variable and at times, teaching is just satisfactory because not enough emphasis is placed on enabling the pupils to learn using their senses. Children are attentive, well-motivated and behaved, and clearly enjoy school in the secure environment. Staff provide very good role models for the children and manage them very well. They work very well together, sharing teaching responsibilities and carefully monitoring children's progress.
68. The accommodation in the reception class provides a stimulating learning environment with clearly-defined areas. Resources are of good quality and well used. In the reception/Year 1 class, organisation does not always provide sufficient opportunities for independent learning opportunities to challenge children's natural curiosity. There is a spacious outdoor play area, marked out with a roadway and crossings, where children use the good range of large wheeled

bicycles, tricycles and scooters. There is currently no outside adventurous climbing equipment, although the school has clear plans in place to provide some. However, children do have regular access to climbing and gymnastics equipment in the hall.

69. By the end of reception, most pupils are likely to achieve the expected levels in personal, social and emotional development, physical development and creative development. However, few are likely to achieve expected levels in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world, because of their very low attainment on entry.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for independence are better in the single-age reception class.
- Staff provide a caring and supportive environment from which children learn to co-operate and help each other.
- Staff provide very good role models and relationships are very good.
- Children achieve very well because of the good teaching and the high expectations set by staff.

Commentary

70. By the end of the reception Year, pupils will attain the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, and their achievements are very good. Most children have underdeveloped social skills on entry to reception and staff work hard to develop these. High standards and caring relationships ensure that the children know what is expected of them so that they quickly learn the correct way to behave. Children quickly settle into the daily routines of directed and self-chosen tasks with little fuss and behave very well. They take good care of materials and equipment and move confidently round the classroom. They are given many opportunities to develop independence, co-operate with others, and share and take turns during activities, such as when using the parachute in the playground. They are encouraged to clear away at the end of sessions and help with activities such as giving out fruit and milk during 'snack time'. The quality of teaching is very good, with examples of excellent teaching seen in the single-age reception class. Teachers know their pupils well and generally provide good opportunities for developing independence, especially in the class taught by the co-ordinator. The very good teamwork of the adults in both classes gives the children very effective role-models for co-operation and a calm approach to work. Relationships are very good. Most children show good levels of interest in what they are doing, concentrate well even when not directly supervised, and are eager to learn. However, children in the reception/Year 1 class are occasionally over-directed and do not have enough opportunities to choose what they want to do and to share experiences with their friends. Most children go to the toilet unaided and manage to dress themselves and put on their own coats by the end of Reception.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff take every opportunity to develop the children's language skills, and teaching is consistently good.
- Children do not always form letters correctly as there are insufficient opportunities for children in the mixed reception/Year 1 class to learn by using their senses.

Commentary

71. By the end of the reception year, in spite of good achievement, approximately 80 per cent of children will not attain the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy. On entry to reception, many children have limited language skills with a narrow vocabulary and find it difficult to express themselves. During activities both in and out of the classroom, staff take every opportunity to develop children's speech and language through careful questioning and modelling and ensuring that they take turns and listen to others. This means children make good progress due to the good teaching and learning and they achieve well. Very good relationships mean that children develop the confidence to talk and all adults show interest in what the children have to say. Children listen and join in enthusiastically with favourite rhymes and songs, developing speech and language. Most listen attentively when a story is read to them. There is effective teaching of specific knowledge and skills and children gradually learn to recognise sounds and simple words. They regularly take books home to share with parents and carers and there are many opportunities when children can look at books themselves, which they handle with care. Activities in the reception class role-play area, currently 'Connor's Cosy Cafe' provide children with the opportunity to develop confidence in speaking and listening skills and co-operation. They are taught to recognise words and letter sounds in stories and good opportunities are provided for children to practise writing patterns and letters, although in the mixed reception/Year 1 class, pupils would benefit from having more opportunities to learn by using their senses, through the use of a wider range of tools and textures. Most children write their names, although a small proportion form their letters incorrectly. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff know their pupils well and intervene appropriately in their learning but, in the reception/Year 1 class, do not offer sufficient opportunities for children to develop their writing skills using a range of different media. For example, there is a lack of opportunity for pupils to write using shaving foam, trace letters using textured fabric and use a variety of tools.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults plan a wide range of practical activities to promote children's mathematical development which ensures children achieve well.
- Good use is made of mathematical language.
- Good use is made of resources to promote learning.

Commentary

72. By the end of the reception Year, almost all children will not attain the early learning goals in mathematical development in spite of good achievement. This is due to their very low starting points on entry. Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well. A wide variety of opportunities are provided to help children become familiar with mathematical vocabulary. In outdoor play, children are encouraged to use mathematical expressions such as 'next to', 'beside', 'longer', 'shorter', 'wider'. Staff plan a good range of interesting activities to promote mathematical understanding. Pupils can count and match numbers securely up to ten using a good range of resources in structured and less formal activities. Adults use a wide range of number rhymes and songs to help children count and a few are already beginning to count at least to five. Children have regular access to structured sand and water activities and

understand words such as ‘full’, ‘empty’, ‘larger than’ and ‘smaller than’. They are developing an understanding of shapes, and weigh and measure when making biscuits.

73. In reception/Year 1, children are given a sound range of activities to build on what has been learnt in the Reception class. These involve counting on and back from a set number and ordering, estimating and matching numbers to 20. They undertake activities to reinforce the meaning of ‘longer’ and ‘shorter’ through simple measuring activities. All these practical activities prepare the way well for future learning and are appropriate for this stage of development, ensuring that children sustain interest and do not become bored.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A range of interesting activities is planned to promote learning in this area.
- Staff use questioning effectively to enhance the children’s knowledge and understanding of the world about them.
- There is a good range of visits and visitors to the school.
- Children have regular access to, and use, computers.

Commentary

74. By the end of the Foundation Stage, almost all children will not attain the early learning goals. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. The reception classroom is well organised with a range of activities to stimulate children’s natural curiosity and enthusiasm. Through the use of road layouts, simple construction kits, and role-play areas, children increase their knowledge and understanding of the world. Cooking and sandwich-making activities for ‘Teddy Bears’ Picnic’ make them aware of health and safety issues. There is a good range of visits to places of interest such as the theatre and Sandwell Valley Farm. A wide range of visitors, such as the fire services, postman and police, provides good opportunities to raise children’s awareness beyond the school. Opportunities are provided for children to develop early scientific skills through simple observations of seeds and plants. They learn about famous people from the past such as Florence Nightingale. They begin to learn about their own culture and that of others and how to live harmoniously together through religious education lessons. Children have regular access to computers, using the mouse and keyboard to design and print pictures and control objects on the screen. However, there are limited opportunities for children to explore and examine objects through interactive classroom displays in the reception/Year 1 classroom.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff make good use of the outdoor play area and children have regular access to the hall to participate in physical education activities.
- Good hand and eye co-ordination is encouraged in a variety of activities that require the use of small hand-tools, crayons, pencils and brushes.

Commentary

75. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children attain the early learning goals and achieve very well. They are well co-ordinated and are making good progress in their cutting skills. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The outdoor provision is good and provides a good learning environment where children develop independence and co-operation. Children move freely with growing confidence and are developing good awareness of space and others as they use the large wheeled toys on the roadway. They run, jump and balance soundly and enjoy using skipping ropes and hoops. They respond well to instructions, stop and start on request, and clearly enjoy the opportunities provided during outdoor play time. Staff are clearly aware of health and safety issues as they support children. However, children's physical development could be even better if children had access to fixed climbing equipment in the outside play area to develop climbing, sliding and jumping skills.
76. Children are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their co-ordination and manipulative skills by handling dough, cutting with scissors and using brushes when painting pictures of their families and special things. Children manipulate a range of small objects such as puzzles

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of role play to develop children's creativity.
- There is a good range of planned creative activities.
- Children have regular access to a role-play area.

Commentary

77. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children attain the early learning goals in creative development and achieve very well. There is good provision for children's creativity and children achieve very well because of the good teaching and many good opportunities for painting, singing, role-play and music-making. Planning and displays show that, through the use of art, role-play, songs, rhymes and stories, children successfully develop their imagination and creativity. Children use paint confidently to create imaginative pictures of their favourite toys and their parents. Resources are plentiful and used well. Children in the reception class readily take part in role-play activities in 'The Café' and are beginning to co-operate well. Weekly sessions in the school hall provide good opportunities to move to music and act out songs such as 'Old MacDonald had a Farm'. Adults intervene well with challenging questions and are willing to enter into play when opportunities present themselves. Resources and equipment are used well. Children are given regular opportunities to explore musical instruments and sounds, using both tuned and un-tuned instruments during music activities. They respond well to the weekly opportunities to work with children, pupils and adults from other classes during 'plan, do and review' creative activity time.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards need to be higher at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The school has recognised the pupils' weaknesses in speaking and listening and is in the process of introducing a rigorous speaking and listening policy.
- The quality of teaching, resources, and provision for reading is good.
- Information from the good assessment procedures could be used better to move pupils on in their learning, especially for higher-attaining pupils.
- Learning support assistants work very effectively to help pupils improve their rates of progress.
- There is no scheme of work for speaking and listening and this limits pupils' progress.

Commentary

78. Inspection findings show that standards are well below national averages by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in speaking and listening and reading and writing, due to the high percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and who are below average attainers. Furthermore, on entry to Year 1, pupils have not attained the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy. Teaching in the mixed-age Reception/Year 1 and Year 1/Year 2 classes, while satisfactory, is not always strong enough to enable pupils to make fast enough progress to help them to catch up.
79. In Year 2 and in the juniors, pupils make good progress in response to good teaching. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall in the infants, but it is good in the juniors in response to consistently good teaching throughout. Overall, achievement is good. Pupils' standards of speaking and listening are well below the level expected when they enter Year 1 and this affects their ability to predict which words will come next in reading, and their grammar in writing, throughout the school. Pupils do not remember the pattern of correct spellings or learn spelling rules well enough, and tend to spell words as they sound and, as a result, their spellings are often incorrect. Pupils make good gains in reading due to the good teaching of guided reading. Whilst they know how to read unfamiliar words in both Year 2 and Year 6, their skills of comprehension are weak. Writing skills are poor because pupils have difficulty in explaining their thinking. Only the above average attaining pupils achieve average levels.
80. The quality of teaching is good overall, but teaching in Year 1 is only satisfactory. In Year 1, independent tasks in the literacy hour are not planned sufficiently well for pupils to be challenged to succeed independently of the teachers. For example, pupils are not given sufficient ways of helping them to solve problems of spelling a word, or sentence-building, for them to succeed and become confident learners. In a lesson observed in Year 2, the purpose was clearly presented and pupils understood how to tackle their work. As a result, they made good progress, achieved well and their behaviour was good because of their level of concentration. In the juniors, lessons are well planned and assessment is used effectively, although higher-attaining pupils need a greater degree of challenge if they are to fulfil their potential.
81. Interactive whiteboards are used well throughout, and were seen to be used particularly well in the Year 5/6 class. This use of new technology helps to keep pupils' concentration and involvement and maintains the pace of lessons. Whilst teaching of speaking and listening is good in the juniors and pupils' achievement and learning are good, there is no scheme of work in place, although the school has identified the weaknesses in pupils' spoken language. The teaching of reading, and resources to support literacy, are good. Pupils know how to build words but their prediction is weaker. However, progress is undermined by pupils' low levels of knowledge of standard spoken and written English. The school is in the process of introducing a consistent programme for teaching speaking and listening skills. However, plenary sessions at the end of lessons are not always effectively used to check pupils' learning.
82. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially when they have additional support from learning support assistants. They would benefit even more from a consistently applied speaking and listening scheme taught in all subjects. The particular difficulties of boys' learning and progress, identified during the last inspection, have been resolved by staff using a range of techniques, including the use of new technology, the choice of suitable texts for reading and writing, and making sure that boys sit with pupils who are

good role-models. ICT is used well to support learning. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory as the quality of teaching is underpinned by many examples of good practice.

83. Management of the subject is good. Resources are well organised to meet the needs of pupils and are used well by the school. Good assessments are used to track pupils' progress and there is good awareness of what needs to be done to raise standards and how procedures should be implemented.

Literacy across the curriculum

84. Provision for literacy in other subjects is satisfactory. Whilst there are many good opportunities made for writing and reading, the approaches to speaking and listening are too unstructured to support pupils' literacy skills and the spelling of subject-specific words is not taught well enough.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics across the school is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall but it is better in the juniors than in the infants.
- The mathematics curriculum and lessons are well planned and the quality of teaching is good.
- Results of most recent pupil assessments are now thoroughly analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Insufficient use is made of assessment in planning challenging activities for above average attaining pupils when they are taught in ability groups.
- Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy their lessons.
- In both the infants and the juniors, pupils struggle with problem solving activities.

Commentary

85. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, work seen during the inspection and the school's assessment results indicate that standards are well below average. Although achievement is good, it could be even better if more use was made of assessment information for challenging higher-attaining pupils even further. Standards are not as high as at the time of the last inspection because of the high percentage of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 who are below average attainers, have special educational needs and, in Year 6, joined the class at other times than normal admission. The high percentage of pupils who are below average attainers, and those who have special educational needs, depresses results, and standards are well below national averages. Pupils really struggle with recall of numbers, identification of mathematical strategies for problem-solving and applying their knowledge to new situations.
86. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall, although standards have fallen. The school has adopted the National Numeracy Strategy and this is soundly embedded in the school's practice. The school teaches mathematics through grouping pupils by prior attainment across the juniors. However, not enough use is made of assessment information to plan tasks that are appropriate and sufficiently challenging, especially for more able pupils. Teachers use the recently-acquired interactive whiteboards well in their teaching, helping to raise standards. Pupils are highly motivated and, as a result, want to learn.
87. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. During the inspection, examples of good and very good teaching were observed in both the infants and the juniors. Lesson planning is

good and is based on the recent guidance on planning in the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers' display good subject knowledge, manage pupils well and use resources effectively. Most lessons begin briskly and learning intentions are usually clearly shared with pupils so that they know what they will be learning and doing. However, introductory sessions do not always fully engage all pupils because teachers often only take answers from those who put up their hands and there are few challenging follow-up questions. Teachers in the juniors make good use of the interactive whiteboards to provide good demonstrations. However, some lessons are too long and the plenary session does not always give pupils sufficient opportunity to talk about what they have been learning and explain the strategies they used. From looking at pupils' workbooks, teachers do not always provide sufficiently challenging activities for different groups of pupils, with many undertaking the same tasks, resulting in above average attainers not always being stretched to their full potential. Nevertheless, teachers have good questioning skills and, in lessons, pupils are drawn in well and their thinking is challenged appropriately.

88. Throughout the school, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to use mathematics involving real-life problems. There is a heavy reliance on the use of worksheets and a commercial scheme, particularly in the infants. Classroom assistants are used well to support groups of pupils during the lesson. There is inconsistent use of information and communication technology; it is better in the juniors than in the infants. Scrutiny of pupils' past work shows marking procedures are inconsistent across the school and do not provide pupils with sufficient guidance about how they can improve. By the end of Year 2, pupils know their number bonds but have difficulty in reading problems and finding the correct strategies to solve them. They struggle with choosing the correct vocabulary to describe the process of their thinking. In the juniors, not all pupils know their tables and whilst they can measure accurately and solve fractions, they struggle with percentages and identifying the correct strategy for solving problems.
89. The co-ordinator is well qualified and provides good support to colleagues, leading by example. She undertakes regular monitoring of planning and produces an annual action plan. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. However, there are insufficient opportunities for rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and standards as the emphasis has been on raising standards in English. Monitoring now needs to be undertaken to identify strengths and weakness and raise standards. Annual assessments, using statutory and non-statutory tests, are undertaken and the information is used to place pupils in teaching groups. The good analysis of recent test results has identified strengths and weaknesses but this information is not yet used rigorously enough to set individual or group targets and this is a weakness that is presently being addressed. Good procedures for tracking pupils' progress are now soundly established and provide useful information for setting targets but these could be more challenging, especially for above average attaining pupils whose rates of progress, whilst satisfactory overall, are inconsistent.

Mathematics across the curriculum

90. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is **satisfactory**. Links between mathematics and other subjects, such as science, history and geography, are soundly developed. Pupils use their mathematical knowledge and understanding in measuring activities and, in science, an effective start has been made in using mathematics to record data.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in science are well below national averages by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, but pupils' achievements are good, overall.
- The newly-appointed co-ordinator is providing good leadership and has ensured that all staff are now providing good opportunities for teaching experimental and investigative science.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning, but more opportunities could be provided for independent learning.
- Whilst satisfactory overall, assessment arrangements have weaknesses because they do not assess gains pupils make in acquiring scientific skills.
- Whilst making satisfactory progress, above average attainers could be achieving more, especially in recording their findings in a variety of ways.
- The quality of teaching in the mixed-age classes in the infants is not as good as it is in the juniors.

Commentary

91. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are well below national averages, due to the high concentration of pupils with special educational needs and below average attainers. Pupils' achievements are good in the juniors and satisfactory in the infants, because the quality of teaching is better in the juniors. In the infants, there is insufficient emphasis on the rigorous teaching of scientific skills of observation, hypothesis and setting up of experiments. In the juniors higher-attaining pupils, whilst making satisfactory progress, could be achieving more, especially in recording their findings in a variety of ways.
92. By the end of Year 2, pupils know how to classify materials and they make sound gains in acquiring vocabulary such as *cement*, *fabric*, and *glass*. They know about healthy food and that plants need water to live, but they have weak recording skills and have great difficulty in writing down what they have done.
93. By the end of Year 6, pupils know about fair testing, the effect of exercise on the body, properties of magnets, what causes shadows and the properties of rocks. Pupils' verbal knowledge is better than their written work. Pupils struggle with evaluating cause and effect and they are unsure how to set up experiments using a variety of recording strategies; it is only the Year 6 higher attainers who are attaining average standards. Pupils experience difficulty in explaining how their findings differ from their original hypotheses, and their vocabulary is weak. For example, many pupils in the upper juniors did not know the meaning of vapour. Nevertheless, in relation to their prior attainment, pupils make good progress because they are able to find patterns in data and make predictions to find out the boiling and freezing points of water, due to the good use of data loggers in ICT.
94. The quality of teaching is good overall with two very good lessons in Year 4/5 and in Year 5/6. In these lessons, teachers gave very good explanations, using correct scientific vocabulary; they challenged pupils' thinking by using very good questions, provided lots of extension activities for higher-attaining pupils and used ICT well to support pupils' learning. Pupils did not want to stop working and hung on to the teacher's every word.
95. Pupils have good attitudes to learning, behave well and are keen to improve their work. However, more opportunities could be provided for pupils to develop their skills of independent learning.
96. Assessments, whilst satisfactory overall as they record coverage, are not sufficiently detailed and outcomes are not used rigorously to plan the next steps of pupils' learning. At present, the

co-ordinator is addressing this issue. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Test results have been analysed, weaknesses in attainment identified and schemes of work are being altered to suit the needs and interest levels of the pupils. The co-ordinator is an effective classroom practitioner and has helped staff to develop their subject knowledge of experimental and investigative science. Resources are good and are used well to support learning.

97. Standards are not as high as they were during the last inspection because of the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and below average attainment in Year 2 and Year 6. However, pupils with special educational needs are making better progress because of the good use of support staff. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good resource provision in both hardware and software.
- Good teaching.
- Good quality monitoring by the headteacher and deputy headteacher and good leadership and management of the co-ordinator are helping to raise standards.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes.
- Control applications are underdeveloped.
- More opportunities need to be provided to encourage pupils to learn independently through more focused use of the classroom computers.

Commentary

98. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and improving as a result of the good monitoring undertaken in the autumn term by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, and the audit of the subject by the subject co-ordinator. Overall, pupils' achievements are good and ICT is used well across the curriculum. Areas for development were identified and action undertaken to improve the teaching and learning by the good systems for self-evaluation. However, this action is only just beginning to impact on standards through the effective use of interactive whiteboards and planning that closely links the ICT skills learned with other curriculum subjects. By the end of Year 2, pupils use ICT to look at abstract art and create their own pictures, learning how to use the flood-fill tool to colour in sections. Pupils in Year 2 can use search techniques to access information, concentrating on choosing an animal to find out all they could from a web-based site called 'Living Library'. However, there is a need to review the scheme of work and planning because two classes of different age ranges were undertaking the same database activity, where they were searching for information on birds, thus indicating that progress over time may not yet be secure. In lessons, the rigorous use of ICT is variable as, for example in science, pupils would benefit from working on simple databases.
99. The very good displays around the school cover a range of ICT work, including a Little Red Riding Hood play script, instructions for using a spreadsheet, shopping list, word-processed playground rules and World War II accounts. By the end of Year 6, pupils had investigated information from the local community by using directory enquiries to gain telephone numbers for the main superstores and had compared the prices of goods that were then displayed in a spreadsheet.
100. Tape recorders and the digital camera are used frequently, but the development of control technology is underdeveloped. No evidence of the use of control technology was seen across the school. However, the scrutiny of planning for 2003 identified one class that had used Logo, but no evidence of the use of the programmable Turtle for instructing directions of movement. By the end of Year 6, pupils use sensors to measure environmental changes. A very effective example was seen in a Year 4/5 science lesson where pupils constructed a graph using data gained from measuring the temperature of water as it boiled.
101. Teaching is good, overall, with some very good support given in the computer suite by the teaching assistants and the clerical assistant who have particular computer skills. ICT is used particularly well in the mixed Year 5/6 class. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and

motivate their pupils, using ICT, resulting in pupils having very good attitudes to learning. The computer suite is not big enough for a whole class to work in, but all classrooms have two computer systems that are networked. However, during the inspection, these computers were rarely used, even though their use was shown in the planning. Therefore, pupils are not always independently developing and enhancing skills learned in their ICT lessons in the classrooms. Plans are already in place to improve provision. In a religious education lesson observed in the upper juniors, the teacher had prepared a very good PowerPoint presentation on what it means to be a Jew and the part Jews play in the world family. The presentation was also enhanced by some Hebrew melodies and backed up by some reflective non-Jewish music to enable the pupils to reflect on the pictures they saw on the screen. The hardware and software resources are good overall. There has been good improvement since the last inspection because both the teaching and the quality of resources have improved. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The newly appointed co-ordinator is working hard at raising standards and is developing the satisfactory range of assessment procedures to help raise standards even further.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

102. There is good use of ICT in other subjects overall and the focus on cross-curricular use of ICT is beginning to impact upon standards. The good use of ICT in other subjects is having a positive effect on motivating boys to learn, helping to raise standards in science and English. Further evidence of good cross-curricular work was seen in literacy through good opportunities provided for pupils to publish, draft, revise and edit word-processed work, using Clicker 4. In mathematics, pupils have used Numbertime, data-handling and mental mathematics, and in science, 'Living Library,' data logger for pulse rates and graphical representations. Historical work covers the Romans, the Tudors and Anne Frank and, in geography, weather data and waste graphs are covered. Other links are developing well with work seen on alarms in design technology and pop art, still life pictures and patterns in art and design.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision for geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Co-ordination of the subject is very good.
- Good coverage of the curriculum and links to other subjects.
- Teaching in the juniors is good. No teaching was seen in the infants.
- Good links to the Comenius Project.
- Very good resources.

Commentary

103. Standards meet the expectations of seven- and 11-year-olds and pupils' achievements are good. Geography is led and managed very well by the subject co-ordinator. Lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that the subject is well planned and resourced, and the curriculum is covered well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this enthuses pupils, who concentrate well and are eager to learn, resulting in good attitudes to learning. The school makes especially good use of maps, atlases and interactive whiteboards and as a result, pupils begin to develop a good sense of place, climate and distance by the time they are in Year 6. For

example, pupils in Year 6 can find Brazil on the map and have some idea of the climate and differences in the environment.

104. The school takes part in the Comenius Project and, as a result, has links and exchanges with Italy, Finland, Spain and Romania. This has given valuable opportunities for pupils to develop better understanding of how people live in different countries and how their environment affects them. Pupils send e-mails to schools abroad and new technology is used very well. The use of numeracy and literacy is satisfactory. The school has very good resources. The co-ordinator works very hard at ensuring that the subject is very well resourced, and her passion and commitment are having a positive effect on raising standards. Pupils are keen to learn about other countries and can make links between their way of life and that of others. For example, in the juniors, pupils know about housing, schooling and the economy of St Lucia. They know that hot climates produce different kinds of food for export. Year 2 pupils know many facts about their local environment and have made a good start at identifying how their environment has altered due to the lack of care for the environment. The school has maintained its average standards identified in the previous report.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
- History contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Visits to places of interest enhance learning.
- Very good teaching was seen in Year 6, where good links are made with literacy.
- ICT is used well to support learning but pupils' writing and spelling skills are weak.

Commentary

105. Standards meet the national expectations of seven- and 11-year-olds and all groups of pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. By the end of Year 2, pupils know the difference between old and new and can explain their own time-lines and they know how the Great Fire of London started, why it spread quickly and how it stamped out the Bubonic Plague. By the end of Year 6, pupils are very familiar with the 1960s; they can talk about the Beatles and rock and roll, and have a good knowledge of which websites to use to develop their learning. Good examples of research were seen in Years 4 and 5, to develop their understanding of Martin Luther King and the part he played in altering the course of history. This contributed well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development alongside their learning about the two world wars. Pupils visit places of interest such as The Oak House, where they learn about the Tudors, Chester where they learn about the Romans, and Eden Camp, North Yorkshire, where they learn about what life was like during the war.
106. The quality of teaching is good overall. One very good lesson was seen in Year 6, where pupils made very good gains in learning about life on a Tudor ship. The teacher gripped the pupils' interest levels and imagination, especially those of the boys, when she described in graphic detail the plight of sailors having to look at their food which was "all full of weevils and stinking of rat urine". Teachers enable pupils to make good links between history and literacy. In Year 6, one pupil described Henry VIII by writing "When he was showing me how to play

tennis, he looked like the prettiest thing on earth, his fair skin glowing through a shirt of finest texture”.

107. However, scrutiny of pupils’ work reveals that, whilst they make good gains in developing their historical knowledge and skills, their skills of writing and spelling are weak and this prevents them from making even better gains in learning. The subject contributes well to the pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as pupils marvel about the hardships of surviving wars, the splendour of opulence in Tudor times and the harshness of some of the schooling in Victorian times. ICT is used well to support learning and pupils benefit from its use in researching different periods of history on the Internet.
108. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, overall, but assessment is underdeveloped and is unsatisfactory. The school has recognised this as an area for improvement.
109. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make better progress and the good quality of teaching has been maintained.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject. They show respect for their own and other faiths.
- Resources are good and include artefacts for the teaching of Christianity, Judaism and Islam.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- The quality of teaching in the juniors is good.
- Visits to places of worship and from representatives of other denominations are good.
- Assessment is underdeveloped and unsatisfactory, but a new assessment procedure has just recently been put in place.

Commentary

110. Standards in religious education are in line with national expectations and the requirements of the locally-agreed syllabus by the age of eleven. Achievement is good. However, no judgement can be made for standards at the age of seven because no teaching was seen. Standards by the age of 11 are in line with the locally-agreed syllabus and focus on two principal aims of religious education: Learning about Religion and Learning from Religion. The subject policy has been written and the scheme of work is at present being re-written, taking into account the new Dudley agreed syllabus and national guidance. This represents satisfactory maintenance of standards since the last inspection. No judgement could be made on standards in the infants as no lessons were seen. Religious education contributes very positively to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as plenty of good opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about other faiths in our society.
111. The quality of teaching is good overall in the juniors and as a result, pupils have good attitudes to learning. Teachers give good explanations and constantly bring into lessons examples from real life, for example, in a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils were encouraged to look at the Torah as a guideline for living their lives. They soon made the connection that all religions have holy books which define paths that worshippers must follow. Teaching and learning are monitored through regular lesson observation by the headteacher and deputy headteacher and looking at the work of the pupils to assess their progress. Governors are involved well in monitoring the quality of religious education provision. The governors’ monitoring is good,

and a written report of lessons observed is prepared and presented to the governing body by the link religious education governor. Good links are also maintained with the local parish church for assemblies and local studies. Members of the clergy from Wall Heath Methodist Church also visit the school regularly to take assemblies. Visits are made to Christ Church and during the inspection, Year 2 pupils made a visit where the vicar explained to them why the church is a special place for Christians and they were encouraged to sit quietly and 'feel' the atmosphere.

112. Religious education figures highly within the school. The quality of displays is very good, including a Christian baptism and prayers written by the pupils, cards designed for a Jewish Bar Mitzvah, Rangoli patterns for the Diwali festival, and the work of the infant pupils, including photographs of their investigations of a Christian wedding. Above all, pupils learn that although we are all different, we can be respectful of our faith and acknowledge our different rites and practices.
113. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator monitors the subject well, has a good understanding of the areas for development and has written an action plan to address these issues. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Resources are sufficient and are presently being evaluated. Discussions are held with colleagues, resulting in satisfactory planning, and teaching and staff training sessions have been held.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Design and technology and music were only sampled. Therefore, full commentaries will not be made.

Art and design

Provision for art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well managed.
- The curriculum is well planned.
- Resources are good.
- Teachers plan lessons very well and have good subject knowledge.
- Standards are above average in the juniors.
- The use of ICT is good.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted.

Commentary

114. Standards by the end of Year 6 are above national average and pupils' achievements are very good. By the end of Year 2, standards are in line with the national average and pupils' achievements are good. Wall displays of pupils' work and curriculum planning indicate that coverage of the curriculum is good. Pupils have well-planned work to help them to mix colours, draw from life, explore textures and develop observational skills. The school has a good collection of work of great artists displayed and pupils study different pictures, especially those of Paul Klee. The teacher helped pupils to explore both the symbolic meaning of the picture and the technicalities of colour-mixing and the effects of using different colours together. The good subject knowledge and high quality of presentation of the lesson kept pupils engaged as they learned a variety of skills. In another lesson, the teacher taught pupils to look for different relationships in photographs, to develop their ability to reflect, to record and to use

their observational skills. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. The leadership and management of the subject are good and assessment procedures are satisfactory.

115. ICT is used well through interactive whiteboards and computers. The use of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, but the pupils' poor speaking and listening skills limit their ability to understand and record effectively.

Design and technology

116. It is not possible to make a judgement on provision or standards as no teaching was observed and there was very limited evidence of pupils' work. From talking to pupils, they clearly enjoy design and technology activities. Limited samples of pupils' written work show that they regularly undertake the necessary 'plan, design and evaluate' activities.
117. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and provides good guidance and support to staff. Teachers' planning is monitored regularly and an annual action plan written. The policy and subject guidance have recently been updated and provide good guidance for teaching. From discussions with the co-ordinator and looking at documentation, displays and photographic evidence, the subject is soundly planned using national guidance, based on a two-year cycle to cater for the mixed-age classes to ensure continuity and progression of skills and knowledge. However, there are currently no whole-school assessment procedures or evaluation of pupils' work against National Curriculum levels. Clear plans are in place to develop these when the subject is a curriculum focus in the summer term. This is because the leadership and management of the subject are good. There is a good range of resources. The good links with the community have impacted well on curriculum development. Older pupils have visited Asda's bakery and there has been an in-school workshop from Warburton's Bakery which has extended pupils' knowledge and understanding beyond the classroom.

Music

118. Music is a developing subject throughout the school. The subject co-ordinator is new to the post and, although not having specific expertise in the subject, is very keen to raise the profile of music in the school. To that end, she has already organised a training day for the teaching staff. It was not possible to judge the quality of teaching overall as only one lesson was observed and that was satisfactory. Pupils have a good attitude to music and this was evident in the joyful singing in the school assembly and the lesson seen. At Christmas, they visit a local nursing home and sing carols to the residents. The very good quality of displays in the school show the range of musical activities pupils undertake, which include brass and woodwind instruments and keyboards. This provision has been made possible because of the 20-place free tuition that now provides children who wish to play a musical instrument with the opportunity to do so. Parents are very pleased with the quality of pupils' performances at Christmas and rate the quality of their children's work highly.
119. By the end of Year 6, pupils listen and identify rhythm and are able to distinguish between pulse, rhythm and metre. This lesson followed on from the previous week when they looked at music from North Africa. They listened to African drum music and attempted to practise the rhythms contained in the music, using different beats. Music contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
120. The scheme of work is based on a published scheme and national guidance. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. In addition, BBC music programmes are used to develop pupils' skills in music. Resources are good and include tuned and un-tuned

percussion, Latin American instruments, electronic keyboards, a selection of compact discs and tapes, and music book resources. Music contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Physical education

Provision for physical education across the school is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Physical education is a strength of the school; standards are above national average in Year 2 and Year 6, and pupils' achievements are good.
- The curriculum is very well planned, using local authority guidance to ensure skills and knowledge build progressively over the years in school.
- There are very good links with Coseley Sports College whose staff work alongside Wallbrook staff to improve teachers' subject knowledge and expertise.
- Pupils are keen to learn, enjoy their lessons and achieve above expectations.
- The school achieved the Activemark Gold Award in July 2003.
- There are very good quality resources which are used very well in lessons.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.

Commentary

121. It is not possible to make a judgement on standards in all areas of the physical education curriculum but in those lessons observed, standards are above expectations at the end of Year 2 in dance, and in games in Year 6. Pupils achieve well and make good progress because of the good quality teaching and learning across the school. They are enthusiastic about their physical education lessons, work hard and have a very good attitude. They respond quickly to instructions and behaviour is very good. Year 2 pupils show good control over their bodies and use imagination well in their dance lessons. They understand the effect that exercise has on their bodies. Year 6 pupils co-operate very well in group activities and show ball skills of passing and control above those expected. By the end of Year 6, 75 per cent of pupils can swim 25 metres, with many swimming significantly further.
122. The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers display good subject knowledge and provide effective warm-up and cool-down sessions. They explain learning intentions clearly and encourage and motivate pupils well. Good opportunities are provided during the lesson for pupils to review their own performance and that of others. Lessons proceed at a good pace and teachers have high expectations. Planning for progression and development of skills and knowledge is good and effectively based on the local authority guidance, 'Policy into Practice'. The quality of teaching is enhanced by the use of sports coaches and trained staff from the nearby secondary school.
123. The co-ordinator is well qualified and provides good support and guidance to staff and pupils, leading by example. The co-ordinator regularly monitors planning, produces an annual action plan and has undertaken a few lesson observations. Assessment overall is satisfactory as individual teachers make informal judgements, but there are currently no whole-school assessment procedures and this is an area identified by the co-ordinator for development. There are good links with other schools for sporting activities organised by Coseley Sports College. The subject is very well supported by a very good range of clubs and activities for all pupils and includes boys' and girls' football, basketball, dance and gymnastics. There are good indoor hall facilities and outdoor hard and grassed surface areas which ensure the curriculum can be effectively taught. There is a very good range of good quality resources which are readily accessible and well used.
124. Progress since the last inspection has been good. The very good links with Coseley Sports College and support for staff training and running clubs have clearly had a significant impact on raising standards, achievement and the quality of teaching. Staff from the college visit the school regularly to work alongside staff and provide support and guidance. Pupils from the college also use the school to train for their Junior Sports Leaders award. The school achieved the national Activemark Gold award in July 2003.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Whilst discussions took place with staff and pupils and teachers' plans and pupils' work were analysed, only one lesson was seen. Therefore, no overall judgement can be made on the provision in this subject. From the evidence collected, standards are better than those seen in most schools at ages seven and 11.

Commentary

125. The curriculum provision for personal, social and health education is good and the subject leader gives a very clear focus to the subject. She has amassed a high level of expertise in personal, social and health education over many years and offers valuable support to staff as they introduce new ideas. The programme is complemented by the linked pastoral policies. Through her many contacts, the co-ordinator has built up a huge range of pertinent resources so

that pupils enjoy varied lessons that are well supported with up-to-date documentation. The subject is addressed with sensitivity by staff who are ever mindful of pupils' feelings. The emphasis placed on developing emotional literacy is having a positive effect on pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning as they can name and identify feelings which either elate or upset them. Rather than make written comments on pupils' work about their personal thoughts and feelings, the co-ordinator talks through a piece of recorded work with each individual child instead. In this way, she establishes a stronger rapport with her pupils. Although the school already covers all the recognised areas of the personal, social and health education curriculum, a new approach, based on the findings of 'Pupil Lifestyle Surveys', is planned for the start of the next academic year when all the data has been analysed. In this way, Wallbrook School's personal, social and health education programme will be specifically tailored to meet the needs of each cohort.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

| | |
|--|----------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 4 |
| How inclusive the school is | 3 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 4 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 4 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Overall standards achieved | 6 |
| Pupils' achievement | 3 |

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|---|----------|
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 3 |
| Attendance | 5 |
| Attitudes | 3 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 2 |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of education provided by the school | 3 |
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| How well pupils learn | 3 |
| The quality of assessment | 4 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs | 3 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 2 |
| Accommodation and resources | 3 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 2 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 4 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 3 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 3 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 2 |

| | |
|--|----------|
| The leadership and management of the school | 3 |
| The governance of the school | 3 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 3 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 3 |
| The effectiveness of management | 3 |

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).