

INSPECTION REPORT

**LOZELLS JUNIOR & INFANT SCHOOL AND
NURSERY**

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103227

Headteacher: Mrs Judy Worsley

Reporting inspector: Peter Sandall
25771

Dates of inspection: 15th-18th April 2002

Inspection number: 196320

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 with nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Wheeler Street
Birmingham

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Theresa Kraft

Date of previous inspection: July 1997

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19697	Janice Moorhouse	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
1189	Sharon Brown	Team inspector	Provision for children in the Foundation Stage Art and design Music	
8358	Alan Blank	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography	How well pupils are taught
7593	John Collier	Team inspector	English Religious education	
27541	John Collins	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology	Curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
18709	Nina Bee	Team inspector	Design and technology History Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
2063	Judith Hicks	Team inspector	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language Equal opportunities	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Lozells School is bigger than most primary schools and has 215 boys and 239 girls aged 3 to 11, of whom 52 attend the nursery full-time. Most of the pupils come from the local area, which suffers considerable deprivation. Pupils are from a range of ethnic backgrounds, with the largest number being African-Caribbean, followed by Bangladeshi. There is a small number of refugees, mainly from Somalia. English is an additional language for 197 pupils, of whom 72 are at an early stage of learning English. This is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN). The number with statements of SEN is similar to that usually found. Entitlement to free school meals is well above average. There is a very high rate of pupil mobility, with around a third of pupils joining from other schools. When starting in the nursery most children attain at well below the level expected for their age. The school is part of an Education Action Zone, and receives extra support because of this.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides an appropriate education for its pupils within a positive ethos and a caring environment. There is a strong and commendable emphasis on working with all pupils, whatever their difficulties. Pupils make satisfactory progress from a low starting point, but standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science by the age of 11 are too low, especially when compared with those achieved by similar schools. Teaching is sound overall, and often good for younger pupils. Leadership and management are satisfactory, but strategic planning and systems to ensure all pupils make the best possible progress need strengthening. Because the amount spent on each pupil is very high when compared to national averages, while standards by the age of 11 are very low, the school gives less than satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Very good procedures for monitoring and improving behaviour contribute to a positive ethos and a strong emphasis on helping pupils with difficulties.
- There are very good links with the community and partner schools.
- Pupils behave well, have good attitudes to their work and form good relationships.
- There is good provision for moral and social education; cultural aspects are also fostered very well.
- Systems to monitor and improve attendance are very good.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science.
- Use of assessment information to set challenging targets and to track progress towards them.
- The focus in forward planning on the key areas for improvement.
- The management of special educational needs to identify and monitor individual pupils' progress.
- The balance of the curriculum, especially for English.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has moved forward in a number of the areas identified for improvement by the last inspection. However, marking and assessment practice need further development, and the monitoring of the curriculum and teaching is not yet reflected in pupils' progress. Development planning, while comprehensive, lacks sufficient focus. Attendance, despite the school's hard work, remains an issue.

This, and the very high rate of pupil mobility, makes the school's work much harder. Overall the school has made satisfactory improvement, is committed to making further improvement and has a good capacity to achieve this.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E*	E	E*	E
Mathematics	E	E*	E*	E
Science	E	E	E*	E

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

very low E*

Similar schools are those schools where more than 50% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals.

Having fallen dramatically in the year following the previous inspection, standards have gradually improved each year since then, apart from a dip in 2001. However they have not improved as quickly as standards nationally, and as a result the gap has widened. In the 2001 national tests, standards in Year 6 were very low when compared to the national average in English, mathematics and science. These results place the school in the lowest 5% nationally. They are slightly better when compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, but remain well below average. In Year 2, standards in 2001 were very low in reading and writing, and well below average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, standards in writing and mathematics are well below average, but in reading they are slightly better.

The inspection finds that currently pupils in Year 6 attain standards that are well below average in English and mathematics, and below average in science. The school's targets for achievement in English and mathematics at Year 6 are low in national terms but appropriately challenging for these pupils. In Year 2, standards remain well below average in English, and are below average in mathematics and science. In all other subjects standards are average in Year 2 and Year 6 with the exception of music, where they are below expectations, due mainly to the limited curriculum pupils are offered. Pupils who have English as an additional language make steady progress due to the support they receive. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress, but in view of the amount of support they receive their achievement is relatively limited, and could often be better. Both planning and assessment need sharpening to move them forward. Higher attaining pupils could also achieve more: expectations are not always high enough, particularly for older pupils. One result is that very few pupils achieve the higher level 5 in national tests at Year 6.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils like school and are interested in learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The great majority of pupils behave consistently well in lessons and on the playground. The number of exclusions has reduced.
Personal development and	Good. The quality of relationships makes a positive contribution to the

relationships	quality of learning.
Attendance	Poor. Levels of attendance are very low, despite the school's best efforts. This affects the attainment of a significant minority.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching is significantly better now than at the time of the previous inspection, with very little unsatisfactory teaching compared with last time. There is also a higher proportion of good and very good teaching. There is most consistently good teaching in Years 1 and 2, but very good teaching is sometimes found in all age ranges. The teaching of English and mathematics is at its best in the infants, where teaching is generally good, and in Year 6, where pupils are taught in ability groups rather than classes. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily.

Teachers manage pupils well: younger pupils are very well managed. This, coupled with good relationships between teachers and pupils, is a significant strength. Teachers show good subject knowledge in areas such as science and information and communication technology (ICT). Support staff are generally well involved and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. How well pupils learn is closely associated with the quality of teaching. Where pupils do not do so well it is linked to teachers' expectations being too low. This happens more frequently in the junior classes. Higher attaining pupils are not always stretched by the tasks they are given. The quality of marking varies too much and is rarely successful in helping pupils to improve their work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum for older pupils lacks balance, and is dominated by English without raising standards. Statutory requirements concerning daily acts of worship are not always met. The frequent withdrawal of groups of pupils from lessons affects their learning in other subjects. There is a good range of activities outside lessons, and there are very good links with the community and other local schools.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils are well supported and there is good involvement with other agencies. Some targets for improvement are not clear enough, and progress is not always monitored effectively.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Sound provision is made for pupils who need help with their English. However, this area would benefit from a higher profile and planning that involves all staff and each subject of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils' spiritual development is fostered satisfactorily, although lacking opportunities for reflection. Provision for moral and social education is good. The school works hard and successfully to support pupils with social difficulties. Cultural development gives pupils a very good understanding of the multi-cultural society in which they live.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils' welfare, health and safety are taken seriously. Everyone in the school gives personal support freely. There are very effective procedures to promote good behaviour. Insufficient use is made of assessment to support progress or modify what is taught.

The school has good links with parents and works hard to involve them in their children's education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. There is a strong ethos of care and support for pupils, but educational direction needs to be promoted more strongly with a focus on raising academic standards. Post holders develop their individual subjects, but the school's long-term goals are not sufficiently defined. Staff share a common purpose and teamwork is well established.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors are interested in the work of the school, giving good support. They are not always fully aware of where the school needs to improve, and this limits the effectiveness of their role.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. Systems to monitor and evaluate how well the school is doing are not effective in improving its performance. While staff are hard working and committed to the pupils, there is insufficient analysis to ensure that all groups of pupils make the best possible progress.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school is very generously funded and has been successful in attracting financial support for a number of projects. Some of these initiatives and extra funds are of real benefit to the pupils, but not all are having the intended effect. Staff and governors always try to obtain value for money when purchasing resources or services, but are not as good at evaluating the consequences of the choices they make. The school is very well staffed and has sufficient accommodation and learning resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour in the school is good. • Their children like school. • The school is well led and managed. • Teaching is good. • Expectations are good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework levels are inconsistent. • The progress their children make.

These views come from both the returned questionnaires and the well-supported parents' meeting. The inspection team agrees that pupils like school and behaviour is good. While both leadership and teaching have good features, there are areas for development and improvement. Expectations are not always high enough, and as a result not all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Homework provision is broadly satisfactory, although there are some inconsistencies.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 At the time of the previous report in 1997, standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science were judged to be in line with the levels expected nationally at age 11, and this was confirmed by the national tests following the inspection. Standards at age seven were judged to be in line for English and mathematics, but below for science. The results of the most recent tests, in 2001, show a much poorer picture. In English, mathematics and science at age 11, and in English and mathematics at age seven, standards are very low, placing the school in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. In science at age seven standards are slightly better, but are still well below the national picture.

2 In comparison with similar schools the results improve a little. At the age of 11 standards were well below in English, mathematics and science, while at the age of seven they were well below in writing and mathematics and below in reading.

3 While current performance is clearly a matter for concern, and one that the school is well aware of, the pattern of results over time in the Year 6 tests gives a somewhat different picture. The results in 1997 were quite exceptional, being three times better than in 1996 and twice as good as those in 1998, taking all three subjects together. In English the difference is even more marked, with 11 per cent of pupils obtaining level 4 or better in 1996, 61 per cent in 1997 and 25 per cent in 1998. Since 1998 results in all three subjects have improved steadily, although not quickly enough to keep pace with improvement nationally, so the gap has actually widened. Results fell back somewhat in 2001 in all three subjects. The school expected this, as over half the cohort was on the special educational needs register and a significant minority of the pupils had severe behavioural problems.

4 Inspectors judge that this year standards are well below average in English at both seven and 11. In mathematics they are below average at seven and well below at 11, and in science below average at both seven and 11. While standards are still not high enough, this does represent an improvement on the previous year. These judgements are confirmed by the standards of work pupils produce and the level of achievement shown both in lessons and in the work in their books. In all other subjects of the curriculum standards are broadly average, with the exception of music, where they are below average at both seven and 11. There has been an improvement since the last inspection in physical education, where standards were below expectations at both ages in 1997. The position is the opposite in art and design and design and technology, where standards were judged to be above average at both seven and 11, and in music, where they are now only in line with expectations.

5 Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage, considering that many start from a very low base. By the time they reach Year 1 they have made good gains in personal, social and emotional development, physical development and creative development, achieving the early learning goals for children of this age. However, attainment remains well below the expected levels for communication, language and literacy and mathematics, and below expected levels in knowledge and understanding of the world.

6 There are a number of specific factors that affect the standards achieved. Pupil mobility is very high, with almost a third of pupils joining the school after beginning their primary education elsewhere. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very high in comparison with most schools, and the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is well above average. The rate of attendance

is very low, despite the school's best efforts to encourage good attendance, and the rate of unauthorised absence is well above the national average, with a number of families taking extended holidays during term time.

7 Pupils come from many different backgrounds and overall they learn satisfactorily. However within this there are different trends in progress, and not all groups do as well as they might. One key group is higher attainers, where the level of expectation and demand could often be much sharper. The proportion attaining the higher levels 3 and 5 in the Year 2 and Year 6 tests respectively are very low. The evidence from lessons and looking at pupils' books in all year groups shows that often these pupils complete work that is very little different in composition or demand from that expected from all pupils. Planning is not always precise enough in identifying exactly what higher attainers are expected to achieve, so there is little to gauge their progress against. The school has not as yet identified any pupils with particular gifts or talents. The current systems of target-setting and tracking procedures are too general to monitor the progress made by these, and indeed all pupils.

8 The majority of pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress but a significant number do not make enough progress. Although teachers are aware of the pupils with special educational needs in their classrooms, work is not always matched accurately to these pupils' individual needs. This affects the standards that they reach over time. Targets which are identified on their individual education plans are not consistently worked on in the classrooms and this hinders the progress that they make.

9 Pupils who speak English as an additional language generally make similar progress to the other pupils in their class. A considerable number receive additional support in English in small groups, and this is enabling most to make steady headway in their use and understanding of both the written and spoken language. A few of the more capable pupils, including some who have arrived recently from overseas, make rapid progress with their English. However, those who are also on the register of special educational needs tend to make slower progress than would be expected and continue to need a good deal of extra help even after two or three years' input.

10 There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls over time, although girls performed comparatively badly in last year's tests in Year 6. The school has undertaken a lot of analysis of the performance of different ethnic groups but there is no particular pattern that emerges. There was however a clear difference in the progress of younger and older pupils in the tests in 2001. In the infants, a roughly equal number of pupils made above or below expected progress between their early assessment in reception and their tests in Year 2. In the juniors only a few made better than forecast progress between their Year 2 and Year 6 tests, while about half did not achieve as well as expected. Teacher assessment of this year's Year 6 pupils shows a similar picture. Systems for tracking pupils' progress need sharpening so that underachievement can be quickly identified and where possible remedied.

11 The staff of the school show good levels of commitment to their pupils and work hard. The focus on inclusion and raising of self-esteem among pupils, as well as the drive to improve behaviour, are both proving successful. The main thrust must now be to raise standards, so that all pupils do as well as expected academically. Senior managers acknowledge that more rigorous assessment, monitoring and evaluation procedures need to be developed in order for this to happen. The school is ready for the challenge.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12 As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' attitudes to school are good. A significant majority of parents replying to the questionnaire agree their child likes school and inspection findings confirm their views. When in supervised situations, most pupils show an enthusiasm for learning and an interest in what is being taught. Younger pupils participate enthusiastically in a physical education lesson, working well with partners and happily exchanging equipment. During an information and communication technology (ICT) lesson, older pupils were seen working co-operatively, confidently and with enthusiasm.

13 Children in the Foundation Stage have positive attitudes and are happy to come to school. They learn to share and to take turns, growing in confidence in response to the high expectations of the teachers and support staff. They are encouraged to show independence, for example through selecting activities or materials for themselves.

14 Pupils are capable of careful presentation of their work and of handling resources sensibly. During a lesson in design and technology, older pupils are seen working well together in groups, although some have difficulty sharing equipment. Occasionally, when teaching is uninspiring or the pace of teaching slow, pupils become bored and an undercurrent of restlessness develops. There are a few pupils who are not attentive or motivated by learning experiences.

15 At the time of the last inspection, pupils' behaviour was reported as usually satisfactory and often good. During the current inspection, consistently good behaviour was seen when pupils were in supervised situations in the classroom and in the playground during morning and afternoon breaks. A significant majority of parents replying to the questionnaire agree that behaviour in the school is good. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting agree that the school encourages good behaviour. Pupils are aware of the standards of behaviour that are expected but do not always meet those standards when moving unsupervised around the school and during lunchtimes. Inspectors saw some deterioration of behaviour when the pace of teaching slowed, work was too difficult, and during afternoon lessons in history and religious education. Pupils cause some loss of time by restlessness and inattention but behaviour is never unacceptable. The number of exclusions has been significantly reduced since the time of the previous inspection.

16 At the time of the last inspection there were insufficient opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and show initiative, both in the classroom and around school. The school has worked hard to improve this area. The majority of pupils have responsibilities within their own classrooms and in keeping shared areas tidy. Older pupils have duties and responsibilities around the school. These responsibilities include operating equipment during assemblies and the distribution of class registers before the start of the school day. Pupils also act as peer supporters, both in lessons and on the playground. One girl summed up the latter responsibility quite beautifully when offering an explanation of her role: 'If children are sad in their heart, I make them smile'.

17 Since the time of the last inspection, a school council has been established, consisting of pupils elected from Year 5 and Year 6. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting were aware of the existence and nature of the school council and agree that pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for jobs around the school. Pupils respond willingly and reliably to these opportunities and they make a positive contribution to their personal development. Inspectors were welcomed into the school by pupils who were consistently friendly and polite.

18 Relationships in the school are good, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils show respect for the feelings and values of others. Year 2 pupils listen carefully in a religious education lesson to each other's views on what is beautiful. There are warm relationships in many classes between staff and pupils. In this atmosphere pupils feel secure, confidently offering their contributions and making progress in their learning and personal development. In the main, pupils form good relationships with each other, with teachers and with other adults. No incidents of unkind behaviour were seen between pupils, and they work in an environment that is free from oppressive behaviour such as racism and sexism. Pupils understand the consequences of unkindness or bullying. They work well together, for example during an English lesson when they share their ideas with a partner. Pupils appreciate each other's successes and warmly applaud those receiving awards in assembly.

19 Attendance in the school is very low when compared to national averages. There is a high level of unauthorised absence. Attendance has improved on occasions since the time of the previous inspection but the school has been unable to raise attendance figures consistently. There are a number of pupils who are persistently absent or who take extended holidays during term time. The poor levels of attendance are having a negative effect on the attainment and progress of these pupils. Not all parents co-operate as well as they might in helping the school to improve the situation, and some fail to fulfil their responsibilities by ensuring pupils attend regularly and arrive promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20 In the infants teaching is consistently good, whilst in the Foundation Stage and the juniors it is sound overall with a significant proportion of good and very good teaching. Very little unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection (3%). This profile of teaching represents a significant improvement in overall quality since the last inspection when there was a smaller proportion of good and very good teaching and a much larger proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching in physical education, unsatisfactory in the last inspection, is now sound.

21 There are several qualities that characterise strengths in teaching throughout the school. Teachers know their pupils well and relationships are good so that pupils feel valued and secure. Teachers generally have good knowledge of the subjects they are teaching. Teachers in the Foundation Stage and the infants know how young children learn best, planning lessons that are varied and interesting with work that matches the range of abilities. Specific knowledge in subjects such as ICT is good, enabling teachers to use programs confidently and take pupils' learning forward at a good pace. This is also true in science, for example in a Year 6 lesson where the teacher revises the function of flowers in the reproduction of plants from a secure base of personal knowledge.

22 Teachers have a clear understanding of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and use them to plan their lessons, often very successfully. Throughout the school teachers manage pupils well; clear standards for behaviour are established and lessons are organised so that time is used effectively. Teachers' preparation is thorough and planning generally includes clear intentions for pupils' learning and exactly what different groups of pupils will do.

23 In the best lessons higher attaining pupils are challenged sufficiently with extension activities. However in many lessons they are not stretched sufficiently to enable them to make good progress. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils are well supported in their lessons by integration staff and classroom assistants who are sensitive to pupils' needs, and this has a positive impact on learning in all

areas of the curriculum. Learning is hindered in some lessons when work is not always accurately matched to the needs of all pupils, and teachers do not reinforce the targets that are identified on the individual education plans during the lessons or when they mark work. In addition, teachers do not consistently share these targets effectively with the pupils, which results in many pupils being unaware of what they need to do to improve.

24 The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching observed does not have consistent features, but rather, specific weaknesses that result in pupils' learning being unsatisfactory. In one art lesson a fairly vague introduction is compounded by a choice of activity that does not challenge pupils and makes them difficult to control. In another session a small group of pupils with special educational needs are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills; their learning is restricted by insufficient feedback from the teacher, who does not make enough use of the pupils' individual learning targets during the session to guide their progress.

25 Good or very good teaching has the characteristics of good planning and organisation. However, some of the better learning is facilitated through imaginative use of resources. For instance, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson the teacher presents the class with a line graph that has unmarked axes and no title. The pupils are asked to work out what the graph represents. Pupils are intrigued, they think, they hypothesise, they listen to each others' ideas and present arguments for and against. Eventually all this mental effort results in the correct conclusion, a graph of the level of water being put into a bath, used and drained!

26 Pupils' learning closely reflects the quality of teaching. In the better lessons pupils' knowledge and understanding are consolidated or extended, all pupils are challenged and rewarded with a sense of achievement. Sometimes when groups are extracted to work outside the classroom, the progress made by pupils is less good and lessons are disrupted by several groups of pupils coming and going at different times for special support. The school needs to review its current policy of extraction and support for children who have special educational needs, English as an additional language or those selected for special mentoring. Teaching in all subjects, including English as an additional language, is at least satisfactory. In ICT it is good.

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

27 The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities that meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the early learning goals for children in the Foundation Stage. The planning for religious education follows the guidelines of the locally agreed syllabus for Birmingham schools. Appropriate arrangements are made for sex education and raising pupils' awareness of the dangers of drug abuse. All aspects of the school's provision are open equally to all groups of pupils. Planning for all subjects over both the long and medium term is firmly based on nationally approved guidance. This is an improvement from the last inspection. The headteacher and subject co-ordinators monitor planning but the systematic monitoring of classroom practice in all subjects remains an area of development for the school.

28 The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been successfully adopted but have not yet had an impact on raising standards. The teaching and learning of basic skills in literacy and number are satisfactory. In addition the school is implementing the Additional Language Support and Early Literacy Support national initiatives. These have been supplemented by other language-based initiatives, such as a spelling program for pupils with English as a second language. All these additional language sessions take place through the withdrawal of considerable numbers of pupils from all junior classes. This affects their

entitlement to the full programs of study of the National Curriculum and the syllabus for religious education. For example, pupils are taken from science, design and technology and religious education lessons for spelling or other language sessions.

29 Not all these additional sessions are systematically monitored for their effectiveness. During the inspection, the support for groups of pupils with special educational needs given within lessons was often more effective than when they were withdrawn for an unrelated activity. Whilst some pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills across other areas of the curriculum, this is not as systematically planned as it might be. Some pupils use their research skills in literacy and computers for topics in history and geography, but this is often incidental rather than planned. Limited use is made of numeracy skills in science and insufficient use is made of computers in classrooms, as well as those in the computer suite.

30 The balance of time allocated to subjects, particularly English, is affecting the depth of education pupils are receiving in some subjects. There are a number of periods of time, over and beyond the recommended literacy hour, that are used for additional reading, spelling and writing sessions. For example, in the mornings many pupils have an additional 45 minute spelling or reading session in addition to the literacy hour. The need to improve the balance of the curriculum, particularly for junior classes, is a key issue for the school.

31 The curriculum is enhanced for considerable numbers of pupils through the good provision of extra-curricular clubs and activities. These are well supported by staff and pupils, who appreciate the extra work that teachers do. Parents are also involved in many instances, for example in the computer club, and take part in sessions to improve their own skills with the help of staff. There are before and after school clubs that are to be expanded in the future and the school has been involved with a number of local and national initiatives such as the 'Eco-school' project.

32 The provision for the teaching and learning of citizenship and personal, social and health education is now being more systematically planned and is already well embedded in the work of the school. This is supported through very good links with the local community and other institutions such as other local primary and high schools. Groups of older pupils, along with their parents, have made good use of the facilities offered by other secondary schools to develop work in dance, drama, art and computers. The school has developed very good links with local industries and makes good use of other services such as the police, fire and local health services to support its work. Good use is made of the facilities offered by Birmingham museums and art galleries for work in history. Groups of pupils visit places such as Aston Hall and Woodgate Valley Nature Reserve for work in history and science. Groups of pupils have visited a local arts centre and visiting poets and musicians enhance the curriculum in school for a considerable number of pupils.

33 The school makes good overall provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when it was satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to live harmoniously and to respect each other's beliefs and traditions.

34 Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Teachers occasionally allow time in lessons for pupils to explore intangible, abstract problems that concern them. In a Year 6 religious education lesson, 'generosity' is explored. Pupils know that they feel happy when they receive a present but are not sure why they also feel good when they give to someone else. A helpful discussion quite rightly leaves them speculating about the reason. This sense of wonderment about our world is evident too in a lesson when pupils in Year 2 gasp as colourful pictures of butterflies appear on the computer screen. However, during the busy school day, times for reflection are rare. Even during assemblies, times are brief and, in

some class assemblies, they are non-existent. Statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship are therefore not met. In the infants, two class assemblies comprised the telling of a story with a moral with no prayer or time for reflection. Pupils were withdrawn from one of these assemblies for extra literacy work and this again breached statutory requirements.

35 The school makes good provision for pupils' moral development. School and class rules are clearly understood and all teachers consistently use the rewards and sanctions to reinforce correct actions and behaviour. Pupils who experience particular difficulties in abiding by the rules are being supported effectively through the mentoring system to sort out strategies to cope. Moral dilemmas are well explored in lessons. The message implicit in the story of 'The Hare and the Tortoise' is skilfully discussed with Year 1 pupils who understand that tasks are most thoroughly completed when time and care are taken over them. In a Year 5 lesson exploring 'freedom of choice', pupils clearly know right from wrong. They know that freedom of choice implies responsibility too, giving sensible reasons as to why it is disrespectful to wind down the car windows and have the radio blasting out music. Year 6 pupils explore the reasons for giving to charities, and pupils give generously to local appeals, such as that of the Lord Mayor, and to national and international organisations.

36 Provision for the pupils' social development is good. As well as good opportunities to work together in lessons, pupils are given responsibilities that they fulfil conscientiously. Older pupils are available on the playground to act as confidantes to the younger ones. They have been trained and know how to be friendly to those who are alone and how to sort out minor problems. A school council meets regularly. Members are elected from Years 5 and 6 and represent the views of their 'partner class'. They have been instrumental in suggesting safer ways of coming into school after breaks and pupils now line up rather than surging towards the doors en masse. There are good opportunities for socialising in settings other than the classroom, during one of the many after-school activities, for example, or when on visits outside school. These are many and varied. All pupils experience visits during each school year and they enhance pupils' enthusiasm and learning. For example, Year 2 pupils benefited greatly from a visit to Woodgate Valley during the inspection and came back full of information about minibeasts. Visitors, too, such as those who led a football coaching session for Year 6, promote the development of pupils' social skills as well as their learning.

37 The school makes very good provision for the cultural development of its pupils. Literature is used to introduce the infants to traditional playground rhymes such as 'Oranges and Lemons'. The work of various composers is introduced as music plays at the beginning and end of school assemblies, although this is not developed in music lessons. The work of famous artists is often used as a stimulus for pupils' work, and pictures in the style of Paul Klee, Lowry and Picasso, among others, enhance the displays around the school. Examples from traditions other than Western Europe are also explored, from Benin, for example. History too is strongly represented in the school and pupils have a clear understanding of the influences that have shaped our society and of some of the heroes from the past. The infants know about Mary Seacole, for example, and Year 4 pupils have studied Boudicca. Geography has taken on a practical dimension, with pupils in Year 5 working with representatives of the local council on traffic calming measures for the road adjacent to the school. This is contributing well to their concept of citizenship. Pupils also have a very good understanding of the multicultural society in which they live. "We are proud that we have such a wealth of cultures at Lozells," writes a Year 6 pupil and every opportunity is taken to promote understanding of different values, beliefs and traditions. In a school assembly, pupils from Year 5 enumerate these with reference to all the major world religions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38 Lozells School takes good care of its pupils. The procedures for child protection and ensuring pupil welfare are good and all staff are aware of the named personnel and what to do if they have any concern. There is a member of staff who takes responsibility for pupils in public care. Policies are in line with local procedures and good relationships exist with personnel from outside agencies involved in pupil care. The school has five members of staff qualified in first aid and all staff have undertaken basic first aid training. All necessary procedures are in place for dealing with minor accidents or incidents. Arrangements and procedures for the conduct of educational visits fully comply with local authority guidelines.

39 There is a comprehensive health and safety policy. The school caretaker monitors health and safety issues on a day-to-day basis and takes responsibility for minor maintenance and repairs. The recently formed governors' health and safety committee has carried out a health and safety audit and will be reporting its findings to the governing body. Governors are aware of the need to provide a safe and secure environment for pupils and staff, including procedures to ensure safe use of the Internet.

40 Supervision at lunchtime is satisfactorily arranged through a rota of supervisors. If necessary, the senior supervisor liaises with the headteacher on a daily basis to discuss problems or concerns. Lunchtime staff are aware of the school's behaviour policy and reward good behaviour. They have received training on play and managing behaviour. There is an amount of play equipment available during lunchtime that is in good condition and regularly replenished. However, the high turnover of personnel causes difficulties in ensuring continuity of approach when speaking with pupils and managing misbehaviour. As a result, the behaviour of some pupils deteriorates. Lunchtime is not always an orderly occasion and not all pupils treat supervisors with politeness and courtesy.

41 The school has very good procedures for monitoring absence and lateness and has adopted a number of suitable strategies for encouraging those who are persistently absent or late in arriving. Punctuality has improved, although other initiatives have had limited success. The school has been part of a local authority project monitoring absence and education social workers have been carrying out first day calling on behalf of the school. A member of staff who knows pupils and their circumstances well is involved with monitoring attendance. She works closely with the school's education social worker, who visits the school regularly and has been helping the school tackle the problem. Pupils are appropriately rewarded for good attendance with individual and class awards, certificates and stickers.

42 The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, including monitoring procedures that respond effectively to incidents of racism, sexism and bullying. Pupils and parents are aware of the standards of behaviour expected and of the consequences of misconduct. Observations were made of some members of staff handling incidents of poor classroom behaviour promptly, consistently and by referring to the class rules displayed in all classrooms. School rules are relevantly and appropriately worded. Pupils are aware of the rules and most respond by obeying them. Inspectors saw good behaviour consistently recognised and rewarded with praise and merit points. Staff know their pupils well and monitor their personal development in an informal way. The school does not have in place a systematic method of recording pupils' personal development, although mentors keep good written records on pupils with personal problems.

43 The school has made satisfactory progress in developing assessment procedures since the previous inspection. Assessment procedures are good for English and mathematics and they are satisfactory for science. In the remaining subjects, lessons are planned using the national guidelines and co-ordinators are in the process of developing assessment procedures which are due to be implemented next term. Assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. Areas of concern are

clearly identified and they all have individual education plans. However many do not contain clear targets and this makes progress difficult to measure accurately.

44 Information collected on all pupils in English, mathematics and science is beginning to be used to track pupils as they move through the school. However, the headteacher is aware of the need to develop this further so that all teachers are using assessment information effectively to inform the next step of learning for individuals and groups of pupils. The school does use information collected to place pupils into ability groups in English, maths and science but there has been limited progress in this area since the previous inspection.

45 Teachers do not consistently assess the learning in lessons to identify what the pupils have learned and keep records of what individuals can do in order to move them onto the next stage of learning. There are satisfactory procedures for setting general year group targets in English, mathematics and science and individual pupil targets for English and mathematics. However, these targets have little impact on raising standards because they are not consistently referred to during lessons or when marking pupils' work. This results in pupils being either confused between year and individual targets or being unable to remember what their individual targets are. The school is likely to achieve its statutory targets in English and mathematics for 2001.

46 The school fully complies with the requirements to administer statutory tests at the ages of seven and 11. Pupils are tested at the end of most years and the results are beginning to be analysed, but at present these systems are under-developed and not approached consistently throughout the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47 As at the time of the previous inspection, there is a satisfactory partnership between parents and the school. Parents' views of the school are largely positive and the school continually works towards promoting an effective relationship with them. A significant majority of parents replying to the questionnaire agree the school works closely with them. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting agree that staff are helpful and easy to approach. Parents find staff willing to listen to their suggestions; for example parents suggested that 98 and 99 per cent attendance should be rewarded as well as 100 per cent and the school accepted this idea.

48 Parents receive frequent letters that are informative and produced in a readable style. The school brochure contains all the essential information parents need, and the governors' annual report to parents is helpful and informative. The contribution of parents to pupils' learning is limited and few help in school, although they are strongly encouraged to come in as volunteers. During the inspection parents were seen helping in classrooms and they do accompany pupils going swimming and on school trips. The school has been involved in a number of initiatives aimed at involving parents in the life of the school that include opportunities for their own educational development. The vast majority of parents have signed the home school agreement. It is part of the school's prospectus and has strengthened co-operation between parents and staff.

49 Parents responding to the questionnaire feel well informed about how their child is getting on at school. There are parents' consultation evenings each term when those attending are given information about the progress of their child, although some parents would like the chance to see their child's work on all these occasions, rather than just once. There are information meetings for parents related to end of year tests and additional meetings for parents on helping their children prepare for the tests. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are regularly consulted about their children's progress.

50 Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting were happy with the reports their children receive. They contain a thorough and systematic record of the work undertaken by pupils during the year and some comments related to the progress pupils make. However, information on personal development is limited and the reports do not contain targets for the next school year. The arrangements for the setting of homework and the type of tasks parents may expect pupils to do at home are given in the homework policy. The school's prospectus contains a very short paragraph on homework that includes a request for parents' support. Inspectors saw homework being set in line with the policy, pupils taking reading books home and Year 6 homework books containing a variety of work, although there are inconsistencies in some year groups.

51 Both the returned parents' questionnaires and the well-supported parents' meeting indicate that the great majority of parents have positive views of the school and are supportive of the work it does. It is true that their children like school, and that behaviour in the school is good. Leadership and teaching have good features, but expectations are not always high enough, and as a result not all the pupils make the progress of which they are capable.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52 The headteacher provides sound leadership. There is, and has been for some time, a strong and commendable focus on inclusion, through working with pupils whose behaviour challenges the school's expectations and supporting pupils who, for one reason or another, find school and education hard to handle. The school's successes in this area, often in the face of considerable difficulties, stem from the positive lead given by the headteacher and management, but is shared by all staff. Everyone works to a common purpose and this is reflected in the ethos of the school and the positive attitudes of the great majority of pupils. The headteacher works both hard and successfully to ensure that the school's day-to-day management is smooth and efficient: a good example of this is her excellent organisation of the inspection itself.

53 The school has been less successful in the key priority of raising educational standards. The school is aware of the widening gap between standards in the school and those found nationally, and that the achievement of pupils leaving the school is well below that found in similar schools. The action taken so far, however, has had little impact on standards overall. The curriculum is heavily weighted towards English but there is little analysis of whether this is having any effect, or indeed how it affects other subjects. Opportunities are missed to plan writing, for example, into other areas of the curriculum, thereby meeting two needs at once.

54 There are weaknesses in the systems to monitor the school's performance, to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses and in the action taken to ensure improvement. Development planning, while comprehensive, lacks focus and priorities. There are 47 different areas listed in the school's current improvement plan but no indication of which are the key initiatives. The issue from the previous inspection concerning the establishment of clear long-term priorities for school development in all areas, so that staff, parents and governors are fully aware, has not yet been met.

55 An assessment, target-setting and tracking system is in place with the intention of ensuring that pupils make appropriate progress, but it is not yet having the desired effect. Assessments tend to be retrospective, based on achievement in national and other end of year tests. The targets set for individual pupils are based on these results but are too often undemanding. The school does not have a process to identify gifted and talented pupils and

set rigorous targets for them. The assessment system as it stands is unable to track the progress of individual pupils through the year so that under-achievement can be quickly recognised and responded to.

56 There is considerable monitoring of teaching and learning, both by the headteacher, postholders and members of the senior management team. Lessons are observed and pupils' books reviewed, as well as planning and assessment files, with both written and verbal feedback being given. £30,000 has been allocated in the current school improvement plan to give postholders the opportunity to observe their subject, but there are no criteria to measure what impact this has on raising standards. The postholders, in consultation with the headteacher, work to improve their individual subjects, but there is no evidence that the overall curriculum is monitored for balance and appropriateness.

57 The management of special educational needs is unsatisfactory because the provision, although satisfactory, is not monitored effectively by the co-ordinator. A significant number of targets identified on the individual education plans are not clear, which results in pupils' progress being difficult to measure. Sometimes work is not accurately matched to pupils' individual needs. In addition, the documentation kept on individuals does not clearly show the amount of progress they are making. Funding for special educational needs is used effectively to give additional support to pupils, helping them to develop basic skills, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy. It is also used appropriately to develop resources and release the co-ordinator.

58 The provision for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is satisfactorily managed. Pupils are selected on the basis of their language levels and receive appropriate support. Given the number of pupils with EAL the provision would benefit from a higher management profile and the involvement of class teachers and subject postholders in the planning.

59 Governors are involved and supportive, and fully meet their statutory responsibilities. Since the last inspection they have developed an effective system of committees and have a better knowledge of the school. There are good links between individual governors and different subject postholders, and governors are invited into lessons. Governors are well aware of the effort the school puts into responding to the needs of a largely disadvantaged community, and the way in which it works with parents to develop their aspirations for their children. While they see and discuss the school's development planning they currently have no input into its construction. They know that standards in literacy and numeracy need to improve, but lack awareness of specific weaknesses, such as the underachievement of higher attaining pupils.

60 The school has sound strategies for appraisal and performance management. For example, all staff have a target related to raising standards. The governing body sets the headteacher's targets. Newly qualified teachers, as well as staff new to the school, are well supported, both by the headteacher and colleagues. There are good systems in place and all staff feel valued and part of the team. As well as accepting trainee teachers on placement from the University of Birmingham (some of whom the school goes on to employ), the school also hosts exchange students on a regular basis from both Europe and America.

61 Compared with other schools, Lozells Primary has a good number of qualified teachers and generous numbers of classroom support staff. This helps to ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language can be adequately met. The accommodation is generally satisfactory, but there is very little extra space to enable groups of pupils to work quietly and comfortably outside the classroom. As a result, withdrawal groups tend to work in corridors and circulation areas, or

are squeezed into small offices. The central library has to double up as a computer suite. The school's outdoor space is adequate and the recently developed outdoor play area for the nursery is a high quality facility. Throughout the school staff work hard to ensure that corridors and classrooms look bright and welcoming. Resources for learning are at least satisfactory in each subject and are good in ICT and religious education. The quality and quantity of resources for these two subjects has a positive impact on the standards pupils achieve. The library is well stocked, but some books are very worn.

62 The school is very generously funded and has been successful in attracting financial support for a number of projects. Some of these initiatives and extra funds are of real and obvious benefit to the pupils, for example a recent grant for improving the nursery play area. However, not all are having the effect of improving provision and raising standards; in particular, pupils are being taken out of class unnecessarily for various forms of additional support that are affecting the continuity of their learning. Evaluation of the impact of initiatives has, in some cases, not been attempted. In other instances there has been reliance on slender or narrow evidence, such as a short-term improvement in pupils' spelling scores.

63 The school's finances are effectively managed on a day-to-day basis. The most recent local audit found that secure financial systems had developed since the previous audit and there were many indicators of good practice. Areas that required improvement have for the most part been addressed promptly and methodically. Governors have reviewed the extent of the powers and responsibilities delegated to the finance committee and the headteacher, for example, and their decisions have been clearly documented. The finance committee exercises proper oversight of ongoing expenditure and receives regular financial reports.

64 The school keeps good financial records, and is scrupulous about using grant funding for the intended purposes. Strategic financial planning remains an area of relative weakness, however. After a number of difficult years when pupil numbers were declining and very careful housekeeping was necessary, there has been an upturn in numbers on roll and a considerable budget surplus has been allowed to accumulate. Acceptable plans are now in hand to use these resources, including a building project, but these have not yet been extensively discussed by the governors and senior management team. The school improvement plan includes some costing, but there is no overview of the whole budget matched against major priorities. This issue was raised by the audit and has not yet been adequately addressed.

65 Staff and governors always make every effort to obtain value for money when purchasing resources or services, but are not as good at evaluating the consequences of the choices they make. For this reason they do not yet comply fully with the principles of 'best value'. Taking into account the school's high level of funding per pupil and despite satisfactory progress, the stubbornly low standards being achieved by the older pupils mean that the school is currently providing less than satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

66 To ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress, management systems need to focus on essential priorities. All staff are committed to success and work hard for their pupils. These energies need harnessing to make the necessary improvements that will give pupils a better deal in their learning. Therefore governors, the headteacher and managers in the school should:

1 **Improve standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science in both the infants and juniors by:**

- Matching work more closely to pupils' needs, especially to challenge higher attaining pupils and extend those with special educational needs;
- Setting and assessing regular achievable targets for progress;
- Tracking pupils' progress accurately year on year so that teachers are aware when intervention is necessary.

(Paragraphs 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 23, 25, 26, 44-46, 51, 55, 97, 101, 103, 109, 120,121)

2 **Strengthen strategic planning by:**

- Identifying major priorities in the school's improvement planning;
- Including an overall budget plan in school improvement planning;
- Monitoring and rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of new initiatives.

(Paragraphs 54, 56, 59, 62, 64, 65)

3 **Review the management of special educational needs provision in order to:**

- Improve the clarity of targets on individual education plans so that progress can be tracked more easily;
- Ensure that teachers refer to targets in lessons and marking so that pupils know how well they are doing;
- Match the work done in class to pupils' individual needs.

(Paragraphs 8, 23, 24, 29, 43, 57, 100, 109)

4 **Improve the balance of the curriculum by:**

- Reviewing the amount of time allocated to all subjects but especially English;
- Reducing the frequency with which groups of pupils are withdrawn from class lessons.

(Paragraphs 26, 28, 30, 34, 53, 98, 104, 111, 117, 128, 152, 165)

67 Other issues which should be considered by the school:

- Continue the drive to raise the level of attendance so that it compares more favourably with the national average. (Paragraphs 6, 19, 41)
- Ensure that acts of worship consistently meet statutory requirements. (Paragraphs 28, 34)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	90
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	11	33	43	3	0	0
Percentage	0	12	37	48	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	52	402
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	32	239

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12	184

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	197

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	71
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	74

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	4.4

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	31	26	57

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	20	23
	Girls	21	19	21
	Total	42	39	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (70)	68 (70)	77 (74)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	23	23
	Girls	20	21	20
	Total	42	44	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (70)	77 (70)	75 (72)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	33	19	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	16	22
	Girls	6	5	8
	Total	20	21	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	38 (57)	40 (43)	58 (67)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	16	19
	Girls	6	4	7
	Total	21	20	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	40 (50)	38 (46)	50 (67)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	98
Black – African heritage	9
Black – other	0
Indian	10
Pakistani	50
Bangladeshi	84
Chinese	2
White	32
Any other minority ethnic group	52

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	16	
Black – African heritage	0	
Black – other	0	
Indian	0	
Pakistani	2	
Bangladeshi	0	
Chinese	0	
White	0	
Other minority ethnic groups	22	

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	21.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.7
Average class size	28.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	332.75

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	97.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	1147784
Total expenditure	1108663
Expenditure per pupil	2596
Balance brought forward from previous year	104126
Balance carried forward to next year	143247

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	224
Number of questionnaires returned	89

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	22	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	25	5	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	36	1	2	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	34	13	5	2
The teaching is good.	64	28	1	4	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	27	5	6	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	23	5	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	16	3	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	62	29	3	5	1
The school is well led and managed.	60	33	0	3	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	29	6	3	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	36	7	3	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

68 The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The quality of experience provided at the time of the previous inspection has been sustained and in some areas of learning, such as physical development, built upon since that time. Children are admitted to the nursery on a full-time basis following their third birthday and join the reception classes at the start of the school year in which they become five. At the time of the inspection there were 52 children attending the nursery, with a further 57 children in the two reception classes. Early assessment and other information indicate that attainment on entry to school is well below the expected level for children of this age. Progress is adversely affected by several factors, including almost half the pupils having English as an additional language and a quarter with special educational needs. The high level of movement in and out of school, as well as poor attendance levels, also limits the progress of some children.

69 In spite of satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage, attainment remains well below the expected levels in communication, language and literacy and mathematics by the time children start in Year 1. The factors quoted in the previous paragraph clearly have the greatest bearing on progress in these two key areas, despite the hard work of the staff involved. It is also below the expected levels in knowledge and understanding of the world. In the other areas of learning children make good gains and the majority achieve the early learning goals for children in the Foundation Stage by the time they start in Year 1.

70 Teaching is at least satisfactory and often good, enabling children to make steady gains in their acquisition of early skills and knowledge. Strengths in the teaching include secure knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals, effective planning, on-going assessment and very good management of the children. These, together with effective teamwork are the main factors helping children to make steady and sometimes good progress in their learning. For example, most children make good progress in the development of speaking and listening skills. Children with English as an additional language are helped considerably when they start in the nursery through the additional bilingual support. Early identification of children having special educational needs enables teachers to match tasks appropriately, so that these children make steady progress towards targets set in their individual education plans.

71 Teachers' planning for children's learning reflects the 'stepping stones' leading towards the early learning goals for children in the Foundation Stage. Assessment information is used effectively to determine the next steps of learning in both the nursery and the reception classes. However a weakness is the lack of planning for potentially higher-attaining children, and expectations here are not always high enough.

72 Learning resources are satisfactory, with the recently developed outdoor provision in the nursery being a real strength. It is attractive and stimulating, enhancing other areas of learning as well as physical development. Children in the reception classes also use this provision during the week. An interesting 'outdoor classroom' has also been developed in the reception area that, while more limited in space and less suitable for physical development, provides good opportunities for a wide range of learning experiences.

73 The school's involvement in projects such as Effective Early Learning (EEL) has had a significant influence on the professional development of the staff and on planning and organisation in the Foundation Stage. It has meant greater emphasis on independence, with increased opportunities for children to select activities and make decisions about their

learning. Other experiences, such as health visitors and visits to the park, clinic, garden centre and farm, enhance the curriculum. There are also good links with the 'on-site' playgroup.

Personal, social and emotional development

74 Teaching in this area of learning is good. The children have positive attitudes to learning and are happy to come to school. They develop confidence, for example through the identification of their name on arrival in the nursery and move confidently to their chosen activity. They learn to share and take turns when using the tools in the garden or the sand or the large wheeled toys in the outdoor area. They behave well and are kind and friendly to each other. Relationships with adults are good, and children listen carefully to instructions and carry them out. The good behaviour and attitudes to learning reflect the high expectations of the teachers and support staff, who provide positive role models.

75 A significant proportion of children are reluctant to engage in discussions or respond to questions because they lack these skills, but the staff work hard to promote speaking and listening skills. They ensure full inclusion of all children through carefully matched tasks and well-targeted support. The children move confidently about the classroom, the outdoor play area and into the hall for assemblies or physical development. Children in the reception classes show good independence when dressing for physical education or when selecting activities. Most children make good progress in this area of their development and many achieve the level expected by the time they enter Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

76 Skills in this area of development are well below the level expected when children first start school. Sound teaching throughout the Foundation Stage builds confidence, particularly in speaking and listening. The good focus on language development is a strength of the provision, particularly in the nursery, underpinning all areas of learning. In a good lesson, children in the nursery share the 'Big Book' of 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. Expressive story telling by the teacher captures the children's attention and they listen with much enjoyment. Well-planned resources help to bring the story alive, with the use of characters and a model house encouraging the children to role-play and retell the story. Nevertheless, responses are very limited, with one-word answers at best. Few recall the repetition 'Fe-Fi-Fo-Fum' or show awareness of the rhyme at the end of each line. The good support for a child with special educational needs encourages her to listen and take her turn to speak. The level of attention given by the teacher to those children with English as an additional language ensures they understand and participate fully. The children are given good opportunities to speak to adults and other children in the class throughout the Foundation Stage. In spite of this, a significant proportion remain well below average in their speaking skills when they leave the reception classes.

77 Children learn to handle books carefully and higher attainers in the reception classes are beginning to read the early books in the scheme, making use of picture clues. Most know the letters and sounds of the alphabet and know that print carries meaning. Average children are beginning to use picture clues and recall simple repetition such as 'I am a boy'. Lower attainers lack confidence and have very limited early skills, being highly dependent on adults for support. Many parents have little involvement in their child's learning and lack of home/school reading diaries further inhibits children's progress.

78 Basic writing skills are soundly introduced. Higher attainers are developing appropriate pencil control and with guidance form a simple sentence using familiar words. About two-thirds of the children are able to write their name independently with correct letter

formation. A significant proportion is still at the stage of mark-making and has poor pencil control. Although writing opportunities are built into some free choice activities they are not always well structured. The lack of intervention in some role-play activities does not help to extend these skills through purposeful play, for example in the house, the shop and the writing areas. The development of writing skills is at a very early stage for the majority of children and attainment in this area of learning remains well below the expected level. In spite of making sound progress few children are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception classes.

Mathematical development

79 Attainment in this area of learning is well below the level expected for children of this age, although some aspects, such as number, are stronger than others. Most children count to 5 and more able pupils count reliably to 10, and some well beyond this. The most able group subtract up to 6 from 10 using counters and give the correct answer by counting the remainder, but most children are not yet at this stage. Many are not secure in their recognition of numbers and have difficulty writing them. Higher attainers know how to make a repeating pattern of two shapes or colours and are confident when describing the process, while others need help. In the nursery, good use is made of apparatus such as the linking chains to measure. Through this children acquire mathematical language such as 'long', 'longer' and 'longest'.

80 Good use is made of role-play in the reception class 'shop' to reinforce counting and simple subtraction, but the majority need help to take coins away from 10p. Number rhymes, such as 'Five currant buns', reinforce children's understanding. Higher attainers recognise and name common two-dimensional shapes such as 'square', 'circle' and 'triangle'. Activities exploring the sand and water help children to acquire and extend their mathematical vocabulary and understanding of terms such as 'full' and 'empty', 'more' and 'less'. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and sometimes it is good, with activities that are well matched to children's abilities. As a result, children make steady progress in their knowledge and understanding, although standards remain well below the expected level at the end of the Foundation Stage.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

81 When children start school their knowledge and understanding of the world is well below the expected level. A good range of well-structured practical experiences helps children to make good gains in their learning in the nursery and the reception classes. In spite of this good progress, attainment is below average at the end of the Foundation Stage for a significant majority of children.

82 Scientific knowledge and understanding is developed as children help to plant gardens in the outdoor areas. They look closely at herbs, plants and seeds, acquiring appropriate language such as 'root', 'stem', 'leaves' and 'flower'. Most children know that plants need sunshine and water to grow. They grow bulbs, sunflower seeds and a wide range of flowers and plants, learning how to care for them. Visits to the park extend their knowledge and understanding. One child in the nursery tells me 'We're planting seeds - marigolds - they're yellow and red'. The teacher uses opportunities to explore 'minibeasts' with the children, using stories explaining the useful work done by creatures such as worms. Well-deployed support staff help children to look closely and sustain interest through good intervention.

83 The use of science boxes, developed by a nursery teacher in the school, ensures a wide range of scientific experiences and makes a good contribution to children's knowledge

and understanding. Children explore musical sounds through wind chimes and other instruments in the outdoor area. The children in the reception classes investigate bubbles, observing colour, shape and movement. Good questioning by adults engages them in deeper thinking. They explore artefacts from the past, becoming aware of the difference between old and new objects such as irons, kettles and fire bellows, observing changes over time. There are good opportunities to learn about food; for example in the nursery children make sweets for Eid, while children in the reception class explore different fruits as they work together to make a fruit salad. Awareness of changes in materials is raised as they dissolve jelly. Through water play they experiment with floating and sinking and through play they increase their understanding of the properties of sand and water. Most children know how to use the controls on the listening centre, selecting stop, rewind and play for themselves. Many children know how to control the mouse and move the cursor on the computer. A small group of higher attainers are introduced to the interactive whiteboard in one literacy lesson. They show wonder and delight as the teacher appears to draw by magic. A few practise using the pens to write their name and make patterns. Role-play activities such as the baby clinic in nursery, the shop and home corners all help children to increase their knowledge and understanding. Adults further extend the learning in some of these activities by encouraging conversation and asking questions.

84 Close attention is paid to festivals and celebrations in the Foundation Stage. Children share such occasions as Eid, Chinese New Year, Christmas and bonfire night. They acquire new learning about food, dress and customs, extending their cultural awareness and learning to value the beliefs of others. Good displays support this learning and include a wide range of creative experiences. The good teaching overall in this area of learning helps children to make good progress in their acquisition of knowledge and understanding of the world.

Physical development

85 As a result of sound and sometimes very good teaching most children make steady progress in their learning in this aspect of development. The very good teaching in the nursery provides a wide range of interesting and challenging tasks, which include climbing, balancing and jumping on and off a range of equipment as well as the use of wheeled toys to be pedalled, pushed and pulled. Children are well-motivated by the equipment and tasks. There is great fun and excitement as they use the parachute together. Most children show increasing co-ordination and control when using the apparatus, although a few are more reluctant and skills are less developed. In the reception class, teachers build steadily on these early skills, increasing children's confidence and ability to move in a variety of ways. Higher attainers show imagination when following a radio programme on movement, but the majority just move round the hall. Control and co-ordination is appropriate for their age.

86 Outdoor lessons are enhanced for children in the nursery and, on occasions, for those in the reception classes by the good provision of resources. Support staff also make a strong contribution to the sense of purpose in learning and help to ensure the full inclusion of all children. Children work sensibly, enthusiastically and with increasing independence in most cases. There is good attention to cultural awareness in the nursery as children learn games from other countries. Fine motor skills develop steadily, with most children showing increasing control when using pencils, paintbrushes, scissors and crayons, although a significant minority have yet to master these skills successfully. By the time they join Year 1 most children are achieving the early learning goals for this area of learning.

Creative development

87 When children start school, skills in this area of learning are below the expected level, and well below for a significant minority of children. The good opportunities for children to paint, model, draw, cut, stick and use collage and construction result in good progress for many. Nursery children use salt dough and clay to mould divas for Eid. They thread beads and pasta into decorative patterns. Large friezes involve children working together co-operatively and strengthen social skills such as sharing and taking turns. Hand-painted rainbow fish, collage pictures and models using recycled material, such as the three-dimensional plan of the new outdoor area, provide a wide range of experiences.

88 The reception classes successfully build upon these early skills. Children explore colour and mix paint as they print with leaves and make leaf rubbings. Symmetrical butterfly patterns link to mathematics, as do repeating patterns in foil and paint. String prints, bubble prints, pasta pictures, collage friezes and observational drawings such as those of fruit and vegetables and others of historical artefacts show increasing skill and extend children's experience of a wide range of media. There is evidence of the use of the computer to support creative development.

89 Most children enjoy singing and making music, but opportunities are more limited. Although children explore a range of untuned percussion instruments and have a reasonable repertoire of songs and rhymes, teaching in the nursery in this aspect of learning is weaker and lacks sufficient challenge for higher attainers, who underachieve as a result. Their exploration of instruments lacks clear guidance and the musical vocabulary introduced is limited. Some opportunities are provided for children to experience world music and dance, including visits from musicians, which contribute to their cultural development. Overall most children make satisfactory progress in their creative development as a result of sound teaching.

ENGLISH

90 In the 2001 national tests for seven and 11-year-olds, results were in the lowest five per cent of schools across the country. The main reason for this was that only a very small number achieved the higher levels of attainment.¹ The last inspection report was concerned that the higher attaining pupils were not challenged sufficiently to achieve better standards and this is still a weakness. Overall results appear to have declined since the last inspection four years ago when they were judged average, but this may not have been a typical year, as standards have been much lower every year since then. Slightly better results are forecast this year for the older pupils, due in part to there being fewer who have special educational needs compared with 2001. However, current standards remain well below average for these pupils and for those aged seven. The school's target for the proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving level 4 in national tests is suitably challenging.

91 Standards of speaking are well below those found in most schools amongst seven and 11-year-olds, although listening skills are generally better. Many pupils concentrate well during lesson introductions and follow instructions accurately. When answering questions, however, those in Year 2 often give short answers, sometimes just one word and in such a quiet voice that not everyone can hear. Many pupils have difficulty finding the right words to express themselves. A Year 6 boy in religious education is frustrated that he cannot find the words to explain a famous saying by Gandhi: 'How shall I say it?' he asks.

¹ Level 3 for seven-year-olds and Level 5 for 11-year-olds.

92 Teachers are aware of the importance of developing speaking skills and extending pupils' vocabulary and, because opportunities for discussions are a routine part of literacy lessons, progress for most pupils is satisfactory. It could be better if, for example, teachers routinely insisted on correct practice during lessons. Pupils are not always told to answer in sentences or 'speak up', nor are they corrected when they fail to use standard English, although teachers are rightly sensitive to pupils' use of idiom. When specific activities are planned to develop skills, learning is often good. Year 2 pupils, for example, are encouraged to perform short plays in groups and evaluate the performances. Improvements that they astutely suggest are, "speak louder" and "face the audience." In a Year 5 lesson, pupils take on the role of phantoms in Walter de la Mare's poem 'The Listeners'. They question the traveller sensibly in order to discover his reason for visiting the lonely house and, by doing so, they achieve a better understanding of the poem.

93 Standards of reading for seven and 11-year-olds are well below average. Pupils generally have appropriate books for their level of reading competency. For the below average pupils in Year 2 this means that texts are of necessity repetitive, with only one word changing from page to page. Most above average pupils have books that are only equivalent in difficulty to their chronological age, indicating that not enough are achieving the higher standards found in other schools. Nevertheless, pupils enjoy reading and most say they read books at home, though they do not have diaries to show when someone has heard them read.

94 Teachers in the infants pay good attention to developing reading skills and most pupils know the sounds of individual letters and use this knowledge to read unknown words. An above average pupil reads 'mistake' by breaking up the word and building it again. A below average pupil cannot build 'binoculars' but knows that it starts with 'b' and uses the picture to recognise the word. By Year 6, most pupils have made satisfactory progress in developing technical competence when reading. Problems arise from a lack of interest in reading, particularly amongst the below average pupils, and from difficulties in understanding what is read. An average pupil, for example, cannot read 'draught' and, when told, does not know its meaning. Another cannot infer why a football team that regularly has to play on a waterlogged pitch is called 'The Dolphins'. Most pupils prefer to read story books but they explain clearly how to find a non-fiction book in the library using the classification system and how an index or a contents page help them to find specific information. Teachers keep satisfactory records overall. In the infants they are particularly useful because they identify the books completed, the level of competence and the strengths and weaknesses of the reading.

95 Standards of writing are well below average across the school. Many pupils lack confidence and, particularly in the juniors, are reticent about putting pen to paper. Their reluctance to begin work reduces the amount they produce and causes difficulties for teachers in finding other times when work can be finished. Handwriting generally across the school has improved since the last inspection and is now acceptable. In Year 2, most pupils space their words, though some less competent pupils do not produce writing of a consistent size. Nearly all understand how to demarcate a sentence but, in practice, full stops and capital letters are sometimes forgotten, particularly by the below average pupils. Most write short sentences but the above average pupils understand the structure of a story. Sentences are not always grammatically correct, 'He drinkt fresh water', for example, and many find spelling difficult. The misspelling of words by average pupils can be phonetically sensible, for example 'sci' (sky) and 'frens' (friends), but the work of below average pupils often needs interpretation, 'Dinisw got logg tet' ('The dinosaur's got long teeth'). Nevertheless, pupils make satisfactory progress through the infants because they enter school with well below average standards. Teachers set targets for improvement in the front of pupils' books such as 'put full stops in the correct place' and this helps their learning. Pupils proudly colour in a series of faces until five are completed, showing that the target has been achieved.

96 Most pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in the juniors so that, by Year 6, many produce interesting pieces of work in a good variety of forms: stories, letters, reports and instructions, for example. Above average pupils' writing is technically correct but there is often a lack of adventurous vocabulary and complex sentences incorporating clauses. Average pupils sometimes forget to include punctuation such as apostrophes and speech marks but their work is sensible and intelligible despite some difficulties with spelling. Below average pupils lack confidence and sometimes struggle to produce work of any length. Stories start in conventional ways such as 'One sunny morning' and are often simply constructed. Spelling proves difficult and pupils struggle to spell words like 'hungry' ('hungre') and 'yesterday' ('yesurday').

97 Pupils in the juniors also have targets that aim to help their learning. Teachers mark work conscientiously, referring to these targets and setting a new one when the first has been achieved. This is good practice but it would be more effective if the target was related to an overall improvement in standards rather than just to an immediate piece of work. The current systems for assessing standards are good. Standardised tests in the juniors are administered at the end of every year, with intermittent reading tests, and they are analysed to track the progress of individual pupils and of particular ethnic or gender groups. This enables teachers to identify certain pupils and target extra help for them, for instance through the additional literacy scheme (ALS) for some in Year 3 that is delivered by learning support assistants (LSAs). There are regular meetings through the year when pupils' work is moderated against National Curriculum criteria.² Despite this, specific weaknesses are not clearly identified and a target given to each pupil that, if met, might enable the next level of attainment to be achieved.

98 Teaching overall is satisfactory across the school with some good and a few very good lessons. The better teaching is in the infants and in Years 4 and 6. Teachers are abiding by the recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy and plan lessons effectively to promote learning. Over a third of the week is devoted to English and this is high when compared with other schools. Pupils, particularly in the juniors, are withdrawn from a variety of lessons to receive extra help in English. This produces a curriculum for some pupils that is not balanced and their learning is affected in the subjects from which they are withdrawn. Because of the number and variety of initiatives, teachers find it difficult to track which pupils are receiving extra help and assess what they are learning outside the classroom.

99 Pupils who do not use English as their first language and who are not yet competent in its use are given satisfactory support, usually in small groups withdrawn from lessons, and as a result make sound progress. This is an appropriate way of targeting help. In a Year 4/5 group looking at a poem about ladybirds, the teacher emphasises the importance of reading and speaking the words and carefully explores the meaning of the vocabulary. Two Bangladeshi pupils who have recently arrived in this country benefit from this careful exploration of the text and make steady progress.

100 Some of these pupils with special educational needs are also withdrawn from lessons and receive satisfactory support though, in these sessions, as in class lessons generally, the work is not often linked with the learning targets on pupils' individual education plans. The wisdom of withdrawing these pupils from lessons was questioned in the last report and the school could assess again whether help would be more effective in the classroom, where the pupils could experience the same lesson as everyone else but receive specific help in the activity session. A new initiative since the last inspection is to withdraw pupils into 'mentor' groups where a teacher specifically explores their emotional as well as their learning

² To assign levels – 2c, 2b, 2a, 3c, 3b, 3c etc.

problems. This is helping pupils to make sound progress, and one Year 4 boy is well supported in class by a 'mentoring assistant' who helps him maintain concentration. He therefore benefits from taking part in the whole lesson with his classmates.

101 The best lessons seen during the inspection were in those Year 6 classes where pupils are organised into three ability groups, enabling teachers to plan work more closely to meet pupils' specific needs, and in those lessons where the whole class was taught together with no withdrawals but with enough teaching assistants to help different ability groups. This is the usual pattern of lessons in the infants, where the withdrawal of pupils in Year 1 for extra literacy support³ does not occur during literacy lessons. Learning support assistants (LSAs) give invaluable help to teachers and pupils in and out of class and promote learning well. Those that conduct additional literacy support (ALS) sessions offer particular help, though these sessions last longer than the recommended 20 minutes, resulting in a loss of concentration by pupils. Some pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 receive extra spelling help from an LSA but they are sometimes asked to spell inappropriate words such as 'premature' and 'decompose' that are meaningless for most of them.

102 Teachers have good relationships with pupils and few problems with behaviour. The best lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and work is carefully explained so that pupils are clear about what to do and no time is wasted. In a very good Year 4 lesson, the teacher had compiled some useful examples of pupils' writing from the previous day and systematically used them to show how work could be improved with a second draft, correcting punctuation, spelling and improving vocabulary. Teachers generally have good knowledge of the subject and choose appropriate material to harness pupils' interest. A poem about 'Scorpions' made a particular impact on the lower attaining Year 6 pupils and enabled them to recognise similes and suggest some of their own.

103 The chief weakness in teaching is that teachers do not set high enough expectations for the quantity and quality of work and this is one of the reasons why higher attaining pupils are not achieving the standards of which they are capable. Many teachers accept what pupils produce and do not challenge them to use more adventurous vocabulary, for example, or correct their own spelling mistakes. The opportunities to develop literacy skills in other subjects are not exploited enough either. Often, fill-in worksheets are given instead of requiring pupils to produce a written account of their learning. In a history lesson in Year 3 involving a written task, the teacher fails to reinforce the importance of writing in sentences and work is poorly presented. Similarly, few examples were seen in books and in displays of computers being used to support literacy. Teachers are aware of the possibilities and identify opportunities for using computers in their lesson plans but, in practice, too few are taken. When computers *are* used, work is impressive. Two girls in Year 2 proudly printed a page that gave information about a minibeast. They knew how to produce boxes for their heading, their picture and their text and how to import a speech bubble and adjust its size.

104 Responsibility for managing English is shared between three teachers, one focussing on the infants, one on the juniors and one with a general overview. They hold regular meetings with the headteacher who has oversight of the whole curriculum. Despite this some anomalies still exist in the planned curriculum; two inappropriately long 45-minute slots on a Year 3 timetable devoted to handwriting and spelling have not been picked up, for example, neither does anyone monitor the withdrawal of pupils from lessons. Nevertheless, much has been done to improve teaching, develop assessment systems and build up resources since the last inspection, and management overall is satisfactory. The library is well-stocked and organised but is housed in the room that accommodates the computer suite. It is well maintained by the librarian and pupils use it to find books for their class work. It is not

³ Under the auspices of the Early Literacy Support scheme taken by learning support assistants

possible for them to work in the room for personal research, and this limits the effectiveness of the library in supporting the objectives of the National Literacy Strategy. Resources for English overall are satisfactory. There are plenty of books but some dictionaries, reading books and library books are shabby.

MATHEMATICS

105 At the time of the last inspection in 1997 standards were judged to be in line with national averages in both key stages and this was confirmed by results in national tests that year. Since then, standards have been consistently well below average. In 2001 results in tests were well below average in Year 2 and very low in Year 6; in the lowest 5 per cent of schools nationally. When results are compared to schools similar to Lozells the results in both Year 2 and Year 6 are well below average.

106 Current standards based on inspection findings are below average at seven, compared to schools nationally, and well below by 11. In both infants and juniors many pupils achieve expected standards, but overall these are affected by the very high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and whose attainment is often very low. Similarly, the number of pupils reaching higher levels of attainment is small and this lowers standards when they are compared to other schools. The targets set by the school for the current Year 6 pupils are suitably challenging.

107 In Year 2, more able pupils are able to recognise the reversibility of addition: they understand that $15+5=20$ can be manipulated to produce $20-15=5$, and $20-5=15$. All pupils are able to tally accurately, some using twos and the more able using fives to count the frequency of events such as the scores on a die or spinner. One pair of pupils tallies the number of times they can write their names on a computer in a given time. The work in pupils' books indicates a good range, looking at geometric shape and early work on graphs as well as basic number work.

108 In Year 6, average pupils can reduce fractions and interchange fractions, decimals and percentages; for instance taking 20 per cent as twenty hundredths and then reducing this to two tenths and eventually one fifth. The same pupils are able to solve written problems that require several steps and calculations to reach a result. More able pupils can change weights written in kilograms to grams, and lengths in metres to centimetres in their heads. They discuss strategies for solving mathematical problems, sometimes choosing novel ways that represent 'short cuts', and use calculators to check their answers. Lower ability pupils, approximately one third of the year group, show very low attainment. Their understanding of number is very rudimentary. They need to use counters to carry out relatively simple subtraction and find it hard to understand and solve problems, partly because of poor reading skills.

109 The work in pupils' books indicates that satisfactory progress is being made throughout the school. There is a good quantity and range of work in all age groups. There is a clear progression, both within year groups and between them, showing gradual improvement and increasing complexity in the work done. The progress of lower attaining pupils is less obvious and much slower. Work is generally well presented and this helps pupils to approach mathematics in a logical and appropriate way. The progress made by pupils between national tests taken in Year 2 and again in Year 6 indicates that around one third of pupils do not do as well as expected in the juniors. This underachievement affects all ability levels from higher attaining pupils through to the more average pupils and to those whose attainment is very low and who frequently have special educational needs. The progress of pupils in the juniors needs to be monitored more closely and carefully so that underachievement is identified quickly and intervention planned and instigated. Teachers use

a range of tests and assessments to measure pupils' attainment. Currently, information from these is not always used sufficiently to identify problems with pupils' progress or to plan the next steps in their learning.

110 In the infants, teaching is consistently good and around half is very good. This enables pupils to learn effectively and make good progress in lessons. However this does not always result in equally good progress over time because other factors such as poor attendance tend to reduce pupils' achievement. The same situation occurs in the juniors where teaching is satisfactory overall, though good in Year 6, where specialist teaching is used to maximise pupils' learning. Throughout the school, teachers make appropriate use of the National Numeracy Strategy in planning their lessons.

111 In a very good lesson in Year 1, a lesson aimed at developing counting skills, the teacher grabs a handful of coins and asks the pupils to estimate how many she has. The class count as she empties her hand. Pupils who have guessed correctly are rewarded and there is real excitement as the last coin is dropped. The teacher records the result on the board, but deliberately writes 30 instead of 13. The pupils react, she apologises and the session continues. In lessons like these mathematics engages the pupils' interest and it is fun. In the group work that follows, pupils use actual coins for counting and whiteboards to record their answers, while several pupils use a computer to carry out simple counting tasks. This lesson lasts around 70 minutes, a long time for a numeracy session, but it never loses pace. Other sessions are only 50 minutes long. This works well when teachers plan carefully, but sometimes work is drawn out to fill the time available.

112 Teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) in mathematics. Calculators are used regularly, computers in classrooms enhance group work and sometimes the computer suite is used specifically for numeracy lessons. For instance, in a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils use a specialist spreadsheet to carry out calculations that convert currency from pounds to euros. They insert a formula and produce a list of different quantities that have been converted, demonstrating good ICT skills in the process. In a Year 5 class pupils use information collected on preferences in snacks and then use the computer suite to produce bar graphs, pie charts and line graphs.

113 Resources in mathematics are generally satisfactory and in some lessons in the juniors the range of resources is good. Support staff promote pupils' learning effectively, often working with individual pupils or small groups who have special educational needs or English as an additional language. It is this support that enables these pupils to make the same progress as others in lessons and over time.

114 Mathematics is well managed. A new system for recording pupils' attainment and results in assessments has very recently been adopted and this should help to track pupils' progress and identify problems. The postholders for mathematics have contact with a consultant from the local Educational Action Zone and close links with a number of partner institutions. Effective use is made of these to support and improve the quality of mathematics teaching and learning in the school.

SCIENCE

115 Current standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below average. The position since the last inspection has not been improved. However, current standards are an improvement on the very low results achieved in the last national tests in 2001. Teacher assessment of pupils in Year 2 in 2001 also indicated standards to be well below average. Work seen in lessons during the current inspection indicates that the school is making some progress in reversing the trend of low attainment over the past few years. This is due to the

improved teaching and planning of science so that knowledge, skills and understanding are being built on more systematically and progressively as pupils move through the school. Pupils' attitudes to science have improved since the last inspection and the great majority of pupils now enjoy science activities. The great majority of pupils listen well and are eager to contribute to discussions. They share resources well and take turns fairly. However, standards and learning continue to be affected by the lack of achievement of pupils at the higher than expected levels in both the infants and the juniors. This still remains an area of improvement for the school.

116 Most pupils build up a satisfactory body of scientific knowledge as they move through the school. From the earliest age in reception classes, children develop an increasing awareness of the world about them. They have been on a 'minibeast safari' in the local area and took part in the 'Health Week' in school. The use of 'Science Boxes', developed by a member of staff, is effective in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding across a range of science areas. For example, pupils are able to sort a range of materials according to whether they are transparent, opaque or translucent. More able pupils know that in order to increase the speed of a toy car down a ramp they must raise the height of the ramp. All groups of pupils can correctly name the main parts of a plant and can identify a range of sources of electricity. Looking at their past work, however, shows that few tasks are set to challenge the more able pupils and extend their understanding.

117 A similar picture emerges in the junior classes, but the work of a considerable number of pupils is disrupted by the withdrawal of many groups for additional English work. The school has rightly recognised the need to develop a vocabulary for science and all classes have a list of related words on display. In the better lessons these are referred to and reinforced effectively. This was very evident in two lessons seen in Year 6, where there was effective reinforcement of the correct use of scientific vocabulary in naming the reproductive parts of a plant and separating solids and liquids. By the end of both sessions, pupils were clear about the particular names and functions of such parts as 'stamen' and 'stigma', and could use the terms 'evaporation' and 'condensation' in their correct context.

118 Scrutiny of their previous work shows that pupils have developed a satisfactory knowledge of solids, liquids and gases. They know that magnetism is a force, can correctly identify the main bones of the human skeleton and describe its function. The introduction of this topic was seen in a Year 4 lesson on the skeleton and reinforced by work in a Year 5 lesson on the importance of the heart as a pump. In a Year 3 lesson pupils develop their skills by investigating how shadows are formed.

119 The overall teaching of science is now much more secure and has improved from the time of the last inspection. It is sound overall, and there are examples of good and very good lessons. Many of the better lessons are characterised by teachers using their good knowledge of the subject to question pupils, encouraging them to explain and expand their ideas and opinions. Most lessons are well planned and good use is made of support staff to enable less able pupils to take a full part. This leads to pupils showing interest in and enthusiasm for their activities and many work at a good pace and with concentration. In these lessons, learning is always satisfactory and often good. This was very evident in a Year 1 lesson and the two Year 6 lessons seen.

120 Where learning is less successful it is often because pupils are unsure about what is expected of them. In such lessons, activities are not well matched to the length of time that many pupils can concentrate, which results in lack of interest and commitment. There is often too much concentration on consolidating pupils' existing knowledge without developing their understanding. Much investigative work across classes makes similar demands on pupils and does not encourage them to use their initiative. There is too much emphasis on

recording the results of experiments using worksheets, without giving opportunities for pupils to say why they think things happened as they did. This is particularly true for higher attaining pupils, who are often doing the same work as other groups and are expected to use the same recording sheet. Groups of pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are able to make progress at least as well as others because of the good support they receive in class.

121 Many of the improvements in the provision for science are recent. The planning is now securely based on national guidance and is enabling the school to address all the requirements of the National Curriculum in a systematic manner. Lessons have clear objectives about what pupils are going to learn and the development of investigation skills is becoming more consistent across the school. Current resources for science are satisfactory and being used appropriately to support teaching and learning. The two postholders for science are new to their posts. They have helped to raise the profile of the subject and have a clear and realistic view of what they need to do in order to raise standards. They have already identified the development of a more secure system of assessment of pupils' achievement as a way forward.

ART AND DESIGN

122 The standard of pupils' work in art and design in Years 2 and 6 is broadly average. It is not as high as at the last inspection because there have been many staff changes, resulting in a need for in-service training to build teacher confidence and expertise. Nevertheless, throughout the school most pupils make satisfactory progress. Where they do not, this is directly linked to unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils with special educational needs are often well motivated in lessons and the good support they receive enables them to make at least the same progress as others in the class. Teachers and support assistants make sure that those pupils with English as an additional language clearly understand the task and participate fully in lessons. The good attention to inclusion enables all pupils to make satisfactory gains in their learning.

123 Pupils in the infants work with a wide range of materials, techniques and media. As well as paints and crayons, younger pupils weave with wool and paper, create patterns using sticks and other implements and mould clay into diva lamps for Eid celebrations. Older pupils make models using salt dough and clay, develop early sewing skills to create puppets, and are introduced to batik. Higher attainers draw fruits and vegetables, showing good observation of detail. There is clear evidence of progress: work in the postholder's class is often of a high standard, such as clay tiles made into calendars. Pupils are encouraged to work in the style of famous artists, such as Mondrian and Jackson Pollock.

124 There are good cross-curricular links to science as pupils draw minibeasts from observation, mould insects in clay, using tools with the expected level of competence. They know how to transpose a design on to polystyrene using inks to create a press print, most working at the expected level and some producing work of a higher standard. Other cross-curricular art involves painting linked to history, 'The Great Fire of London' and 'The Crimean War', helping to bring these events to life. The contribution to batik work and tie and dye by a Nigerian learning support assistant also helps to raise standards. Art is used effectively to enhance pupils' cultural understanding.

125 This breadth of experience is built on soundly in the juniors. As well as being influenced by the style of Western artists such as Clarice Cliff and Van Gogh, work is linked to Africa through print designs and history by pottery related to the study of Ancient Greece. There is a fair proportion of three-dimensional work, such as pottery and mask making. Drawing skills are developed satisfactorily, but the use of sketchbooks is inconsistent,

although better in Year 5. This was identified as an issue in the previous inspection, and remains a weakness because most teachers are unsure how to use these as a working art 'diary' for exploration and experimentation. The lack of teacher comments and guidance does not help pupils to know how their work may be improved. The use of computers to support pupils' learning in the juniors is less established than in the infants.

126 The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Although there was one unsatisfactory lesson, good teaching and learning was also seen. In the best practice, teachers have secure subject knowledge and successfully develop pupils' understanding of a wide range of materials. In the infants, where the range of learning opportunities is good, pupils are helped to explore colour, pattern and the work of other artists through interesting activities. The range of learning opportunities for juniors is satisfactory overall, but sometimes the time available limits the quality of what pupils produce. The weaker teaching misses opportunities because planning is too vague and the teacher lacks sufficient knowledge of the subject. An overlong introduction limits the time available for pupils to complete the planned task. This lack of challenge, particularly for higher attainers, results in noise and a loss of interest.

127 The experienced co-ordinator manages the subject well and leads by example in her own class. Since the previous inspection, the school has adopted the national guidance as a scheme of work, but staff changes have meant that there are training needs, particularly for the more recently qualified teachers, in the application of the scheme. There continues to be a need to identify and establish assessment, monitoring and evaluating which was highlighted at the last inspection. The contribution of art and design to pupils' cultural development is good. Learning is enhanced by the good quality of display about the school, which shows pupils their efforts are valued. Visits to galleries and museums, as well as the local environment such as the Jewellery Quarter, make an effective contribution to the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

128 Standards are average by the ages of seven and 11, which is slightly lower than when reported on in the last inspection. The examination of planning and wall displays, discussions with pupils and teachers and the two lessons seen in Years 3 and 5 show that pupils have appropriate opportunities to develop designing and making skills in the subject. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to evaluate what they make. Teachers and pupils speak of a lack of time to develop this aspect and this is a weakness in the planning and teaching of design and technology. In discussions with pupils in Year 6 a few pupils find it difficult to use vocabulary that is related to the subject correctly, such as 'axle' and 'cam', because it has not been reinforced sufficiently in teaching. Despite these limitations pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress overall.

129 In Year 1, planning shows that pupils develop an idea of basic food technology as they work on tasks that reinforce 'Healthy Eating'. Past work shows that they have planned and designed a bedroom. Pupils in Year 2 have made wheeled vehicles from boxes and designed and made puppets. They join materials by using a range of tools such as glue, split pins and needles and thread. In Year 3, planning and teaching shows that pupils are beginning a unit of work where they will design, make and evaluate a Moving Monster. In the lesson seen pupils show enthusiasm as they draw different possibilities. Pupils in Year 4 reinforce previously learned sewing skills as they work on developing money containers using fabric. In Year 5 pupils use construction kits to give them ideas as they begin to design a moving toy. Planning in Year 6 shows that they are due to design, make and evaluate 'Controllable Vehicles'. Past work shows that they have recently designed and made bird boxes.

130 There is too little evidence to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in the infants. However the two lessons seen in Years 3 and 5 and discussions with pupils in Year 6 indicate that teaching is satisfactory in the juniors. Explanations and questioning are clear and consistently reinforce learning. In the lesson in Year 5, vocabulary related to the subject, such as 'prototype', 'sequence' and 'annotate' are carefully reinforced. In Year 3 the teacher demonstrates good subject knowledge as he speaks about the designing element of the task.

131 There is some evidence to suggest that ICT is used to support the curriculum, such as in Year 2 when the computers were used to design wheeled vehicles. However this is under-developed in the school generally. Resources are satisfactory but the newly appointed postholder is aware of the need to re-organise and develop these further to support planning related to the national guidelines. Assessment procedures are under- developed but this is due to be addressed through the school's development plan.

GEOGRAPHY

132 Standards in geography are average at both seven and 11, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Despite below average standards in English and mathematics, pupils attain average standards in geography because they have regular access to a well-planned range of learning experiences. Teaching in geography is at least sound and often good, so that learning in lessons is effective and pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make sound progress in developing skills, knowledge and understanding over time.

133 In Year 1, pupils carry out a survey of traffic that compares the number of vehicles on two different roads near to the school. One is a busy main road and the other a quiet side road and pupils come to understand that locations close to each other can still have differences. As pupils build tally charts of vehicles passing by, they are both excited and motivated, developing positive attitudes to geography. Later, back in the classroom, pupils look at photographs of different types of roads such as dual carriageways and cul-de-sacs. In Year 2, pupils compare the area of Lozells in Birmingham with the imaginary Isle of Struay in Scotland. They consider local amenities and draw plans of a village. The topic is celebrated in a classroom display that consolidates pupils' understanding.

134 This good work in the infants is developed as pupils move through the school. Pupils in Year 3 carry out work on world climates, locating continents and oceans on maps. In Year 4 they survey the contents of rubbish, developing an understanding of aspects of pollution. They learn more about mapping skills, where the postholder for geography sets a good example. Pupils are introduced to the idea of using symbols as they design their own village. Other work in this year group involves the origin of place names, providing pupils with a general understanding that they can apply as they move through the school. Good links are made with literacy as pupils write about early settlements and the reason for locations being chosen. These are continued in Year 5 where pupils carry out a topic on traffic calming, considering different methods, their likely effectiveness and cost. There is an element of citizenship in this topic as pupils anticipate the effects of proposed methods on different people's lives and livelihood. A local councillor is invited into school to hear pupils' views and to listen to their ideas. In Year 6, pupils develop skills in field studies as they measure the flow of a stream and survey its contours and profile.

135 The curriculum for geography is well planned and organised so that pupils have a topic each term and skills are developed in a logical sequence. Teaching is informed, and sensible monitoring of pupils' work ensures both consistency between classes and continuity in pupils' learning.

HISTORY

136 By the ages of seven and 11 pupils reach the expected levels in history. These findings are similar to those reported in the previous inspection. Previously completed work, teachers' planning and discussion with pupils indicate that pupils develop sound knowledge and understanding of history at levels appropriate to their age.

137 By the age of seven pupils develop satisfactory historical skills. In Year 1 they learn how life was different when their parents and grandparents were children. For example, pupils in Year 1 have examined and discussed old and new toys and the differences between them. They have looked at how the inside of houses has changed over the years. In Year 2, pupils develop an awareness of famous people from the past such as Florence Nightingale. They learn about the past as they look at London during the time of The Great Fire.

138 By the age of 11 pupils demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of past events and of how people lived long ago. Pupils in Year 6 talk enthusiastically about topics that they have studied, such as the Ancient Egyptians and the Second World War, and show a satisfactory idea of where they appear on a timeline. Past work and displays in classrooms show that in Year 3 pupils linked history with art as they designed Greek pots while studying Ancient Greece. Pupils in Year 4 learned about how Bouddica led her revolt against the Romans. In Year 5, pupils use their research skills as they look for information about the Tudors. This was later used when they performed in an assembly. Pupils use appropriate vocabulary to discuss the past, and identify differences between people's lives, past and present. Most pupils make satisfactory use of research skills and are beginning to use ICT to support their learning. For example, in Year 5 pupils use the Internet to find pictures of Tudor Kings. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop literacy skills as they write about the past, as when Year 6 pupils write letters pretending that they are evacuees during the war. Sometimes lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs do not always finish their written work because the task is not accurately matched to their abilities. This suggests shortcomings in the monitoring of pupils' learning and it affects the standards achieved. Pupils' books clearly show that at times the quality of work varies across year groups.

139 No direct teaching was observed to enable a judgement to be made about its quality in the infants. Two lessons were seen in Years 3 and 4 and these, together with the discussions with pupils in Year 6, indicate that teaching is satisfactory in the upper part of the school. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use timelines effectively to develop a satisfactory idea of the past. Lessons are satisfactorily planned and suitably resourced. Pupils with special educational needs were particularly well supported in the lesson in Year 4, demonstrated by the quality of their learning during the lesson. However opportunities were missed in this lesson to promote literacy skills, and as a result pupils' writing about life in Victorian times lacked quality. In both lessons the pace was too slow at times and as a result some pupils were unable to sustain concentration.

140 The subject is well managed by a newly appointed, enthusiastic postholder who has quickly identified what is needed to raise standards further. This includes monitoring teaching, as well as re-organising and developing resources in line with the national guidelines. The teachers are following the new yearly plan that the co-ordinator has recently devised, and the clear assessment procedures that she has recently written are due to be implemented next term. History displays in the classrooms and around the school enrich learning and reinforce concepts taught. The school has taken part in 'Black History Month' for the last two years, where each year group is given a black history topic to study. For example in Year 2 they looked at the life of Mary Seacole, which made a good contribution to pupils'

cultural development. Visits to places of interest, such as museums, enhance the history curriculum as well as helping pupils' social development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

141 Current standards by the end of Year 6 and Year 2 are securely in line with those expected nationally. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. Teaching and learning in ICT have improved through the training of teachers and support staff, and pupils' attitudes to the subject remain good. Provision has been greatly enhanced by the new computer suite, which is having a direct impact on raising the level of skill for pupils of all ages and abilities. New planning based on nationally approved guidelines covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum, which is an improvement since the last inspection.

142 Children in reception classes are introduced to computers from the beginning and are soon adept at making marks and drawing freehand patterns. In Year 1 they show good control of the mouse to drag and drop graphics to create the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. They combine simple sentences with pictures and demonstrate satisfactory keyboard skills in typing. By the end of Year 2 most pupils use the Internet to research their science work on animals, and fill in a pattern drawn in the style of Mondrian using the 'FILL' command. Scrutiny of their previous work shows most pupils move a 'Roamer' robot by simple commands, and more able pupils use LOGO commands to move the cursor around the screen in a set pattern.

143 A good lesson in Year 2 introduces pupils to the use of CD-ROMs for research purposes. Good teaching and very effective support enables all groups of pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills at a good pace. By the end of this carefully planned and well-managed lesson pupils access the program using drop-down menus, open and close down their computers correctly and save and print their work. Good use is made of ICT during a visit by the Year 2 classes to a nature reserve for a 'minibeast safari' when teachers use a digital camera to record the events of the day.

144 The development of skills and understanding continues across all junior classes. Good use is being made of the computer suite, particularly for older pupils to develop their skills. For example, research skills using the Internet are very effectively developed in a Year 6 lesson using the 'favourites' menu. Year 4 pupils can use a repeating motif to create very effective and imaginative patterns, while Year 5 pupils use 'Powerpoint' to make multi-media presentations.

145 The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is beginning to develop effectively, particularly in junior classes. It is used in design and technology by Year 2 pupils, who have drawn a picture of their wheeled vehicle as part of their design process. Scrutiny of previous work shows that Year 3 pupils can set up their own database on materials and their properties (science). Older pupils have used ICT in their literacy work on famous black people (history). They can draw a simple line graph on the computer using a formula, and have plotted information from databases as different types of graph. For example, Year 6 pupils have plotted the rainfall from different countries around the world (geography) and the properties of rectangles (mathematics).

146 The overall quality of teaching seen during the inspection is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Through their training, often at their own expense and time, teachers and support staff have developed confidence and competence in ICT. They know the programs and equipment they are using and this enables them to make effective interventions to support their pupils and move them on at an appropriate pace. They plan well using the new scheme of work based on national guidance. In the very good lesson seen

using a spreadsheet to develop mathematical skills, all groups of pupils make good progress during the lesson because the teaching is well organised, the level of challenge is well matched to pupils' ability and pupils' interest and enthusiasm is sustained. Good intervention by teachers and support staff ensures that all groups of pupils make appropriate progress, particularly those with special educational needs and those with English as a second language.

147 The subject is well led by two postholders who have worked hard to raise the profile of the subject, both in school and among parents. Their success is measured by the number of parents attending out-of-school clubs and the way pupils give up their free time to continue their links with a school in America. The postholders are aware of the need to develop systems of assessment to measure pupils' achievement in ICT and this forms part of their current action plan. The use of the computer suite to raise standards is good but the school should continue to develop the use of classroom computers to support learning in other areas of the curriculum. This continues to be an area of development for the school.

MUSIC

148 Only one music lesson, in Year 2, was observed during the inspection, as there were no other music lessons scheduled over the period in which lesson observations took place. Judgements are based on the examination of planning, discussions with teachers and support staff and talking to pupils, as well as observing music in assemblies. As a result, it is not possible to make firm judgements about the quality of teaching. However, on the basis of all evidence seen, standards in music have declined since the previous inspection, when music was considered to be at the expected level in Year 2 and Year 6. It is now below average throughout the school and progress for all pupils is unsatisfactory. Listening to singing in assemblies and in the lesson observed indicates that the standard of singing is unsatisfactory. In assembly, the unaccompanied singing of the song 'I can sing a rainbow' was tentative and not in unison at first. Most pupils sing in tune, but singing is weak and lacks volume and enthusiasm.

149 In the lesson seen in Year 2, pupils recognise ascending and descending notes. Working in groups most pupils create a pattern that rises and falls, but singing skills are weak. They make steady progress in their response to music and their understanding of pitch. A few pupils with English as an additional language do not join in very well with the song because they have difficulty reading the words, as do many pupils with special educational needs. There are missed opportunities in this lesson to draw attention to the words on the chart and too little focus on the teaching of singing skills. Insufficient emphasis is given to the acquisition of a musical vocabulary. Limited literacy skills make it hard for some pupils to explain what they have learned. The good support given to a pupil with a statement of special educational needs means he is fully included in the activities.

150 Teachers' planning shows that pupils have some experience of untuned percussion instruments in the infants. However opportunities for pupils to develop skills in composition are very limited and are not built on systematically, particularly in the juniors, where there is little evidence of pupils recording their compositions. A significant number of teachers have limited music skills and lack confidence in teaching music. Most pupils show satisfactory listening skills. Assemblies provide some opportunity for them to listen to a range of music and reference is made to the composer of the week.

151 All classes have the opportunity to sing with their year group once a week when the visiting pianist plays for lessons. There are no opportunities for pupils to learn to play an instrument with the support of a visiting specialist. The school choir has been maintained and there are opportunities for them to go out and sing in public, for example to the elderly. Pupils

also sing in school concerts. This year's spring concert has a music hall theme and all year groups will make a contribution.

152 Several factors have contributed to the fall in standards in music. There have been changes in the teaching staff, some of whom lack skills and confidence in music. There have also been several changes of music postholder, contributing to the lack of continuity in the subject. Insufficient time is given to music to enable the subject to be covered in sufficient depth. These factors all contribute to the unsatisfactory standards and progress. The recent introduction of a new scheme of work for music is not yet fully effective.

153 Although music is currently without a postholder, an enthusiastic newly-qualified teacher is looking forward to taking responsibility for the subject next term. At the same time music is to become a focus in the school improvement plan, and as such will have additional funding for teacher training, co-ordinator training and improving resources. The latter are adequate but unexciting, with few instruments from other cultures. The music policy is also due for review. At present no formal assessment takes place, but from September the assessment that is built into the commercial scheme will be introduced at the end of each unit. This scheme includes some use of the computer, but ICT skills are not sufficiently developed in music at present.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

154 There has been a good level of improvement in physical education since the previous inspection. Pupils' attainment, which was below expected standards at both seven and 11, is now satisfactory. The introduction of government guidelines means planning is now more consistent through the school. There has been a strong focus on the teaching of skills, which has had a positive impact, although newer members of staff have yet to benefit from this. Safety aspects, also criticised before, are now carefully implemented and pupils know how to perform and use equipment sensibly.

155 It was only possible to see four lessons during the inspection, two in the infants and two in the juniors, with one of the latter being taken by a visiting teacher as part of a football skills coaching programme. Judgements are based on these, talking to the subject postholder and pupils in Year 6, and examining planning. All aspects of the subject are planned for on a regular basis. There is a strong and commendable focus on swimming as an important life skill, and pupils visit the baths regularly from reception onwards. As a result about 80 per cent of the pupils meet the government's target of swimming 25 metres unaided by the age of 11, while many exceed this. All pupils are encouraged to take part in lessons, with support sometimes available for those with special educational needs or social difficulties, and all make similar progress in relation to their ability.

156 Pupils in Year 1 explore basic actions for transferring a ball or beanbag between partners in their games lessons. They have a sound grasp of basic skills, and work well with a partner. The focus in one class is on developing control and accuracy, and this is done very effectively. High expectations are clearly explained, and pupils know what is expected of them. Skills are taught thoroughly and pupils are continually challenged to improve. As a result there is good achievement. The other lesson encourages pupils to explore different ways of transferring objects. While offering good opportunities for independent learning, the wide range of resources and the lack of input from the teacher mean that pupils make less progress than they might.

157 A lesson for Year 4 pupils also looks to develop throwing and catching skills, but does not achieve its aims and the pupils make no progress. The planning does not focus on the specific skills to be improved. There is too much organising and too little activity. As a result

the pace drops, pupils misbehave, and dealing with them slows the lesson further still. Pupils are not challenged to improve, and a significant minority make no attempt to do so. The Year 6 lesson in contrast ensures that pupils are both continuously active and at the same time working hard to improve their ball control. They are set successive small challenges to meet at their own level; this, and the high expectations of the visiting teacher, helps all pupils to achieve well. As all teachers of junior classes observed this lesson with their class it also counts as good in-service training.

158 The quality of teaching observed ranged from unsatisfactory to very good, but is sound overall. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, when the teaching of physical education was judged to be unsatisfactory. The key aspect that makes the difference is the quality of planning. In the better lessons teachers are clear about the skills they want pupils to learn and there is plenty of suitable activity to back this up. The lesson proceeds with pace and pupils are too engaged to have time to mess about. They are also encouraged to be involved in their own learning through observing each other with a critical but positive eye. Relationships generally are good, which helps to make lessons productive. 'Warm-ups' take place before the activity starts, but are not always purposeful, for example going straight into aerobic activity before muscles are stretched. Again the high quality of the warm-up in one of the Year 1 classes is an excellent example for other teachers to follow.

159 With the exception of the one lesson, pupils respond well to physical activity. They find and use space sensibly and treat equipment carefully. When working with a partner they help and co-operate with each other, showing good ideas and initiative.

160 The postholder has worked hard and successfully to influence and improve practice since the last inspection. She is well-informed and has made good use of opportunities to develop staff confidence and expertise through using outside consultants. There is no assessment in the subject at present, but guidelines are being prepared. After-school sports clubs involve both boys and girls, with at least two girls making the football squad.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

161 As at the time of the last inspection, standards are in line with those required by the local programme of work for Birmingham schools. The postholder has produced very helpful documents that assist teachers in their planning. These show the topics to be covered in each class over a year, highlighting the focus for learning and the activities that teachers can exploit. The major world faiths are studied with Christianity correctly receiving most attention. However, in some books, in Year 6 for example, the importance of Christianity is not reflected in the work so far this year, although a display in the classroom showing the Christian story of Creation redresses the balance somewhat. The subject contributes significantly to the pupils' understanding of our multicultural society and Year 5's involvement in a whole-school assembly testified to this when each pupil spoke about the beliefs and traditions of the various world faiths.

162 Pupils in Year 2 know about Moses and the Ten Commandments and have looked at how people from different religious traditions pray. Currently they are studying a Christian church, learning the names of various features such as the font, the pulpit and the lectern, and looking forward to visiting the local cathedral. Visits and visitors are an important part of the work and bring the subject alive. The older pupils in the juniors have benefited greatly from the visit of a Buddhist monk and they understand the concept of gaining enlightenment through achievement of the 'Eightfold Path'.

163 Pupils make satisfactory progress through the school in acquiring knowledge and in realising the part that religions play in shaping people's lives. Those in Year 1 are told the

Christian creation story as a prelude to thinking about how some people believe that everything in the world belongs to God. In Year 3, pupils study the work of the Salvation Army and of how the followers show their religious conviction through practical work in society. Year 4 pupils reflect on the comfort that people gain from religion in times of sadness and, in Year 5, they consider the obligations placed on godparents in Christian baptism.

164 Most pupils respond positively to their work and are keen to discuss issues that arise in the lessons. They respect the views expressed and, because of the warm rapport that teachers have with their classes, they feel confident to contribute. In a very good lesson in Year 6, a Muslim pupil talks confidently about the Third Pillar of Islam during a discussion about giving to charity, and the teacher's skill in using this expertise benefited everyone. In another very good lesson in Year 1, the teacher expertly uses pictures to reinforce understanding of how God made the world. Pupils are captivated and, through very good questioning afterwards, the teacher assesses their understanding.

165 These two lessons are exceptional. Teaching generally in the school is sound. Discussions are usually well-conducted and teachers strive to involve everyone but, occasionally, pupils are withdrawn and miss the lesson. This happened in Year 3 when a spelling group disappeared into the corridor. The weakest part of lessons is usually the activity session, when pupils are often required to fill in worksheets that do not challenge them sufficiently. Teachers miss opportunities to develop literacy skills by not requiring pupils to produce written accounts of what they have learned. Computers are not yet widely used to support work. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have difficulties with understanding English receive appropriate help because teaching assistants are normally well deployed in lessons, enabling these pupils to make satisfactory progress.

166 Informative and colourful displays around the school enhance the status of religious education and there are good book resources to support work. The school also has an impressive collection of good quality religious objects. As at the last inspection, the postholder continues to support her colleagues effectively, although she has few opportunities to observe lessons. She, in turn, is well supported by a governor. There are no systems for assessing the standards and progress of individual pupils.