

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GROVE SCHOOL**

Handsworth, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103392

Headteacher: Mrs P Matty

Reporting inspector: Miss F Robinson  
22182

Dates of inspection: 27 – 31 May 2002

Inspection number: 230798

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Primary Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Dawson Road  
Handsworth  
Birmingham

Postcode: B21 9HB

Telephone number: 0121 554 4669

Fax number: 0121 554 4375

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Satnam Chumber

Date of previous inspection: 23 June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22182	Miss F Robinson	Registered inspector	Art and design	What sort of school is it?
			English as an additional language	The school's results and pupils' achievements
				How well is the school led and managed?
				What should the school do to improve further?
11358	Mrs V Lamb	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
				How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18346	Mr R Bristow	Team inspector	Mathematics Special educational needs	How well are pupils taught?
11660	Mr T O'Malley	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Design and technology	
			Equal opportunities	
23603	Mr M Livingstone	Team Inspector	Science	
			Physical education	
32117	Mr K Bryant	Team Inspector	English	
			History	
18442	Mrs G Walton	Team Inspector	Geography	
			Religious education	
			Foundation Stage	
20707	Mr D Brettell	Team Inspector	Music	

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London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Grove School is situated in Handsworth in Birmingham. It is a large three-form entry primary school organised in three phases. The school is on a split site with Early years and middle school in the Victorian building and Years 5 and 6 in a 1960's open plan building. It draws its pupils from a wide area and caters for pupils aged three to eleven. There are 704 pupils on the roll, of whom 89 attend the Nursery. The school is larger than similar schools nationally. Approximately 55 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. Pupils come from a very wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The main ethnic backgrounds of pupils are Indian, Pakistani, Black-Caribbean and Bangladeshi. Fewer than 5 per cent are of white British heritage. 95 per cent of pupils have English as an additional language and of these 213 are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The main home languages spoken by these children are Punjabi, Urdu and Bengali. Most of the school's pupils are in practice confident and competent speakers and writers of English. 39 per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs by the school, which is above the national average and the percentage with statements of need is broadly average. Pupils with special educational needs have a range of difficulties but the majority have general learning difficulties whilst a few have specific difficulties such as moderate learning, emotional and behavioural, speech or communication and hearing impairment difficulties.

Pupils come from a wide variety of social backgrounds. On average pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Grove School is a very effective school. It has an outstanding and inspirational headteacher and everyone connected with the school works together extremely well. The team spirit is very good and underpins the very good improvement being made. Children join the Nursery with well below average levels of ability. After a good start, pupils achieve standards that are average at the end of Year 2 in reading, mathematics and science. Standards are below average in writing. By the age of eleven standards are average in English, mathematics and science, with the higher achieving pupils attaining well above average standards. Teaching is good and this is why significantly more pupils are achieving higher standards than they were at the time of the previous inspection. All pupils from a very wide range of cultural backgrounds are fully included in every aspect of the day-to-day life of the Grove School. The provision for pupils with special educational needs, including the higher attaining pupils, and for those for whom English is an additional language, is very good indeed. There is very good overall attention given to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and pupils are prepared very well for future citizenship. The school promotes very good links with parents, who play an important role in supporting their children in education. The school gives good value for money.

### **What the school does well**

- The leadership and management of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, her senior staff and governors are excellent. All staff fully support each other with an outstanding shared commitment.
- The quality of teaching is good and, combined with the very positive contribution of support staff, helps pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good in a very caring school where relationships are very good.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. It underpins the bright, stimulating and supporting ethos that permeates the school.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs, for higher achieving pupils and for those whom English is an additional language is very good.
- The school provides every opportunity to provide for excellence. It achieves very high standards in art and design, music, mathematics and information and communication technology for pupils by the age of eleven years.

### **What could be improved**

- Raising the standards in writing.
- Raising the level of attendance.

*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 improved significantly since the last inspection in June 1997. Standards have improved in most subjects but particularly in mathematics, art and design, music, physical education and in information and communication technology by the end of the juniors. Teachers' planning has improved and there is a richness to the broad and balanced curriculum that is in place. Assessment procedures are very good and information from assessments is used very well to promote higher standards. There have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching, with 68 per cent of lessons observed being good, very good or excellent. This has had a significant impact upon the progress pupils make and standards they achieve. The school has made very good progress in developing the role of subject leaders in monitoring teaching, planning and learning and this is also having an impact on pupils' standards. In addition the school has worked hard to improve the overall level of pupils' attendance, although attendance is still too low. With an excellent clear vision for the future developments of the school, the headteacher, governors and staff are well placed to continue the improvements since the previous inspection.



## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	E	E	B
mathematics	D	E	D	B
science	E	E	D	B

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

On entry to the Nursery, children are attaining standards, which are well below those normally expected of this age group. By the age of five, pupils have made good progress in all areas of learning and are on target to achieve their early learning goals in all but communication, language and literacy where standards are below average. By the age of seven pupils continue to make good progress to attain standards close to those found nationally in mathematics, reading and science. Standards are below average in writing. Current standards are higher than those indicated by past results in national tests and assessments for seven year olds. In 2001, pupils attained standards in reading, which were below average. They were well below average in writing and mathematics. When compared with schools having a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards in reading were well above average. They were average in writing and mathematics. Results show steady improvement over the last three years at a rate above that found nationally.

Overall, by the age of eleven pupils attain standards, which are typical for their age. The higher attainers achieve standards that are well above average in English and mathematics and make very good progress. Again, current standards are higher than indicated by results of past national tests. In 2001, pupils attained standards in English that were well below average. They were below average in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, standards were above average in English, mathematics and science. The general trend in results over the last three years is of improving standards at a rate above the national figures.

From a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work over the last year, direct observations of their work in lessons, hearing pupils read and discussing their work with them, inspectors judge that most pupils are now attaining standards in line with those expected in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, geography and physical education by the age of eleven. They are well above average in art and design, music and information and communication technology. They are above the expectations of the religious education Locally Agreed Syllabus by the age of eleven and they are above in history. Higher attaining pupils are achieving very well by the age of eleven especially in mathematics, poetry, art and design and music. Pupils make at least good progress to achieve these standards. The school has set

appropriate targets for improving pupils' attainment, based on a wide range of assessment information.

Standards in numeracy and literacy are in line with those found nationally for most pupils, with the higher attaining pupils achieving much better than this. Overall, boys and girls from all backgrounds, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress over the whole of their education at Grove School from entry to the Nursery to final attainment at the end of Year 6.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Very good. All pupils have a very positive attitude to school and to their work, which they undertake with great enthusiasm.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils' behaviour in all areas of the school is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Boys and girls are very keen to help. Relationships are very good. They play well together and they get on very well with adults.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory, despite significant improvement and very good systems put in place to monitor attendance.

This is a strong aspect of the school's work. Pupils concentrate well in lessons and show very good levels of independence, working well with minimal supervision. Behaviour was consistently very good during the inspection as a result of the high expectations of adults in the school.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Nursery and Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is good throughout the school and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teaching was judged to be excellent in four lessons, very good in 24 lessons, good in 40 lessons and satisfactory in 31 lessons. Teaching was consistently good and very good in the Nursery and reception classes, which ensures that pupils make a good start to their education. The teaching of English was good. Teachers extend pupils' use of literacy skills well in other subjects. There are some weaknesses in pupils' writing. The teaching of mathematics was good and numeracy skills were taught and used effectively by teachers in many areas of the curriculum. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use a range of teaching methods well. Lessons are effectively planned. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is carried out well to plan for the next steps in their learning. There is a strong sense of purpose in lessons, and pupils securely build on their skills and knowledge. Most pupils make

at least good progress including those who have been identified as having special educational needs and those who are at an early stage of using English as an additional language. The higher attaining pupils are challenged very well and in-class support and specialist teaching are used very well to support pupils' learning. All pupils respond well to the good teaching they receive. They make at least good progress in their learning and tasks are matched well to their ability.

### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school has built up a rich and varied curriculum that meets the needs of all its pupils. It has a very good range of out-of-school activities and clubs and these extend the pupils' experiences very well indeed.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. These pupils are fully included in every aspect of the day-to-day life of the school. They are supported very well and they work hard. The provision made for the higher achieving pupils is excellent.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. These pupils are supported very well and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school promotes a strong sense of community, and helps pupils to become very good citizens. They have a very good awareness and understanding of a wide variety of cultural traditions and religions. They are very aware of the wonderful world around them.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Staff know the pupils very well and they take very good care of them. Pupils' attainment and progress are monitored very well.

Parents support the work of the school well and they are very satisfied with what the school offers. A small number of parents thought that the school did not provide sufficient homework.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. There is outstanding and inspirational leadership by the headteacher. There is very strong team spirit and everyone connected with the school works together very effectively to guide the educational direction of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. They have a wide range of experience and they are very supportive of the school in many ways. They have a very clear understanding of what is best for the school if it is to continue forward successfully.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The school's evaluation of its own performance is used very well to guide future planning.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. All additional funds are very well managed to promote learning and improve standards.

The principles of best value are very well understood and implemented by the headteacher and governors. Funds are very well managed and governors are well aware of the importance of making the necessary comparisons to ensure that the school is competitive.

The provision for teachers and support staff is very good and this impacts well on the progress of the pupils. Learning resources are very good and the accommodation is a bright, stimulating and purposeful learning environment.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The parents who responded to the questionnaire and attended the parents meeting were fully supportive of most aspects of the school, including the headteacher and the teaching staff. They felt that the school was extremely well led and managed. They were highly complimentary and supportive of the headteacher.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The amount of homework given.</li> </ul>

Inspection evidence supports all parents' positive views. A few parents thought that the school did not provide sufficient homework; inspectors judged the provision of homework to be satisfactory overall and similar to that found in other schools of its type.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Inspectors based their subjects on an analysis of test and assessment results, direct observations of pupils in lessons, hearing pupils read and a detailed scrutiny of pupils' past and present work. Discussions were held with pupils to establish what pupils knew and could do.
2. The early assessment of children on entry to the Nursery indicates that their attainment is well below that normally found. By the time these children enter the reception classes they have made good progress and are attaining standards closer to those expected. Most have had access to pre-school experiences in Nursery and show developing social awareness.
3. By the end of their Reception Year current children are attaining standards, which are average in all areas of learning except communication, language and literacy where standards are below average. They come from a very wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Most children have English as an additional language and of these a significant number are at an early stage of English language acquisition. All children make good progress due to the high quality of teaching which has a significant impact on their learning,
4. By the age of seven pupils continue to make good progress to attain standards closer to those found nationally in mathematics, reading and science. Standards are below average in writing. In the 2001 tests and assessments for seven year olds overall standards in reading were below average. They were well below average in writing and mathematics. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was well below in reading and mathematics and below in writing and science. The attainment of boys and girls at Level 2 and above were below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Results have improved at a rate above that found nationally over the last three years. Current standards are higher than indicated by recent results due to good quality teaching and learning from all staff.
5. In comparison with similar schools using national benchmark information, standards in reading in 2001 were well above average. They were above average in writing and mathematics. Standards in science were closer to the average.
6. By the age of seven years pupils are attaining average standards in all other subjects except for art and design where they are above average and in religious education where they are above the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Over the last three years standards in English, mathematics and science have improved at a rate above that found nationally. In comparison with similar schools standards were above average in English, mathematics and science. Teachers subject knowledge and understanding has improved and effective teaching strategies are having a significant impact on learning in all subject areas.

7. By the age of eleven pupils are attaining standards, which are typical for their age. In the 2001 tests and assessment for eleven year olds the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 was well below the national average in English and below in mathematics and science. The percentage gaining the higher Level 5 was below the national average in English and close to the national average in science. There were a higher number of special educational needs pupils in this cohort.
8. From a scrutiny of pupils' work and their work in lessons inspectors judge that current pupils are attaining average standards in English and literacy, mathematics, numeracy and science. The higher attainers achieve standards that are well above average in English and mathematics and make very good progress. Almost one in eight pupils in Year 6 achieve at the higher Level 5, and six of those are working towards the even higher Level 6 in mathematics. These six pupils have been attending the Saturday morning Advanced Learning Centre with three taking the national test designed for pupils aged 16. The school has set realistic and challenging targets for pupils' attainment based upon a range of assessment information and these are used very well to monitor the performance of pupils with special educational needs, higher achieving pupils and pupils for whom English is an additional language. The majority of pupils from all ethnic groups make good progress throughout the school. All ethnic groups are represented amongst the higher attaining pupils in the school.
9. Standards in information and communication technology are well above those found nationally. Pupils in the juniors are beginning to access information to support learning in a number of subjects through the Internet. Throughout the school the very high quality of provision for information and communication technology is having a significant impact on pupils' learning.
10. Pupils are attaining standards well above those expected in art and design and music. Standards in history are above average and standards in religious education are above the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards have improved due to teachers having very secure subject knowledge and understanding and using effective teaching strategies which are impacting well on pupils' work in these areas. Standards are average in all other subjects.
11. Overall pupils are achieving well. They are making good progress throughout the school, with no significant differences in the progress of girls and boys. Pupils with English as an additional language are achieving standards appropriate for their age and ability, and the school monitors their progress carefully. It also monitors the attainment and progress of all ethnic sub-groups, higher ability pupils and pupils with special educational needs very carefully. All pupils, whatever their background and ability, are supported very well in their work and work is matched very well to their ability. Pupils are very well behaved, enjoy their activities and have very good attitudes to learning and wish to succeed.
12. The provision for the high attaining pupils is very good and they achieve very well especially in poetry, mathematics, music and art and design.
13. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language achieve suitable standards for their age and abilities. Their individual education plans are

clearly focused and plan for progress step-by-step. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons and over time. Achievement throughout the school is consistently good with regard to the targets contained in the pupils' individual education plans. Comprehensive records of achievement and progress are kept, being very effectively used to inform teaching and planning.

14. The attainment of the pupils needing additional language support on entry to the school is well below the national expectation. Very good support is provided for the youngest pupils in the school and this helps them to make good progress in their acquisition of the English language. There is no difference between the progress of Punjabi, Urdu and Bengali speaking children. There are very good levels of support staff in the infant, middle and upper junior stages. Very good provision is made for pupils who enter the school with no knowledge of English and valuable English language support is provided for pupils where appropriate throughout the school.
15. All pupils are provided with a full range of opportunities and their talents are fully explored and extended. Pupils work well together, they are well behaved, and are proud of their achievements.

#### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

16. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development, including their behaviour, are very good and are a strength of the school. However, although attendance has improved significantly over recent years it still remains below the average for primary schools nationally.
17. Pupils from all ethnic groups, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, like school and demonstrate very positive attitudes to their lessons and special events. They respond very well to the attitudes and values that the school promotes. Pupils chat in a friendly way with each other, their teachers and other adults. When given the opportunity, they display appropriate levels of independence, and develop self-confidence and a very good level of personal responsibility as they move through the school. Those chosen as monitors are proud to show that they can carry out their duties conscientiously. Extra-curricular events are particularly well supported.
18. Pupils' personal development is very good. Staff have developed very good relationships with pupils and provide effective role models. They praise and encourage achievements and intervene quickly and constructively when pupils require guidance. Pupils feel secure with teachers and are able to approach them confidently and respectfully to exchange news, show work and ask for help without fear of failure. They show pleasure when they succeed. Pupils' awareness of how their actions may make others feel is strong. They take notice of each other, work co-operatively and are polite and responsive towards staff. They are friendly towards visitors and are keen to talk about their school and work.
19. Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is very good overall and they work and play together very well. In lessons boys, girls, and pupils of differing abilities and cultures work together in a co-operative and friendly way, supporting one another and sharing materials when necessary. They settle to their tasks well and work at a good rate.

They pay attention to teachers and concentrate effectively in group tasks as well as when working alone. They listen well and join in when necessary, offering sensible questions and suggestions and are keen to share what they know. They persevere and are prepared to try out ideas and respond well to instructions and guidance. Pupils respond positively when staff intervene to guide them and so gain more independence. During assemblies pupils respect the nature of the occasion and join in reflectively.

20. Pupils from all ethnic groups are well motivated to contribute publicly and take pleasure in receiving recognition for their efforts. They move in an orderly way between areas of the building and grounds. In the dining rooms and playgrounds they talk with each other and adults in a friendly way and keep the school routines without fuss. No bullying was seen during the inspection. The school has not permanently excluded any pupil in recent years. During playtimes and lunchtimes pupils co-operate with staff and each other and spend their time usefully in pairs or groups playing, chatting and learning new skills. Pupils take on duties with maturity and common sense. For instance, during the inspection, school council members conducted a survey of pupils' views fairly and methodically and pupils responded sensibly. The pupils make very good use of the cheerful and well-resourced leisure areas. Although the outdoor area for the pupils in the upper phase has not yet been developed to the same degree as the rest of the school, pupils here make enthusiastic use of the space and games equipment available.
21. Relationships between pupils and support staff, especially during break and lunchtime, are respectful and conducive to the sense of harmony and fun that characterises these occasions. The leadership of the pastoral manager is excellent and lunchtime and playtime playleaders support pupils play very well.
22. Attendance is below average and the rate of unauthorised absence is below the average for similar schools nationally. Pupils arrive at school on time and go quickly to their classrooms. Registration procedures are conducted efficiently and lessons begin promptly.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

23. Overall, the teaching observed throughout the school was of a good standard and had a direct influence on the good quality of learning observed during the inspection. Evidence from classroom observations, examining teachers' planning, analysing pupils' work and discussion with pupils, indicates that the quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, and reflects the good quality of teaching which is typical for Grove School.
24. There are four classes in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception), six classes in the infants (Key Stage 1) and twelve classes in the juniors (Key Stage 2). Each class contains pupils of a single age group. Pupils are taught in their own class group for all subjects with the exception of the highest attaining pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 who are taught in an advanced mathematics group for four days of the week.
25. During the inspection, 94 lessons were observed. In total this amounted to in excess of 65 hours of teaching and learning. Teaching was judged to be excellent in four



lessons, very good in 23 lessons, good in 38 lessons and satisfactory in the remaining 29 lessons. Very good teaching or better was observed in each of the three stages of education with excellent teaching and learning in both infants and junior stages. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection.

26. The inspection findings agree with parents' views that teachers provide good role models. In almost two out of three lessons, which were judged to be good or better, teaching was characterised by high expectations; good planning, which was particularly effective in junior classes; and the use of a wide range of teaching strategies to maintain interest and motivate pupils. Teachers concentrated on skill development rather than just sharing information; and gains in skills were recorded so that future activities might be more focused. Pupils were managed very well and teachers were consistent in the use of agreed behavioural strategies. Non-teaching support was used effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning for targeted groups.
27. In almost three out of every ten lessons, teaching was very good or better where questioning was used sensitively to move pupils on. For example in a Year 5 science lesson a pupil was challenged to repeat his answer about *shadows* but to include the key word 'opaque', which he did successfully. In the excellent lessons the pace of teaching and learning was even more demanding, pupils were more fully involved in their own learning, and they were skilfully led to solve investigations rather than being provided with the answers. When summing up, teachers checked for gains in knowledge and understanding, invited pupils to share what gains they thought they had made, and then prepared them for the next stages of learning.
28. Overall, in lessons where teaching was judged to be satisfactory, there were some common areas for development. Teachers' subject knowledge was less secure; the pace of lessons was less challenging; groups of pupils sat patiently during over-long introductions; and they were not always expected to develop their speaking skills by explaining their reasoning.
29. The quality of teaching that was observed in the Foundation Stage class was good overall, with four out of eleven lessons being satisfactory. The very good teaching occurred in lessons where the teacher's expectations were high and activities built on what children already knew.
30. During the week of the inspection, some very good teaching was observed in the Nursery and in the Reception. Where the teaching was most effective, activities were planned to provide learning experiences in imaginative ways which interest and involve children from all ethnic backgrounds in their learning and help them make gains in their knowledge and understanding. An attractive and stimulating environment is provided in which children learn to relate to each other and to adults.
31. The quality of teaching that was observed in Year 1 and 2 classes was good overall. Twenty-eight lessons were observed in these classes. Teaching was judged to be good or better in all but five lessons, very good in five lessons and excellent in one lesson in Year 2. There was no unsatisfactory teaching.

32. When teaching was at its most effective the pace of the lesson was consistently challenging. Relationships were excellent and pupils thrived when being ‘Oh so close!’ rather than ‘Wrong!’ Time was used effectively and pupils were given very good support to advance their skills. In the excellent mathematics lesson in Year 2, the quality of teaching influenced the excellent quality of learning. Pupils remained on the carpet only as long as necessary. Higher attaining pupils who needed only the most brief of introductions were challenged to start their activities, whilst lower attaining pupils were given the additional support they needed before attempting their tasks. Pupils from all ethnic groups are represented in the higher and lower attaining pupil groups.
33. Overall, the quality of teaching observed in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 was good. Fifty-five lessons were observed in the junior classes. In almost two out of three lessons teaching and learning were judged to be good or better with only one in five judged to be satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching, which is an improvement from the last inspection. In three lessons, teaching and learning were judged to be of the highest quality.
34. Teaching which was very good or better was observed in English, science, mathematics, information and communication technology, art and design, history and physical education. These lessons were characterised by the teachers’ very good subject knowledge and command of an effective range of teaching strategies, which highly motivated the pupils in their classes. Questioning was thorough and activities explored the skills of each ability group which is fully inclusive of all ethnic groups in the school. In each lesson teachers had the highest expectations; time was used effectively, and pupils developed and shared key words and phrases to enable them to explain their gains in learning accurately. Teachers kept their introductions down to a minimum and planned for the maximum amount of time for pupils to investigate and practise their newly gained skills. Of particular note was the way in which teachers varied their lessons as they recognised and responded to the very good progress being made.
35. The teaching observed in both English and mathematics lessons was very good overall. Thirteen English lessons were observed, of which ten were judged to be good or better with two in the juniors being excellent in Years 2 and 5. Better than three out of every four mathematics lessons were judged to be good or better with one excellent in Year 2. Three lessons were satisfactory. The high standard of teaching in these important curricular areas has contributed significantly to improvements in standards. In both subjects the school is making good use of the new national guidance for teaching of skills in literacy and numeracy. Pupils are being assessed frequently and this information is used to target improvement.
36. The school flourishes in its determination to pursue excellence for those pupils who display skills and interests that might otherwise remain undeveloped as in music, dance, poetry and philosophy. This is typified in the teaching of an advanced mathematics group, which raises almost one in six pupils in Year 6 to work at standards that are well above those typical of pupils by the age of 11. This group also includes pupils from Years 4 and 5, who thrive on the additional challenge. Pupils who are gifted and talented are also provided with excellent opportunities to develop

their special talents through excellent specialist teaching on Saturday mornings and in school. These groups are fully inclusive and include pupils from the main ethnic groups.

37. The progress made by pupils from all ethnic backgrounds, is usually good and often better as they move through the school. Children enter the Foundation Stage with levels of attainment well below those found nationally. They make good progress to reach standards expected for five year olds in most areas of their learning when they transfer to the Key Stage 1 classes. This progress is maintained in the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 classes so that by age eleven pupils are attaining standards that are typical of pupils nationally.
38. The quality of learning matches closely the good quality of teaching observed in each of the three stages. Consequently, all pupils are given their full entitlement and progress according to their talents and needs. Most pupils make at least good progress including those who have been identified as having special educational needs and those who are at an early stage of using English as an additional language. These pupils are supported effectively by classroom, behaviour management and <sup>1</sup>integration assistants. In several lessons where teaching was of the highest quality pupils thrived on the level of challenge and the quality of relationships which underpin learning. They were proud of their achievements and applied their skills enthusiastically. Pupils develop a good range of literacy and numeracy skills, which they then use well to extend their learning across the curriculum. They have developed good speaking skills and use information and communication technology well to carry out research and study skills. The school has identified the need for pupils to improve their writing and ensure that they write for a range of purposes across the curriculum.
39. Older pupils have a very good understanding of their own involvement in the quality of their learning. They are most aware of their 'contracts' for improvement, which they share with parents and teachers. In a Year 5 science lesson, pupils were most enthusiastic when invited to share 'what they had learned today' with one remarking: 'I think we have exceeded our aims today!' Work in the pupils' books shows that during this school year they have made good progress in many subjects especially English, science and mathematics. In discussion pupils display a good level of understanding and know what they have to do to improve.
40. Overall, the teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good and planning identifies challenging activities that are well matched to their needs. Pupils are fully included in all learning activities, and their self-esteem is high especially when their contributions are valued. The quality of the support staff is very good and is used very well to support pupils in their learning. As a result all pupils including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make very good progress.
41. Teachers work effectively in handling and using the rich ethnic diversity of their classes. They cope very well with the high proportion of English as an additional

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<sup>1</sup> Integration assistants help pupils for whom English is an additional language and pupils with special educational needs. Languages spoken include Punjabi, Urdu and Bengali.

language pupils from all ethnic backgrounds, who produce good work due to good quality teaching. All pupils are given equal opportunities including pupils from ethnic minority groups. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, phase co-ordinators, subject co-ordinators and class teachers all monitor pupils progress very carefully both in lessons and over time.

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

42. The curriculum provided by the school for pupils aged 5 – 11 is very good. There is a very good curriculum in place for children in the Foundation Stage. National Curriculum requirements are fully in place including religious education and collective worship. This is an improvement on what was reported at the time of the previous inspection when the provision for information and communication technology, design and technology and physical education was unsatisfactory. The provision is at least satisfactory now in these subjects. In information and communication technology it is very good. The curriculum is now planned consistently well and reflects the school's commitment to offering all pupils from all ethnic groups, including those with English as an additional language, higher achieving pupils and pupils with special educational needs, a broad and balanced education. The allocation of time to individual subjects is appropriate and ensures that pupils have full access to the curriculum.
43. There are now clear guidelines for teachers to identify what pupils are to be taught each week, each term and each year. The use of national guidelines for planning in all subject areas has improved the quality of the curriculum since the last inspection. The school has effectively implemented planning guidance for the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies. It places appropriate emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy and this has contributed well to improving standards in English and mathematics by the ages of seven and eleven.
44. Planning procedures are good. Staff plan collaboratively in their year groups and ensure that pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and those of high ability are all fully supported and challenged in each lesson. Planning highlights the role of classroom support staff who make a valuable and substantial contribution to pupils' learning. Long, medium and short-term planning documents and all policy documentation are available to the staff at home through the school's website.
45. Across the curriculum pupils' literacy skills are being developed well. They are being given more opportunities to write using a wide range of styles that includes non-chronological writing in history and geography and a range of recording styles in science and design and technology. Opportunities are carefully planned to develop speaking and listening skills. The very good relationships and very good behaviour seen in all classes have contributed effectively to the improvement in these areas. Resources are managed well to ensure that information books are available to support topic work in each class. Where research skills are well developed, pupils use computers to promote study skills as when Year 6 pupils used the Internet to gain information about Mexico.

46. Numeracy skills are developed well in mathematics lessons and applied well across the curriculum. For example, valuable opportunities are provided to draw graphs in science. Very effective use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning.
47. Religious education is provided for all pupils in accordance with the Locally Agreed Syllabus and parents have been informed about their right to withdraw their children. The school complies with statutory requirements by providing a daily act of collective worship. Very good provision is made for pupils from all religious groups and pupils' awareness is raised very well of the rich diversity of religious beliefs in the school.
48. A distinctive feature of the school's curriculum is how specialist teaching enhances its quality and breadth. Amongst the subjects to benefit are music, art and design, poetry, physical education, mathematics and information and communication technology. Weekly lessons in philosophy are provided for pupils in Year 6. The positive impact of these initiatives is evident throughout the school. They contribute significantly to the school's stimulating learning environment and impact directly upon the high achievements of the pupils.
49. A further strength in the curriculum is the teaching of personal and social skills. The school has placed a high priority on building good relationships and teaching social skills. It has invested very successfully in high quality pastoral care at playtime and lunchtimes. Teaching and non-teaching staff respond to any inappropriate behaviour consistently well and there is a very good support system in place to help pupils with emotional and behavioural needs. Pupils are given opportunities to share their experiences, views and opinions in groups during 'circle time'. Health education, which includes sex education and the raising of awareness about the use and misuse of drugs is good. It is linked to the programmes of study for science. A 'Health Week' is held in school in the autumn term.
50. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all school activities and are given access to the full range of National Curriculum activities, which are extended by activities outside of the normal school day. Generally, parents appreciate the amount of homework given which enables them to support their children's learning.
51. The aims of the school give the highest priority to providing equal opportunities for all and a policy is in place that values all abilities and ethnic backgrounds. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those for whom English is an additional language is very good. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all school activities and are given access to the full range of National Curriculum activities that are extended by activities outside of the normal school day. Generally parents appreciate the amount of homework given which enables them to support their children's learning. Pupils new to the country, and those who are at early stage of using English as an additional language, are fully included and support is targeted to ensure their pace of learning matches that of others. Work is planned effectively for higher attaining pupils and advanced skills are taught well, especially when skilled support is available, as for example in mathematics lessons for higher achieving Years 4, 5 and 6 pupils.
52. The school offers a very good range of extra-curricular activities to pupils. During the

week of inspection these included athletics, gymnastics, badminton, reading club, robotics and dance. Staff gave generously of their time and parents appreciated that these activities add to the quality of pupils' learning. On Saturday morning many pupils from Years 5 and 6 attend the Children's university with children from other schools at a local secondary school. The modules taught are Japanese, French, German, aerobics, mathematics, English, science and information and communication technology. In addition, Saturday morning classes are held for more able pupils in mathematics and English. Grove School started the Advanced Learning Centres for mathematics and English. These are funded by the National Primary Trust and several others have been set up around the country.

53. Educational visits and visitors to the school have a very positive impact on the curriculum. A range of visits to local museums and places of worship such as the local church and gurdwara support learning in many areas, but particularly focus on religious education, art and design, history, geography and poetry. There are annual residential opportunities for pupils in Years 2 – 6 at the Merevale Hostel, Atherstone. The strong links with the local community provide opportunities to extend and enrich the quality of the curriculum. Visitors to the school play an important role enabling the whole school community to celebrate and respect the many cultures and religions in the school and its locality.
54. The school encourages pupils to take responsibility through an active school council. Each class from Year 2 to Year 6 has representatives on the school council. The school councillors from all ethnic backgrounds represent the views of their class and debate whole school issues. They have planned meetings with the headteacher and the governing body.
55. Pupils from Grove School transfer to as many thirteen grammar or secondary schools. The school works hard to ensure that pupils are well prepared for a smooth transition to the next stage of their education; and plans visits, and sporting and musical links where it is possible. The school has strong links with local colleges and uses these to provide training for parents in information and communication technology and English, which have a beneficial impact on the pupils in school.
56. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The opportunities for pupils' spiritual development are good. The school holds daily assemblies for lower, middle and upper school each sharing a common theme. During the inspection the theme was 'Treating others like you would like to be treated.' Assemblies are used to celebrate success, hard work, good behaviour and special occasions such as birthdays. Music is played on entry and exit of assembly creating a calm atmosphere. During the assembly a candle is lit creating a special moment and pupils are invited to reflect on a specific issue. To improve the spiritual dimension this 'moment of reflection' sometimes needs more time as in at least one assembly it was rushed. Pupils commented that all faiths are respected and that there are visits to places of worship of several faith communities. Thus pupils show a very good awareness of the multi-faith dimension of their own community. Pupils in work and play demonstrated an empathy with others and a readiness to challenge discrimination in the form of racism or sexism.

57. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Class rules and school rules about how to behave are displayed. Attitude and behaviour in lessons were consistently good and often very good. Pupils commented that the school took racism very seriously and were able to articulate the school's procedure for reporting racist incidents. Pupils were constantly reminded how to behave and why good behaviour was important. Teachers praised good behaviour in lessons and assemblies. The school promotes racial and religious equality, successfully developing a safe learning environment in which pupils can express their views. Pupils can articulate what is right and wrong and give reasons. Adults throughout the school modelled behaviour that promoted respect for pupil's welfare and the interests of all groups. Moral issues were considered through historical studies such as 'Black History Month'.
58. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Pupils relate very well to adults and their peers. They are able to share their views and work toward a consensus. Pupils show respect for each other and each other's property. A group of eleven-year-old pupils were able to debate enthusiastically whilst maintaining respect for each other and each other's point of view. The school fosters a sense of community with common, inclusive values. Pupils value the social dimension offered by school with a pupil commenting that school feels 'just like home.' Children are encouraged to respect cultural and religious differences and value the opportunity to celebrate festivals during the year. Festivals celebrated are Harvest, Diwali, Christmas, Chinese New Year, Eid-Ul-Fitre, Easter and Baisakhi.
59. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. The school uses the cultural diversity of its pupils very well. Through history the pupils study the contribution of different cultures made to Britain. Music is used well to celebrate cultural diversity with pupils being encouraged to take part in musical activities from a range of cultures such as Dhol drumming and Salsa. Poetry from a range of cultures is read with a pupil reciting a Caribbean poem in assembly. Artefacts and artwork from a range of cultures are on display. The school's staff represents a broad cultural diversity, which provides very good role models for the pupils. Pupils expressed the view very strongly that they perceived cultural diversity as a strength of the school and praised the teacher's commitment to respect all cultures and a willingness to learn about them from the pupils.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

60. The school is highly conscious of its duty of care towards pupils and has developed a wide range of appropriate policies and procedures to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. Staff know pupils well and are sensitive to their needs. Attendance is very well promoted throughout the school and opportunities are provided for pupils to take on added responsibilities. The promotion of good behaviour is a strength of the school. As a mark of their commitment to high standards in this aspect of school life, the governors have appointed a pastoral manager and a wide range of support staff to work with pupils, parents and outside agencies. This contributes very significantly to the pastoral care that the school provides.
61. Parents are highly satisfied with day-to-day arrangements and agree that they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns about their child.

Parents confirm that the school expects their child to work hard and achieve his or her best. Staff are vigilant in their care for those pupils who are known to need extra attention and look on pupils as individuals, helping them accordingly. Teachers and non-teaching staff supervise the pupils very well throughout the school day. In particular the school's commitment to providing pupils with opportunities for high quality play experiences is very effective as playtime and lunchtime play leaders support pupils' skills and social development in a purposeful and happy environment. Parents are very satisfied that their children like going to school.

62. The school supports pupils' personal development very well through providing a clear framework for conduct, both in respect of behaviour and attitude to work. Staff act as positive role models and are conscientious in establishing and maintaining very good relationships with pupils. They help pupils to develop in confidence through carefully balancing praise for good work and effort with guidance on what is expected in order to achieve the high standards set. Pupils' personal development is enhanced by events such as celebration assemblies, which highlight and reward significant achievements, and opportunities to help in class and generally around school. Opportunities are provided for pupils to take special responsibility as they move through the school. Pupils of all ages help with routine tasks such as setting out and clearing away equipment. Older pupils enjoy an active role in school developments through the school council. Pupils' views are sought on a range of issues that affect them directly and the school takes pupils' contributions seriously. The school takes part in local and national fundraising events, which help pupils to develop responsible attitudes towards those who need extra support. Significant aspects of pupils' personal development are included in annual reports for their parents alongside areas to concentrate on for further progress. These provide a very good means of acknowledging pupils' good points and boosting their self-esteem.
63. The school has developed its own comprehensive and detailed policy to manage arrangements for child protection that follows the local education authority's procedures. Staff are very aware of appropriate responses should they have concerns about a pupil's welfare. There is a formal programme for personal, social and health education that provides a forum for pupils to express their views and feelings, such as during 'circle time'. Pupils know who to turn to for help or advice and they take part in events supported by a range of agencies working in the wider community that provide additional means of helping them learn how to look after themselves. The school maintains a good working relationship with outside agencies for additional support and advice when necessary.
64. The school has made good arrangements to meet health and safety obligations, including a clear policy. A handbook for staff is well focussed to provide staff with guidance on managing the welfare of pupils in a range of situations. Appropriate arrangements are in place for managing trips out of school. For instance, the school has appointed conscientious supervisors specifically to look after pupils while they are away from their classrooms before and after swimming lessons. Well-considered procedures are established for emergency evacuation and fire drills are conducted each term. Accidents or illness are handled with care and consideration and clear procedures are established for administering medicines during school hours. The school is careful to record accidents or first aid given and to inform parents promptly



of anything, which may need further attention.

65. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour mean that pupils are expected and encouraged to be well-behaved at all times. Staff are positive and constructive in their management of pupils. Pupils know who to turn to for help if they need it and do not feel under threat in school. The great majority of parents are satisfied that behaviour is well managed by staff and are confident that any concerns are taken seriously and resolved quickly.
66. The school sets high standards for behaviour during lessons, based on a system, which makes expectations, clear to all pupils, rewards good behaviour and sanctions any which does not meet the high standard required. Staff provide very good role models and demonstrate a very positive approach to management of pupils. The school's general approach to discipline is shared with parents in the prospectus. Support is requested from home should a pupil have difficulty in achieving an expected standard in any aspect of school life. The school policy regarding unsatisfactory behaviour is well implemented to reflect the commitment of staff and governors that anti-social incidents will not be tolerated. The school works constructively with the small number of pupils who are temporarily excluded and their parents to enable a swift return to school and to deter future instances. Attendance is monitored very carefully throughout the school.
67. Non-teaching staff, including lunchtime supervisors, make a very significant contribution to good behaviour and standards during breaks. An excellent feature of this school is the attention paid to the quality of experiences made available to pupils during breaks and lunchtime which make a very positive contribution to pupils' well being. As well as outdoor areas with seating, apparatus and space for active games during breaks, the school runs clubs, which take place during breaks and lunchtime and add an extra dimension to pupils' experiences. This means that all pupils can pass the time happily in an activity of their choice, carefully supervised. The school manages the time and limited space available for dining and recreation extremely well so that arrangements for pupils at lunchtime ensure a calm and friendly environment and a very positive social occasion.
68. The monitoring of pupils' attendance is very good and the school has very effective procedures in place to encourage improvement that are conscientiously implemented by administrative staff. Registers are completed accurately and are kept up to date to maintain a record of those present and to identify any pupils who may need support to maintain regular and prompt attendance. Staff are conscientious in obtaining notification from parents about absences, and contact education welfare staff should they require further assistance. These measures ensure that reasons for absence are notified and recorded appropriately and support is provided for pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern. All pupils are made aware of their own, class and year group attendance rates each week and the school sets targets for them to aim for, with prizes awarded for the most successful. This works well alongside the school's procedures for promoting pupils' overall welfare in motivating pupils from all ethnic groups to attend. The school is rightly concerned about pupils whose parents keep them away from school for extended periods and the effect this has on their education. The school recognises that some families wish to visit distant relatives. It encourages

parents to attach such trips to the long summer holiday and to be aware that their child's place in school is at risk if absence is severely prolonged. At the time of the inspection, the school had established very good educational links with one family abroad, which gave pupils a flavour of life in Korea and helped the absent pupil maintain links with his teachers and peers to support a smooth return to school life. However, there are still a significant number of pupils whose absence on holiday during term time has a detrimental effect on the attendance rate of the school as a whole but most significantly on the standards that those pupils attain during their time in school. Despite the good efforts of the school, pupils' academic and social progress in school is hindered particularly when they are absent for extended periods.

69. The provision for both pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is very good. The Code of Practice is fully implemented for special educational needs pupils, and all statutory requirements are met. Individual needs, whether learning or emotional and behavioural, are identified early and teaching and non-teaching support is managed and organised effectively and fairly. Pupils at an early stage in the use of English as an additional language are assessed in their home language. Targets for improvement are shared with parents and carers, and gains in skills, knowledge and understanding are very effectively monitored. Targets are also shared with pupils and there is an excellent system of reminding pupils of their targets. Their achievements are celebrated and shared with others. Great care is taken to place pupils in the appropriate literacy and numeracy groups. Outside agencies are used very well and there are good links with secondary schools to provide a smooth transition.
70. Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is very good overall. There has been a significant improvement since the last inspection, with very effective procedures in place for assessment in English and mathematics. Constant monitoring and assessment throughout the school support each pupil's academic progress very well. Teachers regularly check pupils' progress through observations, questioning and tests. In English and mathematics, assessments are used regularly to indicate pupils' development against age-related expectations. Teachers use this information very well to identify pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language and to set targets for individual pupils. Pupils' progress over time is monitored carefully in most subjects. Pupils have a good idea of targets for improvement and know their relevant strengths and weaknesses across the curriculum.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

71. The school has established very good links with parents from all cultures and ethnic backgrounds to enable them to be actively involved in their child's education. Parents hold the school in high esteem. Most feel that the school works closely with parents and feel comfortable about approaching the school. Parents are particularly pleased that their child likes school and that the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. Parents are satisfied that good standards of behaviour are maintained. However, several parents express dissatisfaction with the amount of homework set.
72. The school provides parents with very high quality information and seeks their views

on many aspects of school life. The headteacher and senior management team provide an excellent, clear educational direction for the school and communicate this very well to parents from a very wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The prospectus is clear about the attitudes and values that the school promotes and provides an outline of school life, with a lot of detail about the extra-curricular activities provided and information about how the school promotes good behaviour. The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents meet statutory requirements. They are accessible to all parents including those from ethnic minority backgrounds.

73. The school has produced a policy document on partnership with parents that lets parents know what information they can expect over the school year and how they can help their child at home as well as help the school in its work, for instance by promoting good behaviour and becoming involved in school life. Written reports on pupils' progress are specific to individuals and include significant aspects of pupils' academic progress and personal development, particularly skills achieved in English, mathematics and science as well as targets to provide a focus for further progress. The school invites parents to meet teachers three times each year for discussions on how well their child is doing. Parents receive a newsletter at the start of each term containing information about forthcoming assemblies and other special events and details about projects that their children will be undertaking. The great majority of parents are very satisfied that the school keeps them well informed about how their children are getting on. Parents are fully consulted if problems arise concerning their child with a view to home and school working closely together to help the child. Members of staff and translators enlisted from the local community are available daily in school and during special events such as teacher consultations and learning workshops to help parents receive all of the information that they need. The support they provide is very good and indicative of the schools exceptional efforts to keep parent well informed.
74. The school welcomes parents' involvement and provides a wide range of opportunities for parents and staff to work in partnership. The school has drawn up an agreement of the responsibilities of staff and parents which both have entered into as a framework for working together in the best interests of the child. Teachers are available to parents on an informal basis day to day and provide useful information during formal consultation appointments. Parents are generally well involved through supporting their child with homework and this makes a positive contribution to the home-school partnership. Parents tend to agree that the amount of homework set is appropriate although several would like to see improvements in this aspect of the school's work. The school frequently invites parents to see the school in action. For instance, parents, and other family members, are invited to special events, such as assemblies, concerts and sports days, and many take up the invitation. As part of its commitment to working with parents the school employs a parent partnership worker who seeks parents' views on possible activities and arranges courses that help parents get to know the school and each other, to improve their English and information and communication technology skills and to learn how to help their child succeed in school. In addition, parents have the opportunity to attend a weekly coffee morning in a room set aside for their use. Parents support the school by taking up the offers of courses, which are usually fully subscribed, and attending special events in great numbers. The school seeks parents' views on a range of topics and parents are keen to

respond. This helps the school to develop what is on offer and has a very positive impact, not only on home school relationships but also on pupils' personal development.

75. Parents of pupils with special educational needs, the higher attaining pupils and English as an additional language are very well informed at reviews on a termly basis. Pupils from the main ethnic backgrounds are represented in these groups. Details of gains in skills, knowledge and understanding are often shared on a more regular basis.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

76. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection and the headteacher who was appointed after the 1997 inspection has made great strides in moving the school forward. Standards are improving significantly in the main subjects. Teaching is good, with a number of very good features, and the curriculum is rich, broad and balanced. This is having a significant impact on pupils' learning. Pupils from a very wide range of social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds are all very well provided for. Pupils of all abilities and attainments including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language receive a vibrant, challenging, stimulating and supportive education. The leadership and management are of an outstanding quality.
77. The headteacher provides excellent, inspirational leadership. There is outstanding support from the deputy headteacher, phase leaders and pastoral manager. She has established a very clear aim for the work of the school to continue to improve standards, and the quality of education, since the last inspection. As the leader of a team of senior managers she has ensured that the key issues identified at the last inspection have been very effectively addressed. In particular the role of the co-ordinator has been very well developed and all co-ordinators now monitor teaching, planning and pupils' learning. Subject co-ordinators monitor the work of the school very well and then use the information gained to raise standards still further. The school has appropriate priorities for future development and targets set for development are both realistic and achievable.
78. The school's aims are very clearly reflected in its daily work. The very good relationships and very good behaviour of pupils, their concentration, high motivation and their care for one another all positively enhance their learning and the standards they achieve.
79. The headteacher, senior managers and the governors share a strong commitment to develop Grove School still further. The school has a very good capacity to sustain the current improvement and to continue to improve the quality of education and the standards pupils attain. Everyone works together as a very effective team. This includes non-teaching and administrative staff, site supervisor and cleaning staff, lunchtime staff and play leaders. Governors have many strengths that they bring to the management of the school, taking great pride in their role as 'critical friends'. They are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and they know what has to be done to make the school even better. They play a very full role in deciding the school's priorities and setting the budget. The school's development plan is an outstanding document, reflecting a well thought out process for directing the work of

the school. The headteacher, senior management team and governors use this document very wisely for leading the school forward.

80. The headteacher and her team are very clear that improving standards, teaching and learning are their main priorities and they are very successful. There are now very good systems for monitoring the work of the school, and these have had a significant impact on the improvements. The entire process focuses teachers on the performance of their pupils and contributes very effectively to the overall aim to improve standards. Teachers' performance is monitored very effectively and all of this contributes to improving standards across the board.
81. The governing body fulfils all of its statutory requirements effectively. Governors know the school very well and they are exceedingly well informed about what is happening in the school. All governors visit the school regularly to keep themselves appraised of what is happening. Governors who represent all the main ethnic groups undertake their responsibilities conscientiously and they maintain very strong links between the school and the local community. They are very clear about the standards the school achieves and use information very well when they are setting targets for improvement.
82. The co-ordinators monitor the pupils on its register of special educational needs very efficiently and play a very effective part in raising the awareness of all staff about these pupils' needs and achievements. Learning support is well managed and progress is evaluated. Resources are managed very efficiently and outside agencies are used effectively. The governing body is well informed and carries out its statutory duties including reporting on special educational needs at the governors' annual report to parents.
83. There are a very good number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers and classroom support assistants. This provision impact very well on the progress of pupils throughout the school. The quantity and quality of materials, books and equipment available to teachers and pupils are good. This helps pupils to learn more effectively. The provision for information and communication technology is very good indeed and supports the development of pupils' information and communication technology skills very well. The accommodation is bright, purposeful and stimulating and is of good quality overall.
84. The headteacher and the governing body carefully monitor expenditure, which is managed very effectively by the school bursar. They review the effectiveness of spending decisions against the benefits for all pupils in their pursuit for excellence. They have increased non-teaching support to respond to the needs of pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of using English as an additional language; and recent innovations included the very good strategies for managing the behaviour of pupils and extremely effective arrangements for managing pupils during break and lunchtimes. Resources are used very effectively to continue and extend the challenge for gifted and talented pupils especially in music, poetry, art and mathematics.

85. Grants have been very well targeted to raise standards particularly those relating to staff professional development, the Birmingham Grid for Learning and the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.
86. Systems for the day-to-day administration of the school's financial affairs are excellent and effective. Supported ably by the local education authority's finance officer, the office staff has access to an ever-increasing range of technology to support their work. Day-to-day collections are handled efficiently. Governors are extremely well informed now that they have taken over control of administering the budget from the local education authority. The finance committee meets at least termly and maintains an excellent overview of the school's financial situation. Private funds are audited annually and limits are imposed upon expenditure. There are detailed procedures for ordering and receiving goods.
87. There are very good procedures for applying the principles of best value. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher and governors has been instrumental in the very good improvement that has been made since the last inspection. All areas for development have been very successfully addressed especially the leadership and management skills of the subject co-ordinators, year group and phase leaders. The governing body is very clear how Grove School compares with other schools, both nationally and locally and how it has focused its energies very effectively on raising standards. In spite of the relatively high amounts of income and expenditure per pupil, Grove School gives good value for money.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

88. To continue to maintain and develop the high standards and quality of education in the school and as recognised in the school improvement plan, the headteacher, governing body and staff should:
- (1) Raise the standards in writing by:
    - Developing a consistent handwriting style throughout the school. (paragraphs 4, 103, 119, 126, 127, 128)
    - Ensuring that all pupils write for a range of purposes across the curriculum. (paragraph 103,
  - (2) Raise the level of attendance by:
    - Close monitoring of whole school and individual class attendance caused by pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds taking extended holidays during school term. (paragraphs 16, 22, 68)
    - Setting clear targets for these pupils and rewarding individual attendance achievements. (paragraphs 22, 68)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed

94

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

30

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	23	38	29	0	0	0
Percentage	4	24	40	31	0	0	0

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

### *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)	89	615
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	371

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	267

#### **English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	526

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	39
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	66

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.5
National comparative data	5.6

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	36	47	83

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	22	29
	Girls	44	41	44
	Total	69	63	73
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (62)	76 (64)	88 (69)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	28	25
	Girls	44	45	43
	Total	69	73	68
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (67)	88 (73)	82 (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)***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	37	40	77

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	23	31
	Girls	30	27	34
	Total	54	50	65
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (58)	65 (56)	84 (63)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	N/A (54)	N/A (57)	N/A (57)
	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	65
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	0
Indian	192
Pakistani	146
Bangladeshi	32
Chinese	1
White	28
Any other minority ethnic group	57

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### *Teachers and classes*

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	28.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21:1
Average class size	29

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	427.75

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	40:1
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	175
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11:1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	8	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	8	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	2	0

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

### *Financial information*

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	1,920,044
Total expenditure	1,872,077
Expenditure per pupil	2,682
Balance brought forward from previous year	64,273
Balance carried forward to next year	112,240

***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	15
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	18
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Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
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	704
Number of questionnaires returned	51

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	16	8	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	39	2	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	33	2	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	37	10	4	0
The teaching is good.	61	33	0	2	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	33	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	24	0	4	8
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	25	2	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	59	31	0	4	6
The school is well led and managed.	59	37	0	4	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	41	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	65	25	2	0	8

### Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Inspection evidence supports all parents' positive views. A few parents thought that the school did not provide sufficient homework; inspectors judged the provision of homework to be satisfactory overall and similar to that found in other schools of its type.

**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**

89. Children are admitted to the Nursery on a full-time or part-time basis in the September following their third birthday. They join the reception class on a full-time basis the following September. During the induction period to the Nursery there is an informal assessment of children. Children are then formally assessed using the local education authority's baseline assessment in the spring term and again in the first term as they enter Reception.
90. When they enter the Nursery most children are attaining standards, which are well below average. The majority demonstrate poor language and communication skills. The baseline assessments carried out in the reception class confirm that many children demonstrate below average attainment and are unlikely to reach the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy. Most children, including those who are learning English as an additional language, make good progress through the Foundation Stage and are likely to attain average standards in mathematics, personal emotional and social development, creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children with special educational needs make good progress and achieve standards in line with their capabilities.
91. Meetings are held with children's parents before they start in the Nursery and opportunities provided for children to become familiar with daily routines before they begin full-time attendance. Similar arrangements take place in the term before children enter the reception class. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their children's learning, for example through making resources to support language work and through sharing books with their children at home. A very clear, comprehensive information booklet is provided for parents. Where linguistic help is required the school provides very good support for parents in home languages. They are encouraged to come into the classroom at the beginning and end of the day when many take the opportunity to discuss their child's progress with the teachers.
92. The overall quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and never less than satisfactory. During the week of the inspection, some very good teaching was observed in the Nursery and in the Reception. Where the teaching was most effective, activities were planned to provide learning experiences in imaginative ways which interest and involve children in their learning and help them make gains in their knowledge and understanding. An attractive and stimulating environment is provided in which children learn to relate to each other and to adults.
93. The atmosphere in the Nursery and reception classes is happy and calm. A purposeful start to the day is created through the adult-led activities, which, whatever the learning focus, emphasises the importance of developing communication and language skills. Good questioning skills help children to focus on what they have learnt about 'Pirates' in the Nursery and 'Bob the Builder' in Reception. A good range of activities enable children to experience a balance of direct teaching and opportunities to gain

independence through planning their own activities. Adults monitor carefully the learning needs of all the children and, in the main, their interventions are made skilfully to ensure that, for example, play is well structured and promotes learning.

94. The accommodation for the Nursery and reception classes is good. The very good outdoor facilities provide a wide range of opportunities for creative as well as physical development. The resources are stored in carefully labelled containers at a height accessible to children. The classrooms are organised in learning areas so that children can explore, investigate and develop communication skills. Community languages, featured in some of the labels, posters and books, usefully reflect the home languages of the children and support their learning well.
95. The curriculum for children in the Nursery and reception classes is planned according to the nationally-defined six areas of learning. Activities are well planned to meet the needs of children of different attainment, including those children with special educational needs. Baseline assessments in Reception are used to help target children who would benefit from additional support, for example, in reading. They are also used to predict likely attainment by the age of seven so that progress in Year 1 and Year 2 can be more accurately measured.
96. In the Nursery and the reception classes, regular observations of children's learning are recorded and these summarise well what children have achieved. However, these assessments could be further developed by identifying, in relation to the <sup>2</sup>stepping stones and the early learning goals, what children need to do next in order to make progress. Good strategies are used to help children discuss how well they are learning. For example, in the reception classes, learning is often summarised by 'I can...' or 'I know how to...' statements alongside the children's work. This is reinforced by similar comments written by the teacher. In the nursery classes questions are planned which ask, for example, 'How did you do that?' or 'What will you do next?'
97. The Nursery is staffed by two full-time teachers and four nursery nurses. In Reception there are three full-time teachers effectively supported by classroom assistants. All staff work well together, have a very clear understanding of their role and demonstrate a high level of commitment to raise standards and to ensure that learning is interesting and fun. Recent opportunities for professional development, both locally and nationally, have added to the staff's knowledge and expertise in planning for children's learning linked to the early learning goals. The school deals very effectively with the great range of social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the children.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

98. The teaching and provision for developing children's personal, social and emotional development are good. Some children enter the Nursery with immature social skills and make good progress by the end of the Foundation Stage. By the time they reach the age of five, most children are likely to reach the early learning goals for this area of development. They make good gains in confidence as they become familiar with the

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<sup>2</sup> Stepping stones are the stages of learning for children under five, which lead to the early learning goals (standards expected of them by the end of the Foundation Stage).

daily routines of the Nursery and the reception class, and come to understand what is expected of them. Children enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn. The staff demonstrate respect by speaking politely to the children, and they encourage them to persevere by praising their efforts when they have worked hard. Most children in the Nursery and Reception listen to their teachers and to each other and are becoming more sensitive to the needs of others. All the staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and the majority of children respond well. They quickly learn what is right and wrong and why they should behave well towards each other. In an assembly on 'treating others as you would like to be treated' many children understood the importance of sharing.

99. As they use role-play, children choose activities and take the initiative. In the Nursery they thoroughly enjoyed acting as pirates and carefully evaluated what they had found on their treasure hunt. They are eager to select resources and to tidy away.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

100. A significant number of children join the nursery class with language skills (especially speaking and listening skills) that are well below those average for their age and this continues into the reception classes. Despite the good progress made, many children from the range of ethnic backgrounds are not likely to meet the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
101. All adults use questions, discussion and explanation to encourage the development of language and communication. The school provides very well for parents from varied linguistic backgrounds. They are skilful at encouraging children to use a wider vocabulary to describe or compare. For example, when choosing words to describe a lobster, children in the Nursery identified its claws and its shell and described its texture as 'smooth'. In the imaginative play area, a group of children suggested new lines to the rhyme 'this is the way we...' and added their own actions. In the reception class, children used words such as *cement*, *mortar* and *bricks* to explain how to build a wall. There are many opportunities provided for children to engage in role-play both independently and with adult support. Adults in both the Nursery and the reception classes frequently extend role-play through relevant questioning. The staff are aware of the need to further develop children's spoken language in all areas of learning. Children's listening skills develop rapidly as they move through the Foundation Stage and they listen attentively in all learning situations where they are required.
102. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children are developing an interest in books. Most children in the Nursery can talk about the pictures and stories in books, handle books carefully and choose to share books with their friends. There is a very good range of books in the Foundation Stage including dual language books. Some children are beginning to recognise some sounds and which letters represent them. In the reception classes, a small number of children read simple sentences independently and can explain the main ideas in stories and non-fiction books. The majority recognise familiar words and simple sentences in their reading books, and can identify most initial letters. Reading activities are well supported and children are encouraged to take their books home regularly. In addition, parents are invited to come into the classroom to choose a book with their child on a weekly basis. The learning support

staff provides bi-lingual help very well where it is needed. Parents support this activity very well.

103. Children in the nursery class are encouraged to use the writing area to practise their early writing skills by making marks to communicate. Some children make good attempts at writing their own names. In Reception, children use their knowledge of letters and sounds to write independently. The higher attainers begin to use story language to write their own versions of the stories they have heard. Many children do not yet form their letters correctly and this weakness is reinforced when they practise without the guidance of an adult.
104. The good range of opportunities provided for children to take part in reading and writing activities where the teacher demonstrates these skills, for example by reading a big book or by writing on a flip chart, contributes significantly to the good progress made. In addition, the speaking and listening activities, where teachers provide good models of spoken language, contribute significantly to the good progress children make in their language development. More opportunities for children to extend their speaking would further increase the rate of progress.

### **Mathematical development**

105. On entry to the Nursery, the attainment of many children in mathematics is well below what is considered typical for children of this age. The quality of provision and the teaching of mathematical skills and concepts are satisfactory and sometimes good; and the majority of children make good progress. In the Nursery children have many opportunities to sing counting rhymes and songs such as 'five currant buns' and to count in practical situations. Daily routines such as registration provide opportunities to count how many children are present. Many of the independent activities enable children to develop mathematical skills, including play with water, sand and baking to support weighing and measuring.
106. Most children learn to recognise and know the names of simple shapes such as circles, squares and triangles. In the reception classes, most children count from 0 to 10 and know how to order numbers. The higher attainers add together two groups of objects such as bags of sweets to calculate  $2+3$  or  $6+4$ . Most children counted out items of fruit up to 10 to correspond with number tiles. In the reception classes the planning of the lesson, and of activities for children of different abilities, contributes to the good progress made. Resources and displays reflect the full range of mathematical experiences in both the Nursery and reception classes.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

107. The quality of teaching is good and children make good progress in their developing understanding of the world in which they live. Themes are planned to link together some of these aspects of learning, for example in the reception class, activities with 'Bob the Builder' provided valuable opportunities to explore building materials, to sort and classify new and old materials and to use the role play area, transformed into Bob's office, to select tools and explore language using the telephone.



108. Children have experience of constructing time lines to illustrate their own stages of growth from a baby to a school child. They complete a diary noting what happens on each day of the week, and meet visitors who tell them, for example about the toys they played with when they were children.
109. Children have opportunities to plant seeds and sow flowers and to contribute to their own environment, for example by working with an artist to plan the new outdoor play area. Scientific ideas are well developed, for example when children in Reception investigated the best adhesive material to hold bricks together.
110. Displays and photographs highlight visits, for example to Twycross Zoo and visitors to school, including an artist in residence.
111. Children have regular opportunities to develop computer skills. Most can control the mouse and move objects on the screen with increasing efficiency. There is a good range of building and construction material and children make good use of these, both inside and in the outdoor play area.
112. They learn about their own and others' cultures and beliefs through stories, displays and discussions and by learning about different religions and major festivals, for example harvest, Diwali, Christmas, Eid, Chinese New Year and Baisakhi.

### **Physical development**

113. Children are developing their skills well as they use well-resourced outdoor and indoor areas to develop a sense of space and to improve co-ordination through playing with beanbags, large balls, hoops and other equipment. Adults lead these sessions well, providing careful guidance to ensure children's safety as they move around to develop skills of running, jumping and hopping, for example.
114. Children have many opportunities to develop fine motor skills through handling paintbrushes, pencils, scissors, cutting and slicing play dough, managing jigsaws, and working with construction sets. Some children made moveable shapes by inserting split pins to work as joints and selected materials to make their own models.

### **Creative development**

115. Opportunities are provided for children to paint, draw and create collages using a variety of materials. Displays and photographs as well as observations indicate that adults work hard to enable children to develop their creative skills by experimenting with colour and texture. Frequent opportunities are provided for singing and music making. Children in the Nursery are encouraged to listen and join in with repetitive rhymes and with the actions to familiar songs, often sung in their home language. Children from the reception classes who took part in an early years assembly sang tunefully and with obvious enjoyment.

### **Developments since last inspection**

116. Since the last inspection many developments have taken place in this phase. The Foundation Stage curriculum has been introduced and staff changes have occurred in

teaching and co-ordination. There has been a comprehensive programme of development in staff training, curriculum planning and assessment and the acquisition of a very good range of multi-cultural resources including dolls, pictures, posters and books to support learning. These actions have led to improvements in the provision and quality of teaching in all areas of learning. The areas highlighted for future development and for 'ongoing review' should successfully raise standards further, particularly in communication, language and learning. The school encourages all children from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds to make the most of their abilities from their earliest days at school.

## **ENGLISH**

117. The results of the 2001 national tests for eleven year olds indicate that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 or above in English was just below average in comparison to all schools nationally and above average when compared to similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was just below average in comparison to all schools nationally and above average when compared to similar schools. Indicators show a rising trend in results over a four-year period. This improvement has been slightly faster than national improvements.
118. The evidence gathered during inspection, through observing lessons, examining pupil's books, hearing pupils read and talking to pupils, shows that at the age of eleven standards in reading are close to those typically found at this age, although below average in writing.
119. The results of the 2001 national tests indicate that at the age of seven, pupils' results were below the national average for reading when compared to all schools and were above average when compared to similar schools. In writing the school's results are below average when compared to all schools and average when compared to similar schools.
120. The evidence gathered during inspection showed that at the age of seven, pupils are now reading at a standard close to those typically found at this age, and that writing is below what would be typically expected for pupils of this age.
121. By the age of seven pupils are able to listen carefully and contribute orally in lessons with adults and pupils. Teachers work hard to develop their pupils' vocabulary being aware that for a considerable number of pupils English is an additional language. All pupils are fully involved in all aspects of the English curriculum, and all pupils from all ethnic groups, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. In Year 1 children were taught literacy terms such as 'contents page' and 'non fiction'. They were asked to express a preference for poetry or fiction. Year 1 pupils discussed different forms of transport in a geography lesson, and shared the experiences of several pupils of travelling to India. In Year 2 pupils were eager to respond to discussions about a shared text. When reading they were able to talk about their preferred authors and the types of book that they liked to read. Pupils were consistently attentive when listening to teachers read.

## Speaking and listening

122. By the age of eleven, standards in speaking and listening are in line with expected national standards. However, a group of able pupils were attaining standards well above that expected of pupils of this age. Again teachers worked very hard to develop vocabulary and speaking skills. In Year 3 history lessons, 'hot seating' was used where pupils acted out the role of historical characters, answering questions from other pupils. A mathematics lesson included different ways of saying 'take away' and at the end of the lesson pupils discussed their work and were questioned by the teacher. Year 4 pupils were able to articulate their views on the divorce of Catherine of Aragon with some pupils being given linguistic support from a teaching assistant. A teaching assistant supported a below average pupil who was experiencing learning difficulties to frame questions. In Year 6, pupils were seen to respond to demanding questions in history and English lessons. Teachers used correct terminology, - 'quest, resolution, hero and heroine' - which encouraged pupils to do the same when they discussed what they were reading. Able pupils were able to discuss poetry and performed recitations in assembly, speaking with clarity and presence. They debated historical issues, understanding the conventions of debate, waiting their turn, apologising for interruptions; and they made their point forcibly backing it up with evidence.

## Reading

123. Reading by the age of seven is in line with national standards. Higher achieving pupils attain above average standards in reading. The school has put in place a rigorous system of tracking pupil's progress in reading and setting personal targets for each pupil. These targets are shared with parents, and workshops have been held to help parents to give their children support in learning. Pupils are tested each term. All those reading below their chronological age are heard by a class reading assistant four times each week and all other pupils at least once a week. Reading assistants have all received training and were able to develop pupils' use of reading cues, such as initial sounds and blending phonemes. In January 2002 the school appointed a Reading Support Manager to monitor standards, manage reading assistants and report to the school's reading co-ordinator. The Reading Support Manager demonstrated excellent knowledge of pupils' achievements and progress. These systems are proving to be very effective with a significant improvement in standards since the tracking of progress has been put in place. Class teachers are able to assess each pupil's progress through the shared reading in the literacy lesson, the class file and discussions with the Reading Support Manager. Systems are well established for pupils to change their books and record the book in the reading diary at the start of the day.
124. Teachers model reading well during their literacy lesson and encourage pupils to join in. However, on some occasions pupils were not able to see the text being used well enough to read it. Pupils read a range of texts; a Year 1 pupil selected a book of class writing about visits to places of worship. A Year 2 class was observed enjoying poetry and reading their own poems to the class. By the end of Year 2, some pupils were reading demanding texts fluently, being able to decode unfamiliar words. They talked about authors they liked and recognised fiction and non-fiction. Pupils of average ability were reading appropriate texts fluently. They had a good level of comprehension, self corrected their errors and were able to predict what may happen

next in a story. Some pupils have to work particularly hard at developing their reading skills as the content of the text is not familiar to them. A Year 2 pupil when reading about the birth of a seal pup, experienced some difficulties in comprehending the text. Discussion with the child revealed that they did not know what a seal or seal pup was and that had neither been to a zoo or seaside. The same pupil had no difficulties when the text was changed to one that they could relate to their home environment.

125. By the age of eleven, pupils from all ethnic backgrounds have attained standards in reading that are typical of those normally found for pupils of this age. Pupils' progress in reading is tracked throughout the key stage, using a similar system to that in Key Stage 1 except that pupils well below the expected standard are heard four times each week and those just below twice. Most Year 3 pupils decode text appropriately, can explain how to use the library and understand terms such as publisher and illustrator. They respond to humour and subject matter, with some pupils able to discuss motivation or causation in narratives. Pupils are eager to attend after school reading clubs where they read and listen to others. A group of Year 4 readers attending reading club with the Reading Support Manager were so enthusiastic that, even after an hour's reading, they were reluctant to finish and leave. By the age of eleven, pupils of average ability can read fluently depending upon the demands of the text. Levels of comprehension are good even when pupils struggle to decode. All pupils are able to discuss the types of reading they prefer, including sports information, poetry, play scripts, comics and fiction. All pupils are able to locate information. Able pupils were able to discuss literary style, with one pupil comparing the work of Jacklyn Wilson and Judy Blume, commenting that she enjoyed it when Judy Blume wrote in the third person. Year 6 has a large number of pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are able to decode text but their reading lacks fluency and they comprehend most of the text but not all. When given less demanding texts, both the fluency of reading and level of comprehension improved.

## Writing

126. Attainment in writing is below the national standard expected for pupils of seven and eleven years of age. Pupils in Year 1 are writing simple sentences, sometimes using capital letters and full stops. The punctuation of pieces of extended writing is poor. Some pupils have difficulty in remaining on task when writing. By the age of seven, able pupils are writing accurate recounts, text with a clear beginning, middle and end with some writing beginning to engage the reader. Most pupils write only short sentences, and their punctuation is insecure. When teaching was observed to be very good, pupils were given different, stimulating writing tasks, which resulted in all pupils being fully engaged and the production of some extended writing. Handwriting is poor. Pupils are not joining their letters, and letter formation and sizing are inconsistent. This results in poorly presented work, and the lack of fluency hinders pupils' ability to produce extended text. Whilst teachers frequently model reading, there is very little modelling of writing and pupils make less progress. During the reading of shared text, the opportunity to focus on punctuation, the use of full stops and capital letters is missed.
127. In Year 3, sentence structure for many pupils remains simplistic, with the use of full stops and capital letters insecure. Pupils were, however, observed completing notes

and understood the purpose of note taking. Writing was modelled successfully by the teacher, with pupils being reminded of the correct use of tense and pronouns. By Year 4, able pupils are using some complex sentences and beginning to use exclamation marks, apostrophes and speech marks. Their writing can include the use of adverbs and adjectives to increase interest. Some pupils are still insecure in their sentence construction and they do not always use capital letters and full stops. Some pupils are limited in the way they start their sentences, for example repeatedly using 'and'. Able Year 5 pupils produce writing in a variety of genres, including writing for a prospectus, a diary entry and recount. They use complex sentences, are secure with present and past tense, use the imperative verb and can develop characters in fiction writing. Most Year 5 pupils write at a considerably lower level. They remain insecure with sentence structure, still not using full stops and capital letters in all cases. Some pupils require a scribe at times and are reluctant to write. However, when teaching was at its best, pupils from all ethnic backgrounds were enthusiastic and were able to produce a report from their own notes, with lower ability pupils highlighting specific information and transferring this to note form. There was evidence in Year 6 of a greater emphasis upon the actual teaching of writing skills. Pupils' own writing was used as a shared text, with pupils being expected to comment about how it could be improved. Pupils were taught the convention of writing in the first and second person. Able pupils could identify what they needed to do to improve their writing. Two boys of average ability could describe clearly what story elements they would plan for the opening, problem/dilemma, ending/resolution of a story and how they would 'grab the reader's attention.' However, for most pupils, sentence structure is still insecure. Punctuation remains weak, with many pupils not consistent in their use of speech marks or the apostrophe. Some pupils are still over-reliant on adult support when writing. There are a considerable number of pupils with special educational needs. These pupils face particular difficulties. Spelling is weak, for example spelling 'what' as 'whot'; and capital letters appear in mid-sentence. Writing is usually in the correct sequence and pupils are using phrases such as 'Once upon a time.' Most pupils do still not join their handwriting, and letter formation remains weak.

## **Handwriting**

128. Handwriting is clearly an issue for the school to consider. The school has identified the need to review the handwriting policy in order to give clear guidance on how letters are to be formed and joined throughout the school. Some teachers do not present a good model of handwriting to the pupils and this needs consideration. Pupils' poor handwriting is not only affecting presentation but also the fluency of writing.

## **Teaching and learning**

129. The quality of teaching seen throughout the school was good overall. It was often very good in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, with the teaching in two lessons being of an excellent standard. Pupils are put into appropriate groups for their literacy lessons from Year 1. Teachers plan carefully, identifying what each ability group should learn and preparing resources to help pupils succeed. Classrooms contain useful list of words to help pupils with their spelling. Teachers do not always demonstrate handwriting styles to pupils, which has resulted in a range of styles and

variable presentation. The most successful lessons presented pupils with stimulating writing tasks. The higher attaining pupils benefit greatly from specialist teaching, which especially develops their love of poetry. The marking of pupils' work throughout the school in almost all cases is a strength. Teachers clearly work very hard to mark pupils' work thoroughly and there are many examples of teachers giving extensive feedback to pupils on how to improve their work.

130. The school has two relatively new co-ordinators, one for reading and one for writing. They provide clear educational direction for this subject. They are both aware of the structures in place to support reading and the impact it is having. They are also aware that the school's portfolio of pupils' writing needs to be updated and they should ensure that when this is done. Pupils' progress is monitored very well throughout the school by the headteacher and senior management team, for all pupils including those with special educational needs, higher attaining pupils and for pupils for whom English is an additional language. There is very good use made of information and communication technology to support pupils independent learning. Literacy skills are developed well across the curriculum. At present, the co-ordinators are aware that each year group has adapted the National Literacy Strategy.

## **MATHEMATICS**

131. In the 2001 national testing when compared with all schools, standards in mathematics were judged to be well below those typical for seven year olds and below those considered typical for pupils aged eleven. By the age of seven pupils were as expected when compared with standards for schools considered to be of a similar nature, although pupils aged eleven were judged to be of a higher standard than that considered typical.
132. As a result of observing lessons; carrying out an analysis of previous and current work in pupils' books, and after discussions with pupils and teachers, evidence indicates that standards are now close to typical of those expected nationally for pupils by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This compares favourably with the standards achieved at the last inspection in 1997, particularly for pupils by the age of seven. Standards by the age of eleven show good improvement. When considering the demands imposed in mathematics after the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, standards at Grove School have improved at a greater rate than that found nationally.
133. Professional development for teachers of mathematics has been given a high profile in recent school improvement plans. This has resulted in teachers' improved subject knowledge and the use of an increased range of teaching strategies. Teachers know their pupils well. Throughout the school they are taught in ability groups, which results in work being matched very well to their abilities. The detailed planning for each class now challenges the different ability groups, especially those identified as having special educational needs; those who are the earliest stages of using English as an additional language; and higher attaining pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. Evidence indicates that all pupils by the age of seven have made very good progress, especially those who are achieving at the higher Level 3. Similarly, almost one in eight pupils in Year 6 achieve at the higher Level 5, and 6 of those are working towards the even higher Level 6. These six pupils have been attending the Saturday morning Advanced

Learning Centre, with three taking the GCSE national test designed for pupils aged 16.

134. By the age of seven years, pupils of average ability use numbers to 100, understand place value to tens and units and recognise patterns relating to the two, five and ten times tables. Most pupils in Year 2 identify common two- and three-dimensional shapes and have good mental skills. They solve money problems using sound strategies, such as counting on from the largest coin and using the opposite operation to check that the answer is correct, for example if  $7 + 10 = 17$  then  $17 - 10 = ?$  They recognise odd and even numbers, and use doubles and near-doubles to solve addition problems. Pupils use standard units to record time in hours, half and quarters and measure accurately in centimetres. They interpret information shown in simple pictograms and bar charts and use scales where one symbol represents five squares.
135. Pupils of differing abilities are given their full entitlement. Higher attaining pupils understand place value of number to hundreds, tens and units; mentally recall table facts to three, four and five times; and begin to explore numbers to 1000. Lower attaining pupils practise simple addition and subtraction with numbers up to 20; sequence larger numbers to 100; recognise reflective symmetry; and measure accurately in centimetres. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support. They use number confidently to ten; name common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects; and use information recorded by tallying to represent likes and dislikes such as favourite fruits. A pupil with a statement of special educational needs knew terms such as *longer and shorter*; used simple fractions such as *one-quarter* and *one-half*; and used tallying to record birthdays.
136. By the age of eleven years, pupils show a very good understanding of place value to more than 1000, and use fractions and percentages confidently. Pupils multiply and divide decimals to two places, and know how to use and interpret co-ordinates. They calculate the mode, mean and median, and have a good understanding of ratio and proportion. They multiply three digit figures by two digit figures, classify two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects, measure perimeters and calculate areas of shapes.
137. In discussion, pupils of average attainment demonstrated a very good understanding of factor and multiple; showed a good understanding of place value including decimal fractions; and recognised square and prime numbers accurately. They use line graphs and pie charts to record information and interpreted them with confidence.
138. Higher attaining pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 are challenged very well as a specific group, and are moved on a greater pace. When appropriate the oldest pupils are entered for mathematics GCSE and are highly successful in their attempt. They use all four operations to two places of decimals and use brackets and formulae to solve problems, as when finding areas of irregular shapes. They are confident when investigating and solving problems, and are becoming increasingly more confident when collecting, representing and interpreting data whether as line graphs or pie charts. Their communication skills are very good. They explain their methods and are aware of the value of checking their answers.
139. Lower attaining pupils have a good understanding of the place value of numbers to

1000 and round numbers to 100 and 1000. They can calculate simple percentages such as 20 per cent, 70 per cent of a total and use simple formulae to calculate perimeters and areas of regular shapes. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well, and the very good levels of support by classroom and integration assistants enable these pupils to remain in higher ability groups. Pupils with statements of special educational needs use numbers to 20, and experience the same skills as others when undertaking investigations. In discussion they explain line graphs; measure and recognise angles; and know how to locate position by using co-ordinates.

140. Effective in-service training has raised teachers' knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy, which has been implemented very well. There is a consistency in the way in which the three stages of each lesson are used. The initial mental and oral introductions are good; pupils are then set tasks, which are well matched to their abilities; and then the summing up period is used to check gains in knowledge and understanding. At its best, this part of the lesson gives pupils time to reflect on their achievements by questioning what gains they have made, before preparing them for the next stage of learning. No homework was observed during the period of the inspection.
141. Overall the teaching of mathematics is very good in both infant and junior classes. As a result, the quality of learning is very good. Pupils are very well behaved and they have very good attitudes to learning.
142. Overall the quality of teaching and learning has improved impressively since the last inspection with no teaching being less than satisfactory. Almost three out of every four lessons was judged to be good or better with a half of all lessons judged to be at least very good.
143. In the one excellent lesson observed in Year 2, the introduction was most effective; relationships were excellent; and the teacher's expectation was high. After the briefest of introductions, higher attaining pupils were challenged to begin their problem-solving investigations, whilst less confident pupils continued to rehearse their skills orally. Throughout the lesson, the teacher intervened sensitively to support different groups, not wishing to interrupt the good progress being achieved. A group of lowest attaining pupils were challenged impressively by a classroom assistant and their rate of progress was very good. All pupils explained their strategies and checked their answers carefully by using the inverse operation.
144. Where teaching was less effective, over-long introductions gave pupils insufficient time to carry out their activities and the pace of the lesson was slow. Questioning was laboured; pupils were not expected to explain their reasoning, and the level of challenge was inconsistent.
145. Teachers' planning of work to be done identifies key vocabulary, and pupils are encouraged to use accurate terminology when developing their speaking and listening skills. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support learning, with younger pupils using computer programs for investigating number patterns, and older pupils exploring the properties of fractions and shapes.



146. Teachers know their pupils well. The information collected from twice yearly tests, together with information gained by analysing pupils' previous strengths and weaknesses in national testing, is used to match the quality of teaching to the needs of groups of pupils. This enables planning to be well focused, with teaching and learning objectives matched keenly to the ability of pupils. This provides a good pace to the quality of learning. Contracts for achievement have been negotiated with pupils and parents, and pupils showed a good awareness of what they needed to do to improve. Pupils were proud of their achievements and responded to questions confidently. Self-esteem was high when pupils were praised for their answers rather than being informed that their contribution was wrong. Marking is consistently good and is used to best effect when it informs pupils of the progress they have made and the skills they have achieved. Comments such as 'You can complete frequency charts from tallying' or 'You understand numbers to five' inform and remind pupils of their achievements and promote confidence and very good attitudes.
147. Overall progress in mathematics is good and often better. Great care is taken by staff to ensure that pupils build on their skills, understanding and knowledge systematically, term on term and more importantly year on year. Pupils in Year 3 classes were observed to be carrying out problem-solving investigations, which were not too dissimilar from the problem-solving observed in a Year 2 class. Although the highest attaining pupils in Year 3 were given work to extend their skill development, pupils with a real talent in mathematics work best when given challenging activities from the start of the lesson.
148. Pupils enjoy their mathematics and collaborate well in their investigations. Pupils model their enthusiasm for mathematics on that of their teachers and many agree that 'Maths is fun'. Pupils were very well behaved in all lessons, and this behaviour contributed very well to the quality of learning. They responded positively to challenge, and were attentive and eager to contribute to lessons and use their skills and strategies. Work in books was well presented and reflected the high expectations of teachers and the effort of pupils.
149. Mathematics is led very well by an enthusiastic co-ordinator, who has a very good vision of what is needed for the future. She has responded positively to the changes in teaching staff by arranging good-quality training and by sharing model lessons with less experienced members of teaching staff. Results of school and national testing have been carefully analysed; and there are good records of progress according to gender and ethnic groupings. The monitoring of the quality of provision in mathematics is of a very high standard. The strategy of observing teaching and learning, examining teachers' planning records and analysing the work of pupils has contributed greatly to the raising of standards. The governing body is kept very well informed about developments in mathematics and is very proud of the success in the school's thrust for excellence.

## **SCIENCE**

150. Overall, standards are broadly in line with national expectations at the ages of seven and eleven. In the 2001 teachers' assessments made for seven year olds, the expected

outcomes were well below the national average. The percentage of pupils who attained the higher level was below that found nationally. In the 2001 national tests for eleven year olds, the percentage of pupils who attained the expected level was below the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level was close to the national average. The performance in the science tests was above average in comparison with similar schools. Evidence gathered during the inspection confirms that standards have improved from last year with more emphasis being placed on the development of pupils' investigation skills. This is a direct result of clearly planned learning experiences by teachers who have improved subject knowledge. Progress across both key stages is satisfactory.

151. By the age of eleven standards are in line with those expected for pupils of this age. In the four lessons observed in the infants, standards were judged to be typical of those found nationally by the age of seven. In the six lessons seen in the junior classes standards were judged to be broadly in line with those expected for junior pupils by the age of their age. The higher attainers are performing well. The standards and presentation of work in pupils' current science books at the end of Key Stage 2, clearly reflect the high expectations of the teachers and the enjoyment which pupils show when carrying out their scientific enquiry. There was very little difference between the standards for boys and girls. All pupils from all ethnic groups including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress.
152. In Year 1, pupils identify and classify the habitats where various creatures can be found. These topics are then extended in Year 2 with pupils investigating the effects of forces being made to a rolling object, by changing the surface, or angle of slope. The concept of 'fair testing', which accompanied this investigation, is well extended into the junior years.
153. Pupils in Year 4, have a good understanding of how to separate sand and dissolved salt in a water solution. They have also extended their use of scientific vocabulary and can explain the process of evaporation. Pupils in Years 5 have similar experiences of scientific enquiry and have investigated the effect of light sources and shadows. In one excellent lesson the pupils' investigations were further challenged and extended by the teacher who used both time and questioning very effectively. These pupils thrived on the respect and value given to their contributions. These pupils did not spend too long sitting listening to information being imparted. Pupils in Year 6 were able to clearly describe a range of scientific enquiries with enthusiasm and good understanding.
154. There are satisfactory links with numeracy and literacy. In the infant classes, pupils are encouraged to use charts and tables to record their findings, with pupils in Year 2 producing bar charts to record the different distances a marker pen rolled over different surfaces and by changing the angle of slope. In discussion with pupils, some were clear that only one variable could be changed to allow for a fair investigation. There were no Year 6 classes taking science lessons during the inspection. However, from work seen in books and discussions with pupils, it was clear that they take a pride in their work and are keen to learn about science. Pupils showed good listening skills and were confident when replying to questions or when contributing to lessons. By the end of Years 5 and 6 pupils have begun to introduce an element of choice, by devising

their own variations on the theme of good preparation, prediction and fair testing, with higher attaining pupils seeking how they could have improved their investigation. During the period of the inspection, information and communication technology was under-used to support learning in science.

155. Overall, the quality of teaching seen ranged from satisfactory to excellent. It was good overall. In the four lessons observed in the infant classes, teaching ranged from one satisfactory lesson to three that were good. In the six lessons seen in the junior classes four lessons were judged to be satisfactory, one good and one excellent. The most effective teaching was characterised by teachers knowing their subject well enough to build on what pupils already knew, understood and could do; using questions effectively to move on to the next stage of learning. Pupils thrived on the urgency, which was given to learning, and responded positively when challenged. An excellent strategy was used in Year 5, where questioning checked what different groups of pupils knew about 'shadows' before undertaking further investigations. This avoided unnecessary repetition and motivated pupils to build on their previous knowledge and understanding.
156. Overall pupils make at least satisfactory progress with some excellent progress in Year 5. Generally, pupils work well together in group activities; thrive on the opportunities given to explore and investigate; and gain in confidence as teachers value their contributions. Where teaching was only satisfactory, pupils became less focused towards the end of long introductory sessions and when time was used more to give pupils information rather allowing them investigate for themselves. From the end of Year 2, pupils have shown that they are ready to take on more responsibility for adapting the original investigation set by their teachers, and explore a range of hypotheses.
157. Science is very well led and managed by the deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinator who was appointed earlier this year. Appropriate curricular guidelines are based on the national programmes of study, with projects set in each year group to allow for appropriate coverage and the development of more 'in depth study', which allows for pupils to develop increasing levels of scientific enquiry. The training for staff provided by the co-ordinator, to give colleagues more confidence in developing pupils' scientific investigations, has been effective. The new end-of-project assessment sheets currently being piloted in each year group are helping staff to gain more confidence and become more aware of the investigative nature of the subject. The realistic action plan includes the improved use of end of unit assessments to add more purpose to the quality of teaching and learning. A recent survey of pupils' books to monitor consistency in marking and standards of work achieved has helped to raise the profile of the subject. This detailed survey has identified both strengths in the quality of teaching and learning and has provided a focus for each year group where areas require further development. The co-ordinator uses assessment strategies very well to plan the next steps of learning and the need to analyse previous learning and testing to identify priority areas for future teaching and learning.

## ART AND DESIGN

158. Attainment has improved since the last inspection and is now well above average at the end of Year 6. It is above average for pupils by the end of Year 2. There have been good improvements in the curriculum, planning and display work, and the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject have improved. The co-ordinator has worked very hard to develop good teaching and effective learning throughout the school and the subject has a high profile.
159. All pupils are fully involved in all aspects of art and design, and all pupils from all ethnic groups, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress. They really enjoy the subject, and concentrate for long periods of time to make sure that their work is as good as they can make it.
160. Year 1 pupils, inspired by the work of Henri Rousseau, were learning to use different media to make animal pictures. From a wide variety of materials they were creating animals for their jungle display. Good direct teaching by the teachers resulted in them creating good two-dimensional and three-dimensional designs of lions, tigers, elephants and giraffes. They demonstrated some good cutting and sticking skills. Good use of the materials by the pupils resulted in them creating attractive and realistic animals out of fabric and fur. Pupils were able to select and match colours well and were able to explain why they had selected certain materials. 'Why did you use this lovely fur fabric?' asked the teacher. The pupil replied, 'It looks fluffy and spiky like the lion's mane.' Year 2 pupils usefully explore shapes and patterns with good links with mathematics. They are developing a secure knowledge of mixing colours; and good direct teaching enables pupils to apply these skills well in their painting and models.
161. In Years 3 and 4 pupils understood how to control pencil and water colours in order to record degrees of shade and tone. Pupils of all abilities skilfully print patterns on papers and create interesting models for their school environment. Good direct teaching enables them to develop their skills well. The lessons are well planned and there is good challenge for pupils of all abilities. Year 3 pupils made good progress in mixing paints to create colours necessary to complete their designs and paint their Roman tiles. There are good cross-curricular links with history and effective use is made of information and communication technology to support their learning.
162. In Years 5 and 6 pupils make very good progress in developing ideas for pattern, texture and colour. Year 6 pupils successfully developed techniques to use a range of materials, exploring colour, pattern and textures. They decorated death masks using an imaginative range of materials. Very good teaching enables pupils to make well-informed decisions concerning their design. Very good use was made of information and communication technology to deepen pupils' understanding of Egyptian mummies.
163. In the five lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning was good overall. Teachers have a clear understanding of the skills they want pupils to learn. They give pupils valuable opportunities to explore their own ideas and to experiment. Where

teaching is good teachers show good subject knowledge and good skills tuition, for example, when pupils create Roman tiles and Egyptian death masks. Teachers use questions well to remind pupils of their previous learning. Pupils make good use of information and communication technology to support their learning, for example in design work.

164. The co-ordinator has very good knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject, which she shares very effectively with her colleagues. The art and design policy has been recently reviewed and the curriculum is planned well to give pupils good experience of different techniques and media, including working with three-dimensional materials. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning, and observes their teaching and pupils' learning on a regular basis. Very good use is made of pupils' sketchbooks throughout the school to develop skills and techniques such as mixing colours before painting tiles. There are effective records kept of tracking pupils' progress in the development of art and design skills. Pupils have valuable opportunities to work alongside professional artists in their work and effective use is made of trips to museums and art galleries such as the Waterhall Modern Art Gallery to enrich pupils' experiences. The subject makes a very good contribution to the cultural development of the pupils and draws extensively from the richness of their own cultural traditions. For example, effective use is made of the work of Black-African, Asian, Australian and French artists in the pupils' curriculum. The higher achieving pupils benefit greatly from the excellent role models provided by the professional artists, for example, in their clay work. The headteacher provides excellent support for the development of this subject.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

165. Five lessons were observed in design and technology and provided useful evidence of work that is going on in the subject. Further evidence was collected through an interview with the subject co-ordinator, a scrutiny of pupils' work, conversations with pupils and looking at displays around the school.
166. At the time of the previous inspection provision and standards in design and technology were judged to be unsatisfactory. In both areas there has been satisfactory improvement. The scheme of work and teachers' planning records now identify full coverage of the National Curriculum with an appropriate balance between designing, making and evaluating. There is a clear framework for building on pupils' previous skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. Standards achieved are now typical for pupils at the age of seven and eleven. All pupils are fully involved in all aspects of design and technology, and all pupils from all ethnic groups, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress.
167. By the age of seven pupils can mark out, cut and join pieces of fabric by gluing and basic sewing techniques. They can use junior hacksaws and drills to make wheeled vehicles. They are able to complete a planning sheet with labelled diagrams, lists of materials needed and complete a step-by-step action plan. In a good lesson Year 2 pupils were able to show and talk about hand puppets they had made. They were able to suggest ways they could have improved their designs. The pupils are well aware of health and safety issues.

168. In Year 3 and Year 4 pupils learn about basic food preparation, packaging and making books with pages incorporating moving parts. Pages they have created show rotary and linear movement. The pupils in Year 3 used information and communication technology to make accurate nets for packages they were designing. Overall their progress is satisfactory.
169. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have learnt a range of joining techniques to design and make a Victorian sampler, strong bridges, musical instruments and toys with a moving part. Two Year 6 pupils, who had made a turtle on wheels, were able to describe all stages of the process and justify the decisions they had made. They had used a cam to produce a lurching motion when the turtle is pushed along and causes the turtle's head to move in and out of the shell.
170. In the one Year 5 lesson observed, the quality of teaching and learning was very good. Pupils were evaluating musical instruments they had designed and made in previous lessons. Skilful questioning encouraged all pupils, including those with English as an additional language, to consider how successfully their work had met their design criteria. The pupils had made a wide range of percussion, string and wind instruments and were able to evaluate them in terms of the clarity and quality of their sound, their portability and robustness and their aesthetic qualities. The technical skills used in making the instruments were good and of a higher standard than in other lessons observed where they were satisfactory.
171. Overall the quality of teaching seen was satisfactory. On occasions the planning did not accurately match the objectives being taught: too much time was spent on writing out action plans by pupils with special educational needs and insufficient guidance was given to pupils who were asked to think of three ways they could improve their work.
172. Pupils enjoy their work in design and technology. They work well in pairs and groups and share resources sensibly. All pupils have access to the full range of design and technology experiences as good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs, higher achieving pupils and pupils for whom English is an additional language. Resources are satisfactory. There was only limited evidence of information and communication technology being used to support this curriculum area.
173. The subject is satisfactorily led by an enthusiastic, recently appointed co-ordinator. She has a clear understanding of effective teaching and learning and is given excellent support by the leadership and management of the school. Recent training has increased her own expertise in the subject and her capacity to provide support and advice for her colleagues. Already this is having an impact on practice. There are plans for her to undertake classroom observations for the next school year. She is aware that assessment procedures do not presently provide teachers with sufficient feedback to plan a challenging next stage of learning for each ability group.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

174. A judgement on standards has been made after having observed five lessons, checking the quality of pupils' work and teachers' planning and speaking with pupils. Evidence

indicates that, by the age of seven, most pupils are working at a standard expected for their age. By the age of eleven, standards are also typical. All pupils are fully involved in all aspects of geography, and all pupils from all ethnic groups including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress.

175. Curriculum guidelines, based on national recommendations, are in place and these provide clear guidance for teachers to plan how to develop pupils' geographical knowledge and understanding from term to term and year to year.
176. In the one lesson observed in Year 1, the teaching was good. Pupils were able to identify different modes of transport and to rank them according to how quickly they transport travellers. A lower attaining group used the Internet to find out information about a seaside location.
177. Previous work seen indicates that infant pupils have learnt how to locate places on a street map and how to use the contents and index pages in an atlas. Their understanding of some of the features of Handsworth and a typical seaside town was widened when they listed these on a chart.
178. In the junior classes there was evidence of the development of mapping skills to include the use of keys to identify different climates on a world map. In Year 3, a survey of the countries visited by pupils in the class involved further use of maps of Europe and of the world and an interesting approach to their use. Pupils in Year 4 study a village in India to compare aspects of life there with Handsworth. Some pupils make a good contribution to these discussions when they draw on their own experience of travelling in India and Pakistan. In Year 6, a study of the course and features of the river Severn increases pupils' knowledge of how rivers shape the land. They make good use of photographs and Ordnance Survey maps to research information in answer to a series of questions. The annual visit to Merevale Hostel, in Atherstone, and the use of a recently developed geography resource pack provide good opportunities for pupils to carry out fieldwork.
179. In the four lessons observed in the junior classes, three lessons were good and one satisfactory. In the good lessons, time was used well and teachers ensured that learning was interesting. Where the teaching was less than good, some pupils were left with time to spare, having completed the task they were set to identify and classify living conditions in Chembokolli. Overall, pupils in junior classes make good progress.
180. The subject is currently under review and plans to refine the scheme of work are identified in the school's improvement plan. The introduction of a system to assess pupils' gains in skills, knowledge and understanding is planned, and is intended to help to ensure that information about pupils' progress is recorded in a manageable way. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator who has a clear view of the subject needs. It makes a very good contribution to the pupils' cultural experience. The co-ordinator is provided with high quality support from the leadership and management of the school.

## HISTORY

181. Five lessons were observed during the inspection, all with pupils from Year 3 to Year 6. The evidence of history work in pupils' book was provided from Year 2 to Year 6. Evidence was also gained from displays and artefacts around the school, discussions with pupils and the school's history co-ordinator. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement of the attainment of pupils at the age of seven. However, by the age of eleven standards attained by pupils are above those nationally expected and this indicates good progress from the last inspection.
182. During the inspection, teaching in all lessons was judged to be at least satisfactory with one being good and one very good. All pupils are fully involved in all aspects of history, and all pupils from all ethnic groups including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress.
183. Teachers use a broad range of teaching methods to make the subject exciting. By the age of seven, pupils are able to place pictures of historical artefacts in the correct chronological order. Older pupils have been taken on historical visits to places such as the Black Country Museum, Merevale Hostel and Wroxeter. These visits have increased the pupils' knowledge and understanding of their local environment and Victorian and Roman Britain. In two lessons teachers used 'hot seating' in which pupils acted as historical characters, answering questions about their lives from other pupils. Pupils used their experiences from recent visits to ask and answer questions, demonstrating good historical knowledge. In another lesson pupils sorted and sampled food, which may have been available in Roman Britain, whilst the teacher acted as a Roman citizen answering questions.
184. Effective cross-curricular links are made, for example, with Year 6 pupils making Egyptian death masks with accurate historical detail and Year 3 pupils making Roman tiles. Information and communication technology is well used in history lessons with CD-ROMs used to increase pupils' subject knowledge and the Internet used for research.
185. The school takes part in 'Black History Month' studying the contribution made by non-white immigrants to Britain and the contribution made to world affairs by people such as Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and Ghandi. Pupils carry out their own research with their families producing a family tree. Pupils commented on how much they valued the 'Black History Month' study and most of them made very effective use of their own backgrounds and experiences. The subject makes a very good contribution to the cultural development of all pupils.
186. Pupils can express a view and support it with historical information. Some Year 4 pupils commented that the treatment of Catherine of Aragon by Henry VIII was unfair but that his intention was to gain a son, thus avoiding possible civil war on his death. By the age of eleven pupils have very good subject knowledge. They have gained evidence from a variety of sources, texts, TV and the Internet. They were able in discussion to recognise conflicting evidence, such as of the date Tutankamun became pharaoh and were aware of the need to check on the reliability of historical evidence. They knew the difference between primary and secondary source material and were



able to debate when texts were primary or secondary source.

187. The subject is led very well by an able and enthusiastic history co-ordinator. She carefully monitors teachers' planning records and pupils' work to ensure the subject is well covered. She provides a file of resources and ideas for each class teacher. She co-ordinates 'Black History Month' and has been given some non-teaching time to develop a unit of work for pupils who visit Merevale Hostel.
188. To improve the subject further, the school needs to consider the progression of historical skills throughout the school. Whilst pupils' knowledge and understanding is overall very good, on occasions pupils are repeating the same historical skills in different year groups. For example, in Year 3 pupils list the differences between Roman baths and modern baths whilst in Year 5 pupils list the difference between Victorian schools and a modern school.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

189. Five lessons of information and communication technology were observed during the inspection. Pupils were also observed using computers during lessons in a range of subjects across the curriculum. Further evidence was collected through an interview with the two subject co-ordinators, a scrutiny of pupils' work, conversations with pupils and by looking at displays around the school.
190. At the time of the previous inspection, provision and standards in this subject were found to be unsatisfactory. Since then very good progress has been made. The scheme of work identifies appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum and is fully reflected in teachers' planning records. There is a clear framework for building on pupils' previous skills, knowledge and understanding as they progress through the school. Standards achieved by the age of seven are now typical of those found nationally, with many good features. By the age of eleven standards of attainment are well above what is typically expected.
191. By the age of seven pupils know their own passwords and can log onto the computer network, save and retrieve their work. They can complete short word-processing tasks to write letters, stories and poems. They have sufficient skills to change the size, colour and font of a text and print out their work. All pupils made satisfactory progress when using a paint program to make pictures of houses, faces and landscapes. 'Flood-fill' is used successfully to create pictures in the style of a famous artist composed of straight lines and geometric shapes. Pupils can enter, and edit, a sequence of commands to control both floor robots and screen turtles.
192. In Year 3 pupils have learnt about the advantages of e-mail through communications with a fellow pupil who is visiting his father in South Korea. The pupils were excited to share reports on 'football fever' during the build up to the World Cup and descriptions of the women divers of Jeju who catch octopus. In return Year 3 e-mail their news from Handsworth. Computers have also been used to support their study of Roman history.
193. In Year 4 a group of pupils with special educational needs followed-up literacy work very effectively in the computer room. Using a shared screen, the teacher illustrated how tense and word order are changed when statements are transformed into

- questions. In addition to the good progress they made in English the pupils learnt how to select from drop-down menus. Year 4 pupils were also seen working on the Birmingham Grid for Learning through an Internet link. In a religious education lesson they recorded their work integrating clip art into text. The school's computer club this half term has given Year 4 pupils the opportunity to learn about robotics.
194. Pupils in Year 5 can enter sequences to produce particular shapes on screen. Many of them produce imaginative and detailed modelling effects. They are confident using more than one shape and rotating them. The attainment in this area is well above what is usually found because of the expertise of the teacher who is a subject specialist. The teacher uses an interactive whiteboard to revise previous learning and then skilfully demonstrates how procedures can be edited to produce exciting effects.
195. In Year 6 the pupils are able to understand that spreadsheets can be used to explore mathematical models. They can copy formulae to create tables of results and create graphs. The pupils have successfully used a spreadsheet model to find out the maximum area that can be included in a rectangular field of a fixed perimeter. The pupils have also sent e-mails and collected data from a range of sources including the Internet. Sixteen pupils are involved in evaluating the Birmingham Grid for Learning website. All pupils have home directories where there are examples of very good desktop publishing and database investigations presented using multimedia software. In mathematics pupils have used information and communication technology to explore patterns and procedures and to make predictions.
196. A specialist teacher led all of the teaching seen in the computer suites. Class teachers and support staff also taught information and communication technology well in classrooms. Overall the teaching was of a very good standard. All pupils from all ethnic groups including pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are fully included in the lessons and given sufficient support to make very good progress. All of the lessons seen were characterised by high quality planning, the brisk revision and extension of previous learning and strong pupil management. A clear consequence of this is that pupils have very positive attitudes and their confidence is high. Throughout the inspection pupils could be seen working collaboratively, sometimes independent of adult support, using computers to help them in other subject areas. The subject is very well organised and this is having a significant impact on the high standards achieved especially by the older pupils in the school.
197. Since the last inspection information and communication technology has been given a high priority and national funding has been added to provide very good resources. The headteacher and senior management team provide excellent support for the development of this subject. Both school sites now operate on a single network. The two computer suites and classrooms are very well resourced. The co-ordinators manage the development of information and communication technology very well and have contributed much to the very good progress since the previous inspection. A good development plan is included in the school's improvement plan. Very good steps are underway to assess and track pupils' progress based on teaching objectives and learning outcomes from the medium term scheme of work. The co-ordinators are aware of the need to improve resources for monitoring events and composing and recording musical ideas. The school is extremely well placed to move forward in its goal to be a centre of excellence for information and communication technology.

## MUSIC

198. Evidence gathered during the inspection consisted of observation of six lessons, two of which were with visiting, specialist instrumental teachers. Discussions with pupils and the co-ordinator for music took place as well as scrutiny of displays and evaluation of resources.
199. Overall, standards in music throughout the school are high, with pupils of seven achieving above average standards and pupils of eleven reaching well above the levels of competence expected for their ages. A substantial number of pupils achieve higher than expected standards and those with interest and aptitude are encouraged to develop their talents to the full.
200. Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds make good progress throughout their school lives and, unlike findings in the last inspection, progress is good in all year groups. Pupils who have special educational needs make very good progress and have equal access to all the musical opportunities offered by the school. Similarly, pupils who speak English as an additional language make very good progress. The music curriculum is fully inclusive with excellent equality of opportunity and access provided for all pupils. The higher attaining pupils are provided with valuable opportunities to extend their talents in music lessons.
201. By the age of seven, pupils are singing tunefully in music lessons, assemblies and concerts. They have an understanding of melody and they maintain the beat in simple patterns and accompaniments. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils were observed composing musical interpretation based on a class project about the jungle and wild animals. They successfully created their group compositions using their own choice of musical notation. Playing a wide range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments, they rehearsed and enthusiastically performed their compositions, which were evaluated by other pupils. These very good musical experiences were well enhanced by the teacher's recording and playing back the class performances. As they worked towards group compositions, pupils demonstrated very good co-operation and sensitivity towards others in their group.
202. By the age of eleven, pupils have developed a very good understanding of harmony and they are able to sing a good range of songs in parts. They sing very well and successfully maintain their individual parts. They have a very good understanding of standard and non-standard notation of rhythm patterns, and they know and can demonstrate that the patterns are cyclical. In an observation of a Year 5 class, pupils accurately clapped a number of complex rhythms which they had composed using standard or their own method of notation. They show their clear understanding of musical terms such as pitch, duration, dynamics and tempo. By age eleven they will all have had the opportunity to enjoy individual instrumental tuition. They have listened to and evaluated a wide range of music and are able to make judgements using suitable musical vocabulary. In all musical activity observed, pupils exhibit enthusiasm and confidence.
203. Since the last inspection, the good quality provision for music has been maintained

and in those areas of the school where attainment was not in line with expectation, standards have improved. The previous report noted that instrumental tuition was provided, with no mention of the number of pupils who took part. This inspection notes that all pupils have an entitlement and approaching two hundred enjoy such provision. Specialist musicians deliver instrumental teaching in string, woodwind, brass, African drums, Dhol drums, tabla, keyboard and harmonium.

204. All teaching of music, both class and peripatetic, is good, with teachers having sound subject knowledge and a confidence to teach music well. They plan effectively, based upon a good scheme of work and they use resources very well to give all pupils maximum access to instruments and ample opportunity to compose and perform. They manage pupils skilfully and have high expectations of behaviour and quality of work. They make very good use of time allocated for music and ensure that lessons are characterised by good pace with pupils enjoying making, listening to and evaluating music.
205. Many Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 pupils participate in a wide range of concerts, within and outside the school. The school's multi-cultural and multi-faith community is reflected in the annual concerts to celebrate a range of religious festivals. The school recently took part in a concert at the City of Birmingham Symphony Hall, involving more than 100 pupils and 20 adults, where African, Asian and Western music cultures were celebrated. Very good use is made of the expertise of parents, who bring a range of musical and dancing skills to enhance the school's creative arts.
206. The co-ordinator for music provides excellent subject management and his leadership ensures clear direction for the subject. He gives strong support to non-specialist teachers, offering advice and professional development. His effective monitoring of the quality of teaching is carried out through his working with teachers in lessons, modelling good practice and targeting different year groups on a half-termly rota. He manages up to six visiting specialist teachers and carefully monitors the quality of their work. The strength and high quality of their teaching is having a significant impact on the attainment of pupils. He has ensured that accommodation is excellent with designated music rooms in each building. Resources for music are excellent with a most impressive range and quantity of instruments reflecting the range of cultures within the school.
207. The school provides an excellent musical curriculum. The excellent leadership of the music co-ordinator, excellent accommodation and resources and good teaching throughout the school contribute towards making music a strength of the school. Here has been outstanding support and direction for this subject from the leadership and management of the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

208. Standards in physical education have much improved since the last inspection, by the ages of seven and eleven they are now broadly typical of those found nationally with some good and very good features. There is appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum requirements of gymnastics, dance, swimming and developing team and games skills. The school makes good use of both the indoor and outside facilities,

which includes the hall in the middle school for fixed and portable gym equipment, and movement and dance in the upper hall. The latter was used effectively for an athletics session when inclement weather stopped the planned outdoor session. Pupils commence their swimming sessions in Year 2 and swim all year round, which helps to improve their confidence. All other classes from Year 3 to Year 6 swim for one term on a rota basis. The standard of swimming observed was typical for all years in this age range. The school has had to cope with adults being allowed to share the main pool during the school swimming session, which causes a restriction in the available amount of swimming space in the main pool. The new arrangements for pupils changing are satisfactory.

209. The teaching of physical education is good. All pupils from all ethnic group including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress. In the good lesson seen in Year 2 pupils enjoyed their gymnastics lesson demonstrating increased control and co-ordination as they sequence their moves. They were able to both select and link their jumps and rolls in short movement phrases. They were also able to place gym mats and portable equipment in a planned format with great care. This awareness for health and safety also helped to support good concentration for maximum effort and performance. Of particular note was the way in which pupils demonstrated good personal and social skills. Not only were they well behaved, but also they used space well, listened carefully, and collaborated very well. In the six lessons observed in the juniors two were satisfactory, two good and two very good. In the very good dance lessons pupils were able to devise and perform dances, which employed a range of movement patterns. The very good teaching challenged their existing standard of performance, and allowed pupils to gain in confidence. Pupils are also able to evaluate their own and others pupils' performances, with increasing skill and knowledge. Very good use is made of the expertise of secondary specialist teachers to enrich the quality of pupils' learning.
210. The school has made very good use of outside agencies such as a basketball club and a local secondary school. These links have supported training for staff who have gained in knowledge, through taking part in demonstration lessons. After-school clubs are varied and are well supported. They are open to all pupils on a year group rota basis, and talented pupils are also encouraged to attend. During the gym and dance clubs pupils showed appropriate physical and social skills and a good level of spatial awareness and increasing control. There was a good level of enjoyment and pupils were enthusiastic about their opportunities to perform. There are very good links with secondary schools with specialist sports status and their skills have been used well in Grove School.
211. Physical education is well led by the two co-ordinators who have recently shared this subject responsibility. They are aware of the need to develop assessment procedures in order to record the gains in pupils' skills, understanding and knowledge and then to use this information to plan for the next stages of learning. Lessons have been monitored and appropriate feedback given to staff based on a modified format of the school's agreed lesson observation proforma. Pupils are also encouraged to self evaluate their own performances, and a pilot evaluation process has recently been put into place in Year 6. This subject makes a very good contribution to the cultural development of pupils.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

212. During the week of the inspection it was only possible to see two lessons in the junior classes. No lessons were observed in the infant classes. Therefore no overall judgement can be made on the quality of teaching. A judgement on standards has been made after a scrutiny of pupils' work, observations of planning, discussion with the co-ordinator and with pupils. Evidence indicates that standards for seven year olds are above what is expected by the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus. By the age of eleven the indications are that pupils have attained standards above those set in the Locally Agreed Syllabus, an improvement since the last inspection. All pupils including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress regardless of their backgrounds or ethnic origin.
213. Curriculum guidelines based on local recommendations, are in place enabling progressive gains in knowledge and understanding from year to year. In the infant classes, pupils know that stories from special books such as the Bible, the Qur'an and the Torah are important to people of different customs and beliefs. They learn about customs and traditions that are important in Sikhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity. These religions, and others, are regularly revisited so that pupils' knowledge and understanding are built on. They also have many opportunities to learn from these religions and to consider their relevance to their own lives. For example, after discussing the stories of St Francis of Assisi, Muhammed and the Crying Camel and Nazir and the Little Fawn, pupils in Year 2 reflected on the importance of showing respect for living things and wrote an account about 'caring for their own pets'.
214. Good links are made to other areas of the curriculum. Pupils use storyboards to retell the main events in stories and they draw pictures to show some of the symbols of Christianity they have observed on a visit to a local church.
215. In the two lessons observed in Year 4, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. Teachers had planned a sound range of activities to help children make links between the parable of 'the Good Samaritan' and the concept of who is your neighbour. Helpful links were made with the meaning of the school motto. While the higher attainers produced thoughtful versions of the parable, and the lower attainers were well supported, the average attainers would have benefited from further discussion around the theme.
216. By the time they reach the age of eleven, most pupils have made good progress and have attained standards above those expected by the Locally Agreed Syllabus. In the junior classes they continue to learn about significant events to people of different beliefs. In Year 3, pupils understand that people make pilgrimages to places of importance when they write about the Muslim Hajj to Makkah and the Jewish pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In Year 5, pupils visit the local church and pose their own questions about the artefacts they have noticed. They write thoughtful observations about the atmosphere they sense on their visit.
217. In Year 6, pupils discuss why people of different religions tell stories to explain how the world began and draw out the similarities and differences in, for example, a

Christian and a Muslim creation story. Some pupils draw on earlier learning about Buddhist beliefs before they plan and write their own creation stories.

218. The co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the subject and a clarity about the most effective features of planning likely to lead to good teaching. The resources are wide-ranging and support the major areas of study throughout the school. Excellent support is given for this subject by the headteacher and senior management team. The subject makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.