

INSPECTION REPORT

AL-FURQAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 131465

Headteacher: Ms Zahida Hussain

Reporting inspector: Natalie Moss
22685

Dates of inspection: 12th – 14th February 2001

Inspection number: 230614

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Amjad Ahmed
Date of previous inspection:	First inspection

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Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22685	N. G. Moss	Registered inspector	English Geography History Equality of opportunity Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11450	L. H. Kuraishi	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
6752	J. Dickins	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Music Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
20951	P. Littlejohn	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Information and communication technology Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This smaller than average size primary school is situated in Tyseley, near the centre of Birmingham. The school is a voluntary aided Islamic school. In 1999 it became a Voluntary Aided School within the Birmingham Education Authority and is the only Islamic voluntary aided school in Birmingham. The school currently has 119 pupils on roll, aged 4 to 11, organised into 5 classes. At the time of the inspection, 20 pupils were in the Foundation Stage (Reception class). The school attracts pupils of the Islamic faith from a wide surrounding area and is heavily oversubscribed. The social composition of the population living in the area around the school is mixed. School assessments indicate that, although the range of abilities on entry to the reception class is wide, attainment overall is about average when compared with children of a similar age nationally. Eighty-seven per cent of pupils have an ethnic minority background, which is very high when compared with schools similar in size. For eighty-one per cent of these, English is an additional language. Thirty-four per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a number above that of the national average. Just over nine per cent have special educational needs, with one pupil having a statement to that effect at the time of the inspection. This is well below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Al-Furqan Primary School provides a good quality of education for its pupils, within a strongly supportive spiritual ethos. It has many very good, and some excellent features. Although the youngest pupils make only satisfactory progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills, good progress is made throughout Key Stage 1 and maintained in Key Stage 2. By the time they leave the school, pupils achieve in line with the national average in English, just below it in mathematics, though well below it in science. The inspection team found standards to be rising well.

Leadership and management of the school by the governors and headteacher are very good. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with many good features. There are very effective arrangements in place to support the care and welfare of pupils and the school provides very well for their personal development. The behaviour of pupils and their attitudes to their work are very good. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The governors, headteacher and senior teacher provide very good, effective leadership for the school.
- Pupils achieve above average standards in their work in Key Stage 1.
- The school makes excellent provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development and good provision for their social and cultural development.
- Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are very good and their personal development is good.
- The progress made by pupils for whom English is an additional language is good.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities offered are good in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Assessment of pupils' behaviour and academic attainment is very good.

What could be improved

- The quality of some areas of teaching and learning.
- The unsatisfactory quality of teaching in the Reception class.
- The below average rate of attendance adversely affects pupils' progress.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This section does not apply, since the school has not previously been inspected.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	n/a	B	C	B
mathematics	n/a	D	D	C
science	n/a	D	E	C

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

This table shows that when compared with all schools in the year 2000, pupils' standards at the age of 11 are average in English, below average in mathematics and well below average in science. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, results in English are well above average and they are average in mathematics and science. The school is meeting the targets it has set.

Inspection findings show that by the age of eleven, pupils' standards are in line with national standards in English, mathematics and science and are likely to rise above them in English and mathematics. Pupils' exceed nationally expected levels in information and communication technology, history, geography and design and technology. In the remaining subjects, pupils attain the nationally expected levels. Based on inspector's observations of their work, pupils make good progress over time in Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, history, geography and design and technology and satisfactory progress in all other subjects.

By the time pupils reach the age of seven, at the end of Key Stage 1, they attain standards that are well above national standards in mathematics, above them in writing and in line with them in reading. Their levels of attainment also exceed nationally expected levels in science, design and technology, ICT, history and geography. In the remaining subjects, pupils attain the nationally expected levels. When compared with schools with similar pupils, they achieve standards of the highest order in mathematics and well above average in reading, writing and science. Progress is good in all subjects except music, art and design and physical education, where it is satisfactory.

When pupils enter the school, their overall attainment is about average. They settle in well to the school socially and make satisfactory progress in some areas of the Foundation Stage, generally attaining the nationally expected standards for children of this age. However, preparation for starting the National curriculum is currently unsatisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very keen to come to school, enjoy their lessons, are confident in their approach to learning and work with interest and enthusiasm.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good, both in school and in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are developing care and sensitivity to the needs of others and, when given the opportunity, take responsibility willingly. Relationships across the school are very good.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are below those found in primary schools nationally and are therefore unsatisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

In ninety-three per cent of the lessons observed the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory. In thirty-one per cent of those lessons it was good, being very good in a further seven per cent. In seven per cent of lessons the teaching was unsatisfactory. Within the overall pattern there are variations. All lessons observed in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 were at least satisfactory, but the quality of teaching of children in the Foundation Stage was unsatisfactory in forty per cent of lessons. A high proportion of good and very good teaching takes place in Years 1 and 6. An almost even number of good and satisfactory lessons occurs in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. English and mathematics are taught at least satisfactorily and often well. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced into the school successfully and are helping to improve standards. In addition, teachers have good grasp of basic skills, their planning for lessons is good and their management of pupils is good, so that pupils work well and with effort and concentration. The contribution of classroom support staff has a positive effect on standards. Teachers provide well for the needs of pupils of all abilities, especially for those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers' management and methods are not effective and expectations of what pupils can achieve is insufficiently high. As a result, too little work is completed and pupils do not always use time productively.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Throughout Key Stages 1 & 2 there is a good broad and balanced curriculum fully meeting statutory requirements. Provision for children under five is unsatisfactory in that it fails to prepare them well for starting the National Curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. As a result, they make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school receives no additional support for pupils for whom English is an additional language. The commitment and example set by teachers, however, ensure that these pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is excellent. Good provision is made for their social and cultural development. As a result, very good provision is made overall for pupils' personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides good quality care and support for pupils' pastoral and academic development.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school maintains productive links with parents, keeps them well informed and benefits from their support.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the school and is very ably supported by the acting assistant headteacher. The roles and responsibilities of curriculum leaders are well fulfilled and reflect the school's aims.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very effective in helping to shape the direction of the school and have a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good analysis of national test results as well as other formal assessments has taken place. This is being used effectively, along with other strategies, to evaluate the school's performance and to set clear and appropriate targets for development.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its staffing, accommodation and learning resources. Resources are of a satisfactory quality and range for most subjects, other than ICT, where there is a shortage of computers. The school seeks to obtain the best possible value in making financial decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• Their children make good progress in school.• Behaviour in school is good.• The amount of work their children are expected to do at home.• Their children are well taught.• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.• Teachers have high expectations of their children.• The school is well led and managed.• The school helps their children to become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school working more closely with parents and keeping them better informed about how their child is getting on.• The range of activities provided by the school outside lessons.

The inspection team support parents' positive views. With regard to the information parents receive about their children's progress, the school provides good reports and ample opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress. The range of activities provided by the school outside lessons was considered to be adequate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school has had no previous inspection report, as it has only become a Voluntary Aided school in the last two years. It is therefore not possible to comment on standards in the light of previous attainment, only in the light of the national tests for the last two years and on what was observed during the inspection.

2. The year 2000 National Curriculum test results for 11-year-olds show the school's results to be in line with national averages in English, below them in mathematics and well below them in science. The numbers of pupils who reached higher than national expectation was below average in English and well below in mathematics and science. The teachers' own assessments largely confirm these findings. Over the last two years, results have fallen a little in English and mathematics, but have risen significantly in science. These results should be regarded with caution, since the number of pupils entered for these tests was only 14, and therefore the results of so few pupils cannot be considered as a wholly reliable indication of the school's attainment.

3. However, when pupils' results at the age of 11 are compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, they show that pupils' performance in English are above average, average in mathematics and below average in science. The school is meeting the targets it has set. It is notable that, although the school has only taught literacy and numeracy for the last two years, pupils are achieving standards in these subjects higher than or equal to those of similar schools.

4. The slight fall in standards in English and mathematics in 2000 was significantly influenced by the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in that particular group of pupils, higher than that found in the previous year or in the current year. Inspection findings show that the current Year 6 pupils are well on line to exceed national standards in English and mathematics and to attain them in science. The school has put in place many measures to improve levels of attainment, such as extra classes for those who are under-achieving, and it has identified these in its school development plan. The growing impact of the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies, which have only been in place for two years, is having a positive effect on pupils' standards. The spreading of good teaching practice, training in new initiatives for teachers, and the setting of high targets for pupils are all helping standards to improve rapidly.

5. The National Curriculum test results for seven-year-olds in 2000 showed that the proportion of pupils attaining the national average in reading is similar to the proportion that does so nationally, but exceeds it in writing and is well above it in mathematics. Teachers' assessments also show that pupils' standards in science are above national standards. The proportion of pupils who exceed national standards is close to the national proportion in reading, below it in writing, well above it in mathematics and well below it in science.

6. When this school's results are compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, they achieve exceptionally well above the average in mathematics and well above it in reading, writing and science. In the last two years, the overall trend in pupils' standards has been a strong rise upwards in reading and writing and a particularly sharp rise in mathematics.

7. Inspection findings show that the standards of the current Year 2 pupils are above national standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. There are several factors, which have contributed to these standards and to the way in which they are rising, notably the quality of teaching, the very careful analysis of pupils' performance and the consequent setting of high and achievable targets for them, as well as the very successful introduction of initiatives such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

8. The attainment of children on entry to the school is broadly average, but there is a very high percentage of children for whom English is an additional language and who therefore have lower than average levels of skills in communication in English language. During their time in reception, children in their Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress in some areas of the curriculum. Many, by the end of the reception year, have attained most of the Early Learning Goals required nationally for children of that age. In some areas, however, particularly in developing independence in communication skills, in their understanding and experience of knowledge and understanding of the world and in their physical development, they are not always well prepared to begin the National Curriculum in Key Stage 1. The school has identified the shortcomings in teaching and learning in this area and has put in place a range of strategies to remedy the weaknesses.

9. In English, pupils in Key Stage 1 listen well and follow instructions, gaining confidence in oral work and learning to express their thoughts and ideas well. This good progress in speaking and listening skills is further built on in Key Stage 2, so that by the time pupils are eleven, their speaking and listening skills are well developed. They are confident in answering questions in class and in putting forward their own views. Progress in reading is good in both key stages. They read with a generally good degree of fluency, accuracy and expression. In writing, pupils' progress is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2.

10. In mathematics, pupils' standards at the age of seven are above national standards. They have good grasp of ordering numbers, can correctly identify shapes and use a wide mathematical vocabulary with ease. Pupils make good progress in number and in mental arithmetic because of the good teaching, which promotes these skills. They are also able to solve problems with thought and independence. At Key Stage 2, pupils show a good grasp of decimals and fractions, they can construct angles and understand the properties of shapes with confidence.

11. In science, pupils' attainment by the time they are seven is above national standards and, by the time they are eleven, the inspection team judged that they are beginning to achieve in line with the national average. In Key Stage 1, progress is good and opportunities are provided for pupils to plan experiments to use investigation skills. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 2, where pupils can now use scientific method to ensure fair testing and can record their results and use them to make predictions.

12. In the other subjects that pupils study, they make good progress in their learning in both key stages in ICT, art and design, history, geography and design and technology, so that by the age of eleven, pupils' levels of attainment exceed the levels expected nationally for pupils of that age. Despite the constraints placed upon the teaching of the subject by the shortage of both space and equipment at the moment, pupils progress well in ICT.

13. In music and physical education pupils make satisfactory progress in both key stages, so that by the age of eleven the levels being attained by pupils are similar to those expected of eleven-year-olds nationally. Progress in learning in both key stages is satisfactory and often good. The good and satisfactory progress made in their learning by

pupils is directly attributable to the high proportion of satisfactory, good and very good teaching in the school.

14. Higher attaining pupils are adequately catered for by the school and the amount of progress they make is similar to that of other pupils, measured against their prior attainment. There is, however, a variation in the amount of progress they make, which is directly related to the quality of teaching they receive. In some classes, although teachers plan work specifically for these pupils, their expectation of the amount of written work the pupils can achieve is sometimes too low. Pupils for whom English is an additional language have good provision made for them. The school has no supplementary support for these pupils, but great care is taken to provide them with detailed and appropriate targets, which are regularly reviewed. Teachers are always conscious of the need to promote these targets and to ensure that pupils progress to their full potential. As a result, these pupils make good progress and many reach a high level of attainment in English by the time they leave the school. This good progress is the direct result of the very good provision made for them by teachers and support staff. Those pupils in the early stages of language acquisition progress rapidly. The school positively promotes equal opportunities for these pupils.

15. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. These targets are reviewed regularly and shared with pupils. Pupils receive effective and sensitive support from their teachers and other support staff, as well as the good provision supplied by the special needs co-ordinator.

16. National test results have been very well analysed and the school monitors pupils' overall attainment and progress. In response to this analysis, targets for improvement have been appropriately set in English, mathematics and science. There is every indication that the school will be successful in meeting the performance targets it has set for 2001. There is no significant difference in the amount of progress made by boys and girls. All parents who returned the questionnaire were well satisfied with the amount of progress made by their children.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. The pupil's attitudes to school are very good. They are enthusiastic and enjoy learning. Many name their favourite subjects and extra curricular activities and give good reasons for their choice. Parents answering the inspection questionnaire strongly endorse the views that the pupils enjoy school and are happy there.

18. Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good. They concentrate well and listen with interest to teachers and each other. Pupils particularly enjoy practical activities and investigation and most teachers provide well for these. This was evident in a Year 1 science class when the pupils responded excellently to an interesting and challenging lesson on pushing and pulling forces.

19. Parents' positive views about behaviour are confirmed by the inspection. Pupil's behaviour in class is generally very good. There are clear school rules, which pupils know and obey well. The pupils appreciate the recognition given to good effort or behaviour during the lessons. Pupils play well together at playtimes and lunchtimes. They move around the school in an orderly manner, for example, when using the narrow corridors and stairs leading to their classrooms. They open and hold doors for teachers and visitors. Informal discussion with pupils shows that they know the rules for good behaviour and what to do if they are bullied. They are confident that the teachers and the headteacher would deal with any such incidents effectively. There have been no exclusions for inappropriate behaviour in the past

year. The pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour are in line with the general moral and spiritual ethos of the school.

20. The personal development of the pupils and the relationships they form are good. Pupils generally show a good level of maturity for their age. They are developing essential social skills well. They are willing to show initiative and take on responsibility; for example, they choose their own resources in lessons and tidy up the classroom at the ends of lessons. The staff set a good example of caring, friendly behaviour and this fosters good relationships between pupils and teacher and has a positive effect on pupils' learning. The pupils have a high regard for their teachers and behave with courtesy towards all adults. At playtime, older pupils take good care of young children and use the playground resources sensibly. They take care of their environment and so there is no litter around the school. Rewards for good behaviour are effective and sanctions are considered by pupils to be fair. In most lessons pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language join in well, try hard and want to succeed. They are aware of the progress they make and show a pride in their achievements.

21. Attendance is below national averages and is unsatisfactory and adversely affects pupils' progress. The school works hard to promote good attendance and punctuality and there has been some improvement in attendance, but overall the rate remains below the national average.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

22. Across the school, the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in ninety-three per cent of lessons. In all lessons, the quality is good in thirty-one per cent and very good in a further seven per cent. In seven per cent of lessons the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. No one single subject is the focus for unsatisfactory teaching. Within this overall pattern though, there are noticeable variations. Forty per cent of teaching in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. There is no unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2 and there is a high proportion of good teaching in Year 1 and Year 6. This variation in teaching quality has a direct impact on pupils' learning. Pupils in the Foundation Stage do not make good progress in all areas of learning. The amount of progress rises rapidly in Key Stage 1 and progress is again boosted in Year 6.

23. Since the school has not previously been inspected, it is impossible to comment on the improvement in teaching. However, the school has built up and consolidated a committed team of teachers in a short time. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in the last two years has also given teachers a good framework for planning and more precise direction in the delivery of lessons. All these factors have made a contribution to the quality of teaching and this in turn has had a favourable impact on the amount of progress pupils make in their learning.

24. The teaching of literacy is good. Particularly good practice was observed in Years 1 and 6. The National Literacy Strategy has been well implemented but one area requires further development. Time for writing is not always managed with sufficiently high expectations of what pupils, especially the higher attaining ones, could achieve in the time given to writing. In the best practice, teaching is lively and exciting with very good use being made of texts to stimulate pupils and challenge their thinking. This ensures that pupils in these lessons make good progress. Teachers take great pains to ensure that literacy skills permeate through the teaching of all subjects, particularly in history and science, and no opportunities are missed to consolidate these skills.

25. The teaching of numeracy is good. There is an effective focus on the development of mental arithmetic with regular, challenging questioning at the start of most lessons. Teachers encourage pupils to explain their methods of calculating solutions to problems. Lessons develop well with appropriate activities being set to match pupils' prior attainment levels. The pupils enjoy their numeracy lessons, being well motivated by the work set. As a result most pupils make good progress in their learning of mathematical skills and concepts and use them across the curriculum.

26. Good teaching is characterised by a variety of factors. Lessons are introduced in a way that catches pupils' imagination and teachers leave pupils in no doubt as to the objectives of the lesson. Similarly, teachers ask clear, concise questions which challenge pupils' understanding and require them to articulate their thoughts clearly. This was particularly noticeable in a good Year 5/6 science lesson where pupils were exploring how forces are measured and discovering when and why they can become equal. The lesson began with a good question and answer session, which checked pupils' prior knowledge and reinforced the correct use of technical vocabulary. Pupils were asked how the experiment should be set up and became clear on the need for accuracy. Pupils settled to their work quickly and quietly and worked together very co-operatively, showing a high level of interest in the pattern, which emerged in their results. Some pupils found the process difficult at first but, as a result of the teacher's high expectations and her persistent challenging of her pupils, all of them made good progress in their learning during the course of the lesson.

27. Good lessons are also well structured and proceed at a brisk pace. This was particularly noticeable in a good Year 2/3 literacy lesson on the features of an instructional text. The lesson opened with a brisk recapitulation of work done previously, extending this knowledge rapidly into new work on flow charts to aid clarity in writing instructions. The teacher's expectations of the class were high, providing a good degree of challenge and ensuring that pupils worked at a very productive pace throughout the lesson. As a result, time was very effectively used and pupils remained concentrated on their work, absorbed in what they were doing. An additional feature of this and many other lessons, particularly in Key Stage 1, was the very good support that both pupils and teachers receive from the support assistants. They make very effective contributions in many lessons and, as a result, the quality of pupils' learning was greatly enhanced.

28. A strong characteristic of good teaching in the school is the way in which teachers manage their pupils well, expecting and getting good behaviour as well as managing the use of resources in such a way that they enhance their pupils' learning. This was evident in a good mathematics lesson in Year 1. Pupils responded well to their teacher's opening remarks where it was made clear what they were expected to learn during the course of the lesson. The focus of the lesson, counting up and down in threes and understanding addition and multiplication skills, was carefully and clearly explained. The teacher's strong management ensured that pupils remained highly motivated and enthusiastic, following her very clear instructions well. Continuous high quality questioning by the teacher ensured that mathematical skills and vocabulary were well developed. Pupils become totally involved in the lesson and many were excited by it. Despite the pupils' obvious enthusiasm, the skill shown by the teacher in challenging her pupils ensured that they remained engrossed in their work and that very good standards of behaviour were maintained. As a result, very good progress was made in pupils' learning.

29. Where teaching is less successful and unsatisfactory, such a high standard of behaviour is not always achieved. In addition, the pace of the lesson is slow and pupils are unclear as to what they are required to learn. This was most evident in a Reception class lesson on physical development, where pupils were presented with an inappropriate task and were unclear about what was expected of them. As a result, some pupils did very little and

began to disrupt the work of others. The pace of the lesson fell as a result of the teacher constantly having to try to get those pupils to concentrate. Consequently, the amount of progress made by pupils in their learning was unsatisfactory.

30. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. This is most noticeable in English, mathematics and science. In subjects where such knowledge is most secure, pupils' learning is enhanced.

31. Teachers' planning of pupils' work is good and clearly identifies what pupils of different levels of prior attainment will be required to do. This is particularly so in English and mathematics. In addition, such plans identify what resources will be required during the lesson. These are used well by teachers to promote pupils' learning and to increase the amount of progress they make. Teachers use homework satisfactorily to reinforce learning done in lessons.

32. The quality and use of day-to-day assessment are unsatisfactory, in that the marking of pupils' work does not always give a clear indication of how well pupils have done and what they now need to do to continue to improve. Most teachers, however, are skilled in using questions to check and challenge pupils' thinking and understanding and most are adept at asking good follow-up questions to pupils' initial responses. Good use is made of sessions at the ends of lessons to assess what pupils have learned and to further reinforce their subject knowledge and understanding. Teachers' recording of their pupils' attainments and the subsequent use of that to plan the next pieces of work for them, is generally good.

33. Pupils with special educational needs, as well as those who have English as an additional language, are fully integrated into classroom activities. They are given tasks appropriate to their learning needs. Class teachers and classroom assistants make good provision for children with special educational needs. They use the targets in the individual education plans well to plan and assess pupils' work. This ensures children make good progress and are aware of how well they are doing. Some action plans for pupils at Stage 1 would be improved if the area of concern was more tightly specified. Currently, very similar general comments, such as 'improve writing' are repeated in successive plans and this suggests, incorrectly, that there is no improvement. The school has written a number of group plans that contain targets for higher attaining pupils as part of the school's strategy to improve standards. Staff make effective use of homework to reinforce learning in lessons. Classroom assistants provide good support for pupils in lessons and in small withdrawal groups. Additional teaching support is well used to improve the quality of written work produced by more able pupils in Years 2 and Year 6.

34. Most teachers are very aware of the special needs of pupils in the early stages of learning English. They take care to make explanations clear and understandable, and to adapt material to pupils' needs. Learning support assistants are also allocated to provide good quality further support. Teachers analyse pupils' needs, write full and focused targets for them and review progress regularly. The school is providing these pupils with the best opportunity it can to achieve in line with their abilities. Teachers are satisfactorily rigorous in addressing the literacy needs of pupils whose phonic system is different from that of English, in order to help them to spell more accurately.

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

35. The school curriculum is good and the school draws heavily on its religious foundation, to the benefit of pupils' learning. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have both been fully and effectively implemented and a strong curriculum focus is placed upon raising standards in English, mathematics and science. The effectiveness of subject co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating the development of the subject for which they have responsibility is an important factor in improving the quality of pupils' learning.

36. The school also provides a broad and balanced range of activities that fully meets the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of all pupils. All pupils enjoy equal opportunities. Pupils with special educational needs have enhanced access to the National Curriculum through the effective support provided by teachers and classroom assistants.

37. The school is very aware of the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Learning support assistants are allocated to provide good quality further support. The specialist teachers from the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service for the teaching of children with English as an additional language have a very good understanding of their needs and provides them with very effective support. The time allocated to the school for the support of these pupils throughout the curriculum is providing all pupils with the best opportunity to achieve in line with their abilities.

38. Good opportunities are taken to use the local environment for activities, including first-hand observation and studies of local history. Programmes of day visits to enhance learning are undertaken by each class on an annual basis. The school is developing good links with the business community and the 'Excellence in Cities' scheme. Since attaining voluntary aided status, links have been strengthened between the school and the local community it serves.

39. Clubs within the school are used to give pupils some opportunity to obtain extra curricular support or follow a particular interest, for example, an ICT club. Visitors from the local community and resources from local museums help to enrich the quality of curriculum provision. In addition, all pupils follow courses in Arabic and in Islamic studies, which enrich their cultural knowledge. Inspectors felt that, with the constraints of a small staff and the school's present accommodation, it was difficult for the school to provide more extra-curricular activities.

40. Provision for spiritual and moral development is excellent and is all-pervasive in the teaching and learning that takes place in the school. The vision and strong leadership from the headteacher and the shared commitment of the staff make pupils' personal development a strength of the school. Faith development is central to the school's ethos. Values and morals are seen as an important part of each pupil's development. These are taught through a cross-curricular approach, particularly through the use of Circle time.

41. Praise and reward are regularly used to encourage and motivate pupils. Clear behaviour guidelines and boundaries have been established, which are implemented consistently by staff. This has resulted in a very good standard of behaviour throughout the school. There is, therefore, very little need for sanctions and exclusions have not been necessary. Parents confirm that there is no bullying in the school and that pupils work and play happily together. There is a strong respect for teachers from pupils. Rewards for individual and shared success give pupils strong motivation to do their best. Parents confirmed that they are happy with the curriculum the school offers.

42. Plans for the move to new premises in 2002 are well advanced. This will enable the school to expand to one form entry and greatly improve the opportunities to extend the already good range of the curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory. The school provides a secure and enjoyable learning environment for its pupils. As a result, most of the children establish happy, confident, trustful and constructive relationships with adults and with one another. Parents' response to the questionnaire shows that they agree overwhelmingly that their children like to come to school. All teachers make it a priority to ensure children settle well into school, beginning with effective pre-school meetings between teachers and parents. The school pays attention to pupils' emotional and educational needs and provides them with good support. For example, the school targets pupils with additional learning needs early in their school life and then provides extra tuition and monitoring through specially prepared educational plans.

44. The school is aware of the local child protection procedures and has appropriate links with the support agencies. However, there is a need for the school to review training needs for the nominated child protection co-ordinator and the staff. The school secretary cares sensitively for sick children and there are satisfactory arrangements for first aid.

45. The school implements a sound health and safety policy. The headteacher makes informal safety checks on a regular basis and deals promptly with hazards. Teachers and the support staff promote hygiene effectively as part of the curriculum and there is satisfactory attention paid to safety matters. Parents feel that their children are safe and secure in the school. The school does much to promote good attendance, monitoring the unsatisfactory level of attendance stringently and initiating many strategies to improve it. The patterns of unsatisfactory attendance and late arrivals are monitored rigorously. The school is trying many strategies to address the problem and works closely with the Education Welfare Officer

46. The school promotes good behaviour very well through a system of mutually agreed simple rules, which are incorporated in the school's very positive behaviour policy. The school's policies on bullying and other oppressive behaviour are well understood and regarded by the pupils and the staff. All pupils know that good behaviour is expected of them. Procedures for recording and monitoring inappropriate behaviour and rewards for good behaviour are firmly in place. Pupils from different social and ethnic backgrounds are taught to respect one another. The school is successful in creating a truly harmonious environment where all children work and play well together. This has a positive impact on their personal and social development. There is good adult supervision and staff provide pupils with very good role models.

47. Procedures for supporting personal development are good. The school's very good provision for pupils' social and moral development has a positive impact on raising pupils' achievement. Standards of behaviour and relationships are very good as a result, so that pupils work well together and are prompt to follow instructions. The staff have consistently high expectations that pupils will behave well and work hard and this helps each child to achieve to full potential. Monitoring of pupil's behaviour through tracking charts displayed in the classrooms provides a deterrent for inappropriate behaviour.

48. Pupils with special educational needs are well cared for. Their work is closely monitored and targets reviewed. Individual education plans are dated and numbered in

sequence so that it is easy to identify progress. Staff discuss targets with pupils and this has the benefit of making sure they know how well they are doing.

49. There are very good and appropriate aims for the support of pupils for whom English is an additional language and a positive ethos to provide for their needs. The school works hard to meet the range of need of these pupils. There are very good relationships with external agencies, and regular termly meetings in which all involved meet to review pupils' needs.

50. The school has effective systems for formally assessing pupils' attainment. It makes very good use of early testing, such as assessment on entry to the school and Key Stage 1 national tests to identify differences in attainment between different groups of pupils and to plan how these differences might be overcome. In addition to statutory testing, the school also makes good use of optional test material to set individual attainment targets in core subjects for all pupils. The school is able to track pupils' progress and address weaknesses or concerns as they become apparent. All test data and targets are shared with staff so that, as pupils move through the school, their progress can be effectively monitored. Additionally, this information is also used to set annual school targets for improvement in English and mathematics. This enables the school to evaluate its effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress in all other subjects are also generally well developed, enabling teachers to assess the impact of learning, although marking of pupils' written work is not always sufficiently constructive.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. The school ensures that its communication with parents is effective. Parents are also happy with the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by their children. They feel the quality of teaching is good, that most children behave well and that this enables their children to make good progress. Inspectors agree with these parental views.

52. The majority of the parents who responded to the questionnaire are satisfied that their children receive the right amount of homework, but a few felt that they were not always well informed about how their children were progressing in school. The inspection team found the amount of homework given to be appropriate for children's age and the information given to parents on their children is good. Written reports to parents are of good quality, the school holds regular meetings to inform parents about their children's progress and inspectors observed for themselves that teachers were always ready to make themselves available to parents to discuss any problems, which arose.

53. Most parents are happy about the information received from the school and that they feel comfortable in approaching the school with concerns about their children. Inspection evidence suggests that parents are very supportive of the school and the staff is appreciative of their help with reading in Year 2 and various other activities, such as religious celebrations and presentations on sports mornings.

54. The school prospectus and the governing body's annual report are brief but contain necessary information, except that information about arrangements for the admission of pupils with disabilities is not published in the governing body's annual report. The school publishes a regular newsletter, which contains good curriculum information for parents and the school's calendar. Translation of the school's literature is considered unnecessary.

55. Parents have easy access to the staff, there is a suggestion box in the visitors' entrance and there are number of consultation evenings when parents can discuss their children's progress and make suggestions for improvements in school life.

56. The school consults regularly with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. They attend reviews and their comments are recorded. Parents support the work of the school and see that their children's homework is completed. Parents of pupils for whom English is an additional language are consulted initially and at regular intervals, so that they are involved with the progress of their children.

57. A few parent helpers were observed in the school during the inspection. Some parents help their children with homework but this is not consistently so throughout the school. The school has a home-school agreement and is currently working hard to ensure all parents sign it.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The headteacher, who has been in charge of the school since its inception, provides excellent leadership, which has a most positive effect on all aspects of school life. She is ably supported by the acting assistant headteacher. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and a dedicated and committed vision of its future. Above all, her insistence on the highest standards in the spiritual and moral education of the pupils not only aids greatly in helping them to achieve well, but also enables them to become responsible, caring and hardworking members of the community. Her management of the school is purposeful and she has successfully undertaken and achieved its expansion to its present situation and is now planning the further move into new and larger premises with forethought and expertise. She has a clear vision for the further development of the school, which is evident in her determination to raise pupils' standards of attainment by focusing on key strategies.

59. She has continued to address the need to improve standards in numeracy by the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and to raise standards in science by rigorous staff training. In addition, she has identified the need to concentrate on pupils' standards of writing, which are now developing well. The very good school improvement plan also identifies other areas for development, including strategies for increasing the number of higher grades at Key Stage 2, the improvement of ICT and physical education, and improving teaching quality, as well as planning for the move to new premises next year. It is a very good plan in which costs and success criteria are clearly identified. The staff are extremely well supported by a headteacher who recognises the importance of developing a strong and dedicated team. Under her leadership, teachers and support staff work together efficiently and effectively. She is a major strength in the school.

60. The aims of the school are excellent and are clearly defined. They underpin the whole of the school's work and life. Within the school, all pupils are valued and cared for and are encouraged to develop into devout, well-motivated and disciplined young people. The school is particularly successful in achieving its aim of creating positive attitudes towards work in its pupils. There is an explicit commitment to high standards and to meeting the needs of pupils of all abilities. The school also does well in nurturing those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

61. To assist its aim of raising standards, the school has collected together a very good range of data to enable it to monitor and target each pupil's progress. The analysis is very well managed by the headteacher and a senior teacher and provides useful and detailed information on every year group and pupil in the school. This information is used well to provide realistic and challenging targets for both the school and for pupils.

62. There are good structures and procedures in place to monitor standards and teaching. The headteacher monitors teaching in classrooms and also monitors pupils' learning by looking at teachers' planning and checking on pupils' written work. Subject co-ordinators have some opportunity to monitor teaching and learning through direct observation in classrooms. They also scrutinise pupils' work and examine teachers' planning, providing help, support and advice where necessary. Staff meet regularly to discuss the effectiveness of the curriculum and the results of assessments tests, in order to help them to evaluate pupils' attainment and progress. The patterns of unsatisfactory attendance and late arrivals are monitored rigorously. The school is trying many strategies to address the problem of unsatisfactory attendance and works closely with the Education Welfare Officer

63. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed effectively. The special education needs co-ordinator has a very good grasp of current issues and is aware of proposed changes to the Code of Practice. She is well supported by a knowledgeable governor. Together they make a very strong and effective team. The funds provided by the LEA to support a pupil with a statement of special educational need and those provided by the governing body are spent well in ensuring good provision that results in good progress.

64. The governing body is very effective in its work. It is well led and, apart from a few omissions in its annual report to parents on financial details, details of special needs provision and the address of the Chair and the Clerk to the governors, fulfils its responsibilities most efficiently. The body is appropriately consulted and has a relevant committee structure in place to cover areas such as finance, staffing and curriculum and strategic planning. As a result, governors play a good part in working alongside the headteacher to provide effective leadership for the school. Governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are prominent in the clarity of vision they contribute to promoting the aims and objectives of the school.

65. Al-Furqan school is housed in a small former office block. The governors and staff have done all in their power to make it warm and welcoming, but the classrooms are inconvenient in shape and size. The fact that this has little negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning is a tribute to staff and pupils alike. Physical education is restricted on site but the school hires nearby facilities to overcome some of the limitations. Play facilities for the youngest pupils are unsatisfactory because they are severely restricted. There is too little space for the accommodation of sufficient equipment, such as that for ICT, and classrooms are cramped for teaching both academic subjects and practical subjects, such as science and music. The school overcomes these difficulties well, so that they do not affect pupils' progress and next year will move to more suitable premises nearby. Learning resources are adequate generally, in some cases very good, and always used to the best advantage.

66. The school has been very successful in recruiting new staff during the past twelve months and has integrated them quickly into the school curriculum and the ethos of the school. This bodes well for the rapid expansion that will take place when the school moves to new premises. The roles of subject co-ordinators are developing well, with rapid gains in confidence, skills and monitoring of pupils' learning taking place, as well as the sharing of good teaching practice.

67. The quality of financial planning is very good. The headteacher and governors monitor the school's expenditure closely against the planned budget and the governing body is fully involved in planning and setting the budget. Financial decisions are taken to address priorities, which helps to raise the standards of learning. To this end, the school has prudently managed to carry forward a substantial sum to finance the imminent move to its new accommodation. Financial administration is detailed and thorough and specific grants are all

spent appropriately and used to improve educational provision. Careful records are kept of spending and the school constantly seeks to obtain good value for money. It is careful to ensure that it purchases goods and services at competitive prices and to apply the principles of best value. It uses its resources of staffing, accommodation and learning resources well. Despite the fact that the school, at the moment, is small and therefore expensive, it provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68. In order to build upon the many positive aspects of the school and further improve the standards of work and quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Ensuring that teaching and learning is consistently good throughout the school by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of the amount of work pupils can achieve in the allocated time, especially for the higher attaining pupils;
(Paragraphs: 2, 14, 77, 84, 89, 92, 98)
 - providing more professional development to improve teaching in the Foundation Stage;
(Paragraphs: 8, 22, 29, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75)
 - ensuring all staff manage behaviour effectively, especially in the Reception class;
(Paragraph: 29, 70, 72, 73, 76)
 - making effective use of day to day assessment.
(Paragraphs: 32, 50, 86, 94, 122)

- (2) improve rates of attendance by:
 - continuing to implement rigorously the good systems already in place;
 - seek new ways of enlightening parents to the relationship between better attendance and improved progress.
(Paragraphs: 21, 45, 62)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	33
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7	31	55	7	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	119
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	48

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	40

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	96

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

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	4.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1
National comparative data	0.3

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	5	12	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	15	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (88)	94 (94)	94 (100)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	15	15	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (76)	88 (88)	100 (88)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Where the number of boys or girls in the year group is less than 10 the individual results are not reported

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	4	8	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	10	9	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (87)	75 (73)	83 (73)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	10	9	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (87)	75 (73)	75 (73)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Where the number of boys or girls in the year group is less than 10 the individual results are not reported

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	6
Pakistani	81
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	1
White	4
Any other minority ethnic group	16

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.8
Average class size	19.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3.9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	102

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	290 355
Total expenditure	281 503
Expenditure per pupil	2 560
Balance brought forward from previous year	22 371
Balance carried forward to next year	31 223

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	119
Number of questionnaires returned	31

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	84	13	0	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	81	19	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	68	32	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	61	39	0	0	0
The teaching is good.	84	10	6	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	71	19	3	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	26	0	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	19	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	65	19	6	6	3
The school is well led and managed.	65	26	0	0	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	35	0	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	55	10	7	7

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

69. Children are admitted to the reception class at the start of the school year in which they become five years old. During the inspection there were twenty children, most of them girls, in the class. Six pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language but no additional support is available for them. Attainment on entry is assessed using the Birmingham Local Education Authority 'Signposts' scheme and results indicate most children have skills similar to those seen at most schools. The school has identified six children whose level of attainment causes sufficient concern for them to be closely monitored. There is some evidence to suggest that in the reception class girls have more advanced skills than boys.

70. Overall provision for children in the reception class is unsatisfactory. The classroom is too small but considerable efforts have been made to make the best use of the available space through the creation of small bays. Facilities for physical play are unsatisfactory but the main problem lies with the quality of teaching. While most lessons are satisfactory a number are only just so and two-fifths of lessons are unsatisfactory. In the best lesson seen early reading skills were well taught and the children responded well, but this is not typical. The main weaknesses in teaching are insufficient knowledge of the curriculum and a lack of awareness of when children need to move on to another activity. This is compounded by ineffective strategies to manage and motivate children consistently.

Personal, social and emotional development

71. Children are confident, friendly and usually well behaved. Occasionally they are fussy and fail to respond promptly to their teacher but this is often because they are expected to remain at the same activity for too long. They listen well to their teacher and are keen to answer questions and tackle the work provided for them. This leads to effective learning when they share a book with their teacher and try hard to read the words. Children also have the confidence to teach each other computer skills. They relate well to each other and are keen to share their work with adults and visitors. They move confidently in the classroom and playground, change their clothes for physical activities and have well-developed personal self-help skills. They do not always have sufficient opportunity to select their own activities and materials, for example, to mix their own paint. Children listen well to the story of '*Your house is my house*' and show empathy for the plight of lost creatures. The children with special educational needs are gaining in confidence and independence and integrate well with the rest of the class. Children who are at early stages of learning English make their needs known well and have the confidence to join in with class activities. Most children are likely to achieve the expected levels by the end of the school year. The bilingual classroom assistant plays a particularly valuable role in helping children manage their own behaviour and make their needs known.

Communication, language and literacy

72. Many children are confident to speak to the rest of the class although some of the contributions are rather brief. In contrast some children give more detailed explanations. For example in response to the question: 'Why do you think the little girl is sad?' a girl says, 'She is all alone with no mummy or daddy'. Learning in this part of the literacy lesson is good and it is clear that most children are well on their way to achieving the levels expected for their age. Some have already exceeded them. However having sat for almost thirty minutes on the carpet children were then expected to move straight on to more teacher directed activities.

This was particularly inappropriate for the least able group of children who were expected to read a book with the teacher. It was obvious that this group of children were not at this stage of development. The most able readers know and read confidently about twenty of the most common words and show a good understanding of what they read. There is ample evidence to show that most children are making good progress in developing their writing skills. A display in the classroom matches children's first attempts at writing their names with current efforts and the improvement is obvious to the children as well as the visitor. Lesson planning indicates the activities for different groups of pupils but there is little evidence that this is based on detailed records of which children meet, exceed or fail to meet expectations.

Mathematical development

73. Overall teaching and learning is satisfactory and most children are likely to achieve the expected levels by the end of the school year. Most children count confidently backwards and forwards to twenty and enjoy this oral activity with their teacher. But about a quarter of the class only watch and listen rather than join in with the activity. The teacher used a 'counting teddy' as a useful device to gain children's attention and motivation. This is successful, fun and makes sure all children attend well. The most able children recognise 'counting teddy's' errors and know how to correct them. Following this good whole class learning group work is provided at different levels but for some children this stretches their concentration to the limit and they become restless. The most successful group is building sand-castles and labelling them with number eleven flags. They quickly find the right number, know ten is smaller and twenty larger. The biggest number they can think of is a thousand which one child knows is more than 100. The groups threading eight beads or making eight bugs struggle, the group printing in a book are trying to do so with almost dry ink pads and the top group are attempting to do sums which are too hard for them. This last group needed a number line or square to help them with their work and learning in the first part of the lesson would have been even more effective had number fans been used.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. Teaching and learning in this area is mixed but overall is unsatisfactory. ICT skills are well developed. Children are confident skilful users of new technology. They record their names and addresses on a tape recorder and write them on the computer. They have good keyboard skills. They can use the return, shift, space bar and change font size independently. Boys and girls display equally good ICT skills. Skills are effectively taught and well reinforced in sessions at the ends of lessons when children share their learning with each other. However, this positive picture is not sustained in a lesson about old and new toys. The children are expected to sit for too long which led to about a third of them ignoring the teacher. Initial resources are well chosen to stimulate discussion about the characteristics of old and new toys. Some appropriate descriptive language such as clean and dirty is generated, but the lesson is not well managed and the children begin to misbehave. Overall there is little learning in this lesson. Lesson planning makes clear what learning the teacher intends but this is not always achieved in practice because of a lack of sensitivity to how children are reacting.

Physical development

75. Overall teaching and learning are unsatisfactory and children are not on track to achieve the expected levels. The constraints of accommodation lead to difficulties in making good provision for physical development but the planned lesson did not take sufficient account of the small space available. As a result most children had to sit and watch for too long. This led to silly behaviour that the teacher found difficult to manage. The scheme of work predates the Foundation Stage and includes activities that are not suitable for the limited space available to the school. The small outside play area which is empty for most of the day needs to be used to provide more planned physical activity for children if they are to achieve the expected levels by the end of the school year. Children develop their hand control skills steadily and most use pencils and crayons much as expected for their age. Many children however have more limited cutting skills and need more practice in this area.

Creative development

76. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and most children are likely to achieve the expected levels by the end of the school year. Some work of a high standard is seen when children look carefully at the work of Claris Cliff and then create their own designs. A child who is clearly talented in this area produced a particularly fine symmetrical drawing of an urn. Some children produced brightly coloured paintings of teapots while others decorated ready drawn outlines. This was a satisfactory lesson but had the potential to be a good lesson if the teacher had had the confidence to let the children draw their own pictures and mix their own paints. Children enjoy singing and are attentive in this lesson because it is largely practical. Initially they sit in a circle this improves eye contact with the teacher and the children join in well. In the group work that follows they practice making loud and quiet sounds and then share these with the rest of the class. This lesson indicates that the children behave well and learn most effectively when the pace and variety of tasks is better.

ENGLISH

77. The majority of pupils enter the school with average levels of ability in all areas of language and literacy. It is notable that a very high percentage of children come into the school with English as an additional language. Many, though not all, make satisfactory progress throughout the reception class. The standard of attainment improves well in Key Stage and the level of achievement is rising well in Key Stage 2. The results of the 2000 national tests at the age of eleven indicate that standards in English were in line with the national average for eleven-year-old pupils, although the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level was below the national average. Standards were above average when compared with schools with a similar intake. Test results for 2000 show standards to be similar to the national average for seven year olds in reading and above it in writing. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level was close to the national average in reading but below it in writing. When compared with similar schools, results were well above average in both reading writing.

78. The national test results for 2000 indicate improved standards since 1999 at the age of seven, in both reading and writing. At the age of eleven, however, standards in English fell slightly over this period of time. This fall was indicative of the nature of the particular group of pupils, which consisted of only twelve pupils and therefore cannot be taken as a reliable indication of attainment levels. There was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Inspection findings indicate that standards currently the majority of pupils in Year 2 are likely to attain above average national standards in both reading and writing. At the age of eleven, pupils are well on course to attain standards in line with the national average for eleven-year-olds.

79. The school, has not been previously inspected. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented, resulting in a more focused approach to the teaching of English by many teachers. Some good quality resources have been purchased to support literacy, particularly for guided reading. Teachers have worked hard to address standards in reading and these have risen in well as a result. Effective use is now being made of new initiatives such as additional support for under-achieving pupils, support for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language and these are contributing to rising standards for these groups of pupils. Target setting in literacy is used well by most teachers to focus on what needs to be improved. The co-ordinator provides good advice and support to colleagues.

80. Planning has been improved as a result of the National Literacy Strategy, which now provides the long-term planning, and evaluation and assessment opportunities are consistently identified in planning. Much analysis of assessment data is undertaken to identify areas of weakness. This information is used well to inform priorities for attention, such as the recent thrust on writing. Standards in writing show rapid advance in both key stages. Steady progress in writing, however, is not always maintained for the higher attaining pupils, because the expectations of some teachers of the amount of work which can be achieved by these pupils is insufficiently high.

81. The standards of speaking and listening are average overall at the end of both key stages. Pupils show good listening skills. They listen carefully to their teachers and each other, follow instructions without fuss and contribute positively in discussions. Speaking skills are generally well promoted, with few missed opportunities to extend pupils' clarity and use of English when speaking. Most teachers and other adult support staff encourage pupils to ask and answer questions in order to develop their ideas. As a result, pupils develop confidence in speaking aloud and explaining their work. Good examples of speaking skills being well promoted were seen in a Year 5/6 class where the teacher encouraged pupils to share their views on vivisection, identifying the main elements for and against the practice as part of a unit of work on non-fiction texts. In a Year 1 class, through the use of 'Talk Time', the teacher made very good use of opportunities to extend speaking skills, encouraging pupils, to speak at a formal level and to acquire confidence in their own communication skills. They were able to suggest appropriate dialogue and to use good expression in their voices.

82. Standards in reading are average at the end of Key Stage 1. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils have satisfactory phonic skills and a sound understanding of what they read. Many higher attaining pupils read accurately and with good expression. Teachers work hard to develop oral skills in guided reading and extend this use of language well across other subjects of the curriculum. Most pupils understand terms such as 'author', 'illustrator', 'contents' page' and 'index' and enjoy sharing texts during literacy hour. They have a satisfactory range of strategies to enable them to decipher words which they have difficulty in reading. Higher attaining pupils confidently discuss their reading and predict what might happen. Lower attaining pupils build common high frequency words. Reading diaries are maintained which contain informative comment by teachers and involve parents in responding to pupils' reading. In Key Stage 2 standards of reading are also average, but with pupils being extended through the reading of challenging texts. There is good emphasis on the systematic development of library skills, despite the minimal size of the library, because of the constraints imposed by the accommodation. The limited range of reference books, despite teachers' best efforts, hinders the development of research skills for older pupils in Key Stage 2.

83. Standards in writing are above average at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils write for a good range of purposes as a result of the National Literacy Strategy. Tasks set for average

and lower attaining pupils are sufficiently demanding and well matched to their abilities, but higher attaining pupils are not always expected to work at a brisk, productive pace. Handwriting and presentation of work are generally satisfactory for a significant majority of pupils. Teaching of handwriting is being systematically developed and most pupils in Key Stage 1 now join their writing. Most average and higher attaining pupils use basic punctuation accurately. There is some emphasis on early drafting skills and teachers concentrate on improving the quality of writing by helping pupils to choose more imaginative vocabulary or extend their ideas. Pupils' writing by the end of Key Stage 2 is satisfactory for a significant majority, and is often good. By the age of eleven, the majority of pupils have a good knowledge of basic punctuation and grammar, though spelling is sometimes weak. Pupils write at length, but sometimes insufficient work is achieved in the time allocated, particularly by the higher attaining pupils, who are sometimes allowed to work too slowly and with too little sense of urgency to finish a piece of writing in the allocated time. The expectations of teachers are directly related to the way in which pupils progress, especially in the planning of lessons to provide work graded in difficulty to suit the needs of pupils of all levels of attainment. There is evidence of the use of different forms of writing, such as letters, instructions, story and playscripts, and opportunity for pupils to express opinions through persuasive writing and to extend their ideas through purposeful tasks such as newspaper reports and extended writing in other areas of the curriculum, such as religious education and history. Skills such as note taking are being well developed. Most teachers expect good standards of presentation in pupils' written work and this is reflected in other subjects across the curriculum. As a result, pupils take pride in their work. Although pupils have a secure knowledge of letter sounds, sometimes a lack of understanding of spelling patterns hinders their progress

84. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress towards their targets in individual education plans in both key stages. Small group support in classes is successfully helping these pupils to extend their literacy skills. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress at both key stages, because of the good support they are offered by teachers and classroom assistants and the quality of the specific individual targets identified for them by the co-ordinator for special needs. Higher attaining pupils are set appropriate work, but do not always expected to accomplish as much written work as they could.

85. Most pupils enjoy their work in literacy sessions. They respond positively, are eager to answer questions and are keen to learn. Good opportunities are provided within the literacy hour for pupils to develop skills in working together as a group.

86. Teaching is satisfactory overall in both Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2, with many good features. Most teachers have secure understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and use the time appropriately to ensure that the different elements of the literacy hour are well covered. In the best lessons, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and teaching methods inspire pupils to learn successfully. Pupils are well motivated by interesting tasks and lessons proceed at a brisk pace. For example, in a Year 1 class, the exciting activity of presenting a prepared speech on a self-chosen topic held pupils' interest and captured their imagination, the teacher's thoughtful attention and obvious interest adding to the excitement. As a result pupils worked hard and at a brisk pace. In less successful teaching, expectations are not always sufficiently high, teaching methods are lacking in variety, so that pupils spend too long on one activity and their concentration wanes. Strengths of the teaching are teachers' grasp of the basic skills of language and communication, to that pupils are given a solid basis on which to build, and the management of pupils, which is good and ensures calm, uninterrupted interest and concentration. Marking, however, is inconsistent, often failing to identify how pupils can improve their work and thus failing to involve pupils in their knowledge of how they are progressing.

87. Management of English is good, and is a contributory factor to the improving standards in the subject. The co-ordinator for English uses her knowledge well to support teaching and learning. The monitoring aspect of the role is developing so that it supports teaching and learning well. Assessment strategies are in place, and assessment opportunities within teachers' planning are consistently used. Analysis of data from national tests and other assessment information are used well to plan future work and identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment. The use of literacy within other subjects is good. There is good focus on language in most subjects and attention is given to more extended writing skills in other curriculum subjects. Satisfactory resources enhance learning and are well used.

MATHEMATICS

88. The latest national test results in mathematics, showed the number of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 achieving the required Level 2 was well above the national average when compared with all other schools and also when compared to schools similar to Al-Furqan. Over half of the pupils achieved Level 3, a much higher proportion than that achieved in all schools nationally and also when compared to similar schools,

89. At Key Stage 2 results were slightly below average when compared with all schools nationally and in line with similar schools. No pupils achieved Level 5 or above, which is well below the average for all schools nationally and also when compared to similar schools.

90. At the end of Key Stage 1 girls outperformed boys in their test results. The school is aware of this and are taking steps to ensure that boys attain as well as girls. However, the difference in performance between boys and girls at the end of Key Stage 2 was not significant. It should be taken into account that the number of pupils taking the tests was small and results can therefore fluctuate considerably from year to year.

91. The standard of work seen in class lessons and in pupils' books show that standards in Key Stage 1 are being maintained and are improving considerably by the end of Key Stage 2. Much of the work observed at the end of Key Stage 2 was above national average levels and well above standards for similar schools. Pupils have a very positive attitude to mathematics; many saying it was their favourite subject. Basic skills are taught well and pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress. Pupils demonstrated strength in mental arithmetic and were able to recall mental multiplication, addition and subtraction facts with speed and accuracy. Older pupils were seen successfully calculating the areas of polygons by dividing them into rectangles and right-angled triangles. One pupil had worked out the formula for calculating the area of an isosceles triangle. Younger pupils could successfully explain the commutative law and apply their knowledge of mathematics in everyday problems involving the use of money.

92. The quality of teaching seen was never less than satisfactory in Key Stage 2, but higher attaining pupils were not always fully challenged. It was often good in Key Stage 1. In the best lessons seen teachers were clear over their expectations and used questioning well. These lessons challenged pupils and helped increase their mathematical vocabulary and skills. In some lessons classroom assistants were used effectively to help pupils needing support.

93. The management and control of pupils is good. Clear expectations are set for pupil behaviour and pupils respond well. Pupils' attitudes are very good, they are enthusiastic and show interest in mathematics lessons.

94. Teachers' planning is good, learning objectives are clear; activities are well structured and include opportunities for assessment. Grouping of pupils within classes helps staff match teaching more closely to pupil needs. Homework is used as an effective tool to reinforce learning. The quality of marking is variable – where it is good, it is informative to the pupil on how to improve future work.

95. Assessment in mathematics is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons observed teachers questioned pupils to assess their understanding, knowledge and skills. Praise and acknowledgement of pupils' efforts is used well to motivate pupils.

96. Good use is made of teaching resources. The use of computers in the classroom was effective in supporting learning and reinforcing understanding.

97. Co-ordination of the subject is good. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented with good staff training, support and guidance. The school development plan reflects the priorities in developing the subject. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the subject. The need to raise the level of achievement of above average pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 is being addressed. The aims and values of the school are clearly demonstrated in all aspects of the subject, as is the shared commitment of all the staff for improvement and high standards.

SCIENCE

98. Standards achieved by eleven year olds in the 2000 national tests are well below average when compared to all schools and very low when compared to similar schools. The main problem is that too few pupils achieve the higher grades in the tests. The school has recognised this weakness and has put in place a range of sensible strategies to make sure the number of pupils gaining Level 5 increases significantly in the 2001 tests. Inspectors looked very carefully at the work currently being produced by Year 6 pupils and concluded that, although the school's target is an ambitious one, there is good evidence that an increased number of pupils are now working at the higher levels. Standards are therefore currently in line with expectations and improving across all aspects of science.

99. At the age of seven the number of pupils achieving the level expected nationally is very high when compared to national results and those achieved by pupils attending similar schools. However, the picture is less positive when comparing results at the higher grades. Results for pupils at Al-Furqan school are well below those achieved nationally and by pupils at similar schools. Inspectors examined pupils' work carefully and judged that the number of pupils already working at Level 3 is above expectations because teaching and learning are good.

100. There are a number of reasons why past results are not a good indicator of future trends. Very few older pupils have attended the school for more than a few years. National

curriculum assessment information is only available for 1999 and 2000 and the results show that standards are improving at better than the national rate. Staff have changed very considerably and improving teaching and learning in science has been made a priority area for improvement. There has been very good analysis of why pupils have not done well in previous years and a number of key weaknesses have been identified and addressed. Pupils with the potential to achieve high levels have been identified, individual targets set and progress towards them very carefully monitored.

101. There is much good teaching and learning in science. Lessons are lively and build learning systematically. Lesson planning is a strength because teachers identify clearly what they want pupils to learn in the lessons. Teachers are particularly successful at providing activities at different levels. As a result pupils with special educational needs learn as successfully as the rest of the class. Because teachers are well organised they have enough time to provide extra support to those who need it. In general, this means that all groups are well catered for. In the best lessons teachers constantly revisit the learning objectives and check that pupils know what is they have learned.

102. Investigative approaches are well used to make sure pupils understand scientific method and how to analyse their results and draw conclusions. This is particularly important because the school identified these, together with inaccurate reading of test questions as being areas of weakness for many pupils. In a good lesson in Years 5/6 pupils experimented to find out the stretch in elastic bands. They understand the steps required to ensure it is a fair test, record their results carefully and identify a pattern in the results, which they can then use to predict further results. This lesson also demonstrated good co-operative work between boys and girls all of whom achieved well

103. Scientific knowledge is well taught. Teachers use the correct scientific vocabulary and make sure pupils learn to use it correctly. In a Year 1 lesson as a result of good teaching the pupils have the necessary vocabulary to describe the principles of making things speed up or slow down. There are very effective links with other subjects such as ICT, geography, mathematics and literacy. For example, observing changes in the weather and its impact on the environment and recording and using data in different ways. Teachers provide many useful opportunities for pupils to write and record in science lessons. Pupils in Years 2/3 were very interested in their experiments with ice and chocolate and wrote extensively. They made predictions and gave reasons for their views. They used knowledge about insulation gained previously and felt very confident to assert their understanding of the lesson objectives. Their knowledge and understanding was increased as a result of the effective use of questions and examples by their teacher.

104. There are however some aspects of teaching and learning that need improvement. There are some weaknesses in subject knowledge and sometimes teachers talk for too long, which slows the pace of lessons. In their aim to consolidate learning, teachers occasionally go over a point more than is necessary and marking is often more to do with literacy skills than helping pupils improve their science work. Standards of presentation of work are not high enough. But strengths in teaching and learning far outweigh weaknesses.

105. The school has effective strategies for monitoring and evaluation in place that has enabled it to identify what needs to be done to raise standards in science. It has tackled areas of weakness and set ambitious targets for 2001. All staff know what the targets are and work consistently together to achieve them.

ART AND DESIGN

106. Standards in art and design are satisfactory overall.

107. The quality of learning is good. Pupils are well motivated, enthusiastic and have high levels of concentration particularly the oldest pupils. Pupils are able to select and use a range of appropriate materials and processes to interpret set tasks and create a wide range of effects. During the inspection pupils were observed using a variety of media including fabric, crayon, paint and pencil drawing. The oldest children used this variety of media to interpret scenes from first hand observation.

108. The quality of teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use an enthusiastic approach. Resources are used effectively to enable pupils to succeed in the task set. There are high expectations of behaviour and pupils show a high degree of concentration and interest in their own and other pupils work. Praise, and an individual and group reward system to celebrate success, is used to encourage participation and motivation. Tasks are well matched to pupil's ability levels so those pupils with special educational needs also make good progress.

109. The subject is well co-ordinated, planned and monitored. Pupils work is sensitively displayed around the school. Displays are of a high standard and reflect the spiritual and moral values of the school. The oldest pupils display knowledge of the work of some of the world's great artists and are able to identify works by Monet and Leonardo da Vinci. They are able to give a critical appreciation of an artist's work giving reasons for their likes and dislikes. Discussion with pupils revealed that some kept sketchbooks of their work at home.

110. ICT was used well by one of the oldest pupils to interpret his first hand observation using the 'Paintbox' program on the class computer.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

111. Standards achieved by the age of seven and eleven years above average and are higher than those seen in most primary schools because there is a strong emphasis on designing and evaluation. Pupils not only design and make an interesting range of products they understand the whole process well and know how to improve their work. Although teaching is satisfactory in the one lesson seen there is ample evidence to indicate that overall teaching and learning are good across the school.

112. The school has adopted nationally prepared guidelines for the subject and has selected those units, which best complement work in other subjects. This has the benefit of allowing pupils to use knowledge and understanding gained in other subjects in design and technology. For example, accurate measurement learned in mathematics is used in practical work and the use of ICT to create a range of designs to decorate fabric bags. Because the school has also identified planned opportunities to support literacy skills in all subjects the quality of written work in design and technology is good. Teachers' lesson planning is good. The different stages of the lesson, or series of lessons are clearly identified, tasks are imaginative and support skills development across the school well, enabling good progress to be made.

113. There are some aspects of teaching and learning that could be improved. While specific subject language is written on the board for pupils, the meaning of words such as 'symmetry' requires more emphasis. Pupils in Years 3/4 struggled to think of 'wide and narrow' to describe stripes. Almost all pupils used the same method to fasten their bags and this suggests they are not provided with a wide enough range of fastening techniques.

Cutting skills are not as good as they should be by Years 3/4 and, while pupils copy patterns well, they find it difficult to draw their own original ones. A group had more success creating a pattern on the computer, although they were restricted to shapes already in the computer program and could not draw any freehand. There were too many pupils trying to work on the one computer and as a result most of the group watches and comments, rather than taking an active part.

114. It is evident from discussion with pupils that design and technology is a popular subject with pupils of all abilities. Pupils have a good understanding of the design process, they can discuss a range of joining techniques, know the use and limitations of different materials, different ways to achieve movement and understand the importance of evaluation in improving their work.

GEOGRAPHY

115. Throughout the school, standards in geography are above average, largely because of the emphasis on practical study.

116. By eleven, pupils achieve above average standards in the subject. They compare and contrast different physical features. Pupils understand the relevance of climate to people's habitat and lifestyles. In local studies, they demonstrate an awareness of the natural and human features of the locality, such as the local canal. They know something about the features and ways of life of many other countries. By the age of seven, standards are also good. Pupils convert drawings into plans and draw accurate maps, using keys. They relate the difference between architectural features of older and contemporary buildings. They think carefully about what they have done and make sensible suggestions as to how it might be improved.

117. Number skills are used well. Most Year 5 and 6 pupils can use a table of statistics to plot features they are studying on a bar graph. Pupils use their speaking and listening skills to describe and explain aspects of the areas under study.

118. It was not possible to observe geography lessons during the inspection, because of timetable arrangements. It is therefore impossible to make overall judgements on the quality of teaching. From the analysis of work, teachers' planning and discussion with both pupils and teachers, work is well planned, relevant and challenging.

HISTORY

119. Standards in history are above average both by the age of eleven and by the age of seven. Planning is generally effective and uses a good variety of methods and strategies to encourage the skills of thought and deduction through direct learning and practical activities. The purpose of learning is made very clear to pupils and the pace of lessons is often good.

120. Pupils from five to seven successfully distinguish between past and present and develop a sense of chronology. They study the lives and works of famous people, such as Boudicca, as well as important historical events. Pupils from seven to eleven identify and date features in the past, evaluate evidence and begin to examine source material effectively. They study the Celts and the Romans in Britain with interest and enthusiasm, as well as Tudor times, as observed in a Year 2/3 lesson on features of life in Tudor England. Throughout the school, pupils are able to absorb facts well and express an enthusiastic response both to the period under study and people associated with it. This was shown in written by Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, where pupils had used research techniques to examine

life in ancient Athens. Independent research skills are well promoted, using a range of sources.

121. Adoption of a new national scheme of work is helping to ensure a steady progression of skills as pupils move through the school. Supported by this, teachers' planning ensures a good and wide coverage of topics and learning goals and provides a stimulating variety of activities to support the teaching. Emphasis is firmly laid on helping pupils to think for themselves and on the use of first-hand and secondary source material to aid this process. Work is planned to ensure that higher attaining pupils can extend their skills and knowledge by undertaking personal research and that pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are always involved and progress at a good rate.

122. It was only possible to observe two history lessons during the inspection, one at each key stage. Teaching observed in both was satisfactory, with good features. Teachers explained the purpose of lessons well and revised what pupils have learnt in a lively manner. Question and answer methods were used effectively, both to engage pupil's interest and to help them to deepen their understandings of people and period. Marking of written work, however, is not consistently full. Management of pupils is good, having a significant impact on the quality of learning. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of the subject. History is used to provide a context for some interesting and increasingly extended pieces of writing.

123. The impact of the subject is reviewed by the co-ordinator and planning modified as a result. Pupils' personal development is extended well through work in the subject. Pupils study the ways of life of other cultures and learn to understand how the past has affected the present. Visits to sites of historical interest, such as a Roman fort, help to enhance the curriculum. Resources in the form of historical artefacts are few, but these are used well and are supplemented successfully by visits and by visitors to the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

124. Standards in ICT are above average throughout the school.

125. The teaching of basic skills is good and pupils are introduced to using computers from the Reception class. Most pupils have well-developed basic skills and are confident and competent users of ICT skills. Teachers are using these skills often and effectively to support learning in other subjects. Work was observed in which pupils were using information technology to reinforce the learning of initial sounds and follow a story sequence. One teacher achieved whole class teaching by projecting the computer screen image onto a whiteboard so that pupils could learn that information on a record card is divided into fields and that a set of record cards is called a file. In art and design, a pupil generated computer graphics as a medium for developing his ideas. Many examples were observed of pupils working at and above the expected level in most aspects of the subject. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English as an additional language make good use of ICT to support and reinforce their learning.

126. Use of the Internet as an information source is being developed, for example, to gather information for project work. Older pupils talk confidently about their use of ICT in school and at home. All pupils spoken to possessed their own computers and were confident in the use of the Internet and e-mail. The lack of space within the classrooms restricts the use of information technology to one computer per class group. This situation will be improved considerably by the purchase of three laptop computers during the second half of the spring term in 2001.

127. An ICT club is held on a weekly basis, which pupils attend to improve their skills, use CD-ROM's to access information or create their own designs, as well as sharing their ideas with other pupils.

128. Co-ordination of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator has a high level of subject knowledge and expertise. Clear objectives have been set for future developments, including plans for an technology suite when the school moves to new accommodation. Staff training has been beneficial in raising teacher knowledge of the subject and confidence in teaching it. The co-ordinator has monitored the delivery of the subject and feels staff are both confident and secure in their teaching.

129. Curriculum planning is very good and states how and when key skills will be taught. Assessment information and records of pupils' achievements are kept to aid future planning. Planning is regularly monitored by the co-ordinator. A record of skills accomplished is kept on each pupil.

MUSIC

130. Standards in singing by the age of seven and eleven years are similar to those seen in most primary schools. Pupils can hold a tune well and sing a two-part round without losing their place. They know what ostinato means and can demonstrate it, they create a range of sounds to accompany their singing, and most can sustain a steady beat. Some aspects of music are more developed than others: singing and performance, for example, are stronger than music appreciation or notation. Pupils listen to each other sing and can offer suggestions to improve performance but have few opportunities to listen to recorded orchestral music and are not familiar with a wide range of music. is sufficient evidence to indicate that, overall Teaching was satisfactory in the one lesson seen and there is sufficient evidence to indicate that, overall, teaching and learning are sound

131. The school has adopted nationally prepared guidelines for the subject and has selected those units, which best complement work in other subjects. This has the benefit of allowing pupils to use knowledge and understanding gained in other subjects in music. For example, knowledge gained in science about how sound is produced is then used to support instrument making. Teachers' lesson planning follows the scheme of work closely and teachers emphasise well the importance of good body posture and breath control when singing. Pupils gain experience and confidence through regular opportunities to perform for their parents and the rest of the school in assembly.

132. There are some aspects of teaching and learning that could be improved. Overall teachers' subject knowledge is not strong and more guidance is required to enable teachers to get the best from the schemes of work within the cultural and religious context of the school. Notation to record pupils' composition is at an early stage of development and, while singing is recorded and then appraised by pupils, this work is capable of greater extension. Teachers need to use a wider range of comments when evaluating pupils' work and teach pupils an appropriate vocabulary so that they can appraise and improve their own performance.

133. Singing is a popular activity with pupils. They are enthusiastic and learn the words well, often taking them home to do so. Occasionally they become over-enthusiastic and shout but generally they control volume, pitch and dynamics appropriately for their age. They can be imaginative in developing a rhythm to accompany their singing.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

134. On the evidence available, standards in physical education are satisfactory.

135. In the one lesson observed, pupils carried out a number of practice games in the school playground. The limited space available restricted the need to move into space when attacking or defending a position. The skills demonstrated in throwing and catching were satisfactory. All pupils were fully involved and enjoyed the activities presented to them. They maintained a high level of interest and active participation throughout. The member of staff and all the pupils were appropriately dressed for the activity. Pupils were aware of how to handle small games apparatus correctly. Resources were accessibly stored and well maintained.

136. The quality of teaching is satisfactory but more could be done to help pupils evaluate and improve their skills. Planning, co-ordination and monitoring are all satisfactory. Staff training has been supported by the Golden Hillock Sports College, which has enabled two staff including the co-ordinator to receive training.

137. Current accommodation for physical education is inadequate, so the school has hired an adjacent studio. The studio has benches and mats, which the pupils can use in gymnastics. This results in satisfactory progress being made. Movement at Key Stage 1 involves the interpretation of stories, while at Key Stage 2 pupils develop a range of movement patterns and respond to a range of stimuli. Games are taught, although the small number of pupils in each year group restricts the composition of teams to compete against other schools. Swimming is taught throughout Key Stage 2, as a six-week block activity at the local baths. Local authority instructors give instruction. Boys and girls attend this activity separately.

138. The school follows nationally recognised guidelines for the teaching of physical education and staff are confident in its delivery. Expectations of behaviour are high and physical education makes a contribution to the aims and work of the school, particularly the pupils' personal and social development.