

INSPECTION REPORT

COLMORE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Kings Heath

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103188

Headteacher: Mrs C Millard

Reporting inspector: Mr N B Jones
20973

Dates of inspection: 17-19 March 2003

Inspection number: 246267

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Colmore Road Kings Heath Birmingham
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Baker
Date of previous inspection:	16-19 March 1998

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	10
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Colmore is a larger than average junior school which has 362 pupils (196 boys and 166 girls). It is a popular school that has a waiting list for each year group. The school draws most of its pupils from an area of mixed housing to the south of Birmingham city centre. Around 15 per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is broadly in line with the national average. Around two-thirds of the pupils are of white ethnic background and the rest are mainly from Asian, African/Caribbean and mixed race heritages. Around 23 per cent of the pupils have English as an additional language but very few are at an early stage of learning English. Twenty per cent of the pupils are on the special educational needs register (about average for schools nationally) including three pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need. Almost all pupils transfer from Colmore Infant School; their attainment on entry, indicated by the results of Year 2 national tests, is slightly above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Colmore is a very good school. Very good teaching, a very rich curriculum and excellent leadership by the headteacher enable the children to receive a first class education. Not only do the pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science but they are also provided with a very broad and stimulating curriculum overall with particularly strong provision in the creative arts and sport. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils make very good progress and achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Teaching is very good.
- The headteacher, assisted by supportive governors and a dedicated staff, provides very effective leadership.
- A very rich curriculum, both within and outside lessons, is provided.
- High expectations within a caring and stimulating learning environment bring out the very best in the pupils.
- The school has a very good partnership with parents and the community.

What could be improved

- Although standards in English overall are above average there is scope for further improvement in writing in other subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When it was last inspected in March 1998, Colmore Junior School was considered to be a good school achieving standards that were above average in English, mathematics and science. Excellent leadership and very good teaching have enabled the school to make very good improvement since then. Standards overall are now well above average. All of the issues raised in the last report have been addressed effectively, including the raising of attendance levels by a very impressive five per cent. The school is in a very strong position to maintain its current high standards.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	A	B	A
mathematics	A	A	A	A
Science	A	A	A	A

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

Inspection evidence confirms that by the age of eleven the pupils' attainment is well above average in mathematics and science and is close to this level in English. There is scope for the pupils to make some improvement in the writing aspect of English. Across a very broad curriculum, pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make very good progress overall. Boys and girls perform at a similar level when compared with the national averages for boys and girls. Standards in art, music and physical education are particularly high

In the 2002 national tests the school exceeded its target for pupils reaching the expected level (Level 4) in mathematics and came very close to achieving its target for English. Similarly ambitious targets have been set for 2003 and inspection evidence would indicate that they are likely to be close to achieving them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils have a very mature attitude and show real enthusiasm for everything they do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around school is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are of a very high standard. The pupils get on extremely well together. They take on more and more responsibility for their own learning and actions as they move through the school.
Attendance	Very good. Well above the national average.

Since the last inspection the school has worked very hard and successfully to drive up attendance levels from well below the national average to well above. Although the ethos of the school is very much geared to sustaining and raising standards, great emphasis is also placed on developing positive and caring relationships between the pupils. The caring, sharing and belonging aspect of school life is

evident at all times in the way that the pupils interact with each other and with adults. Individuals are respected, opinions valued and there is a genuine feeling of pride in being a part of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
	Very 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.

The quality of teaching is very good; it has improved since the last inspection when it was rated as good. The very good teaching, particularly in English, mathematics and science, enables pupils of all abilities to make very good progress in these subjects. The school's implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies has been very successful and has resulted in the pupils progressing very well. Teaching is also strong in art and physical education. Art plays a major role in creating an exciting and vibrant working environment where displays of high quality work show the pupils' considerable achievements in this subject. The pupils made very good progress in the physical education observed and in addition the extra-curricular activities provided by the teachers enable the pupils to develop their skills very well across a range of sports. The very good specialist teaching of music throughout the school has enabled the pupils to receive a consistently high level of tuition and achieve very good standards.

The teaching is characterised by very good relationships with the pupils, high expectations, a brisk pace to lessons and well-defined routines. This results in a very good working atmosphere. The use of time targets and the sharing of learning objectives with the pupils are consistent features that help the pupils maintain their concentration.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Excellent. The curriculum is broad and balanced with an appropriate emphasis on English, mathematics and science. It also provides many rich and imaginative opportunities for the pupils to learn across the whole curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Teachers and teaching assistants provide very effective support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Pupils with language difficulties are identified at an early stage and are supported very well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school encourages responsibility and values pupils' achievements. It provides a secure, stimulating and democratic community in which pupils can develop their understanding of moral and social responsibilities. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is promoted very well through curriculum activities and the everyday life of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The pupils are well supported and cared for by the staff. The school's daily routines are well organised and run smoothly.

The school's provision for art, music and physical education is of a high standard. The expertise of the staff and extra-curricular provision are used very well to support the development of these subjects. The school is a harmonious community in which everyone is valued and the effective involvement of all pupils is central to its work. The cultural diversity of the pupils is celebrated and particularly so during special occasions such as Diwali, Eid and Black History month.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher very effectively leads a hard working and dedicated staff. Very high expectations and a constant striving to maintain and improve the school's standards and the quality of education are shared goals. The management structure ensures that all teachers are involved, supported and valued.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors show great commitment to the school. They keep close oversight of developments and ensure that all statutory responsibilities are carried out.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school improvement plan is used very well to set targets that are evaluated on a regular basis. The school ensures that teaching and learning are regularly monitored with a view to bringing about improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Very effective use of time, staff, accommodation and learning resources help provide a stimulating education for all of the pupils.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher, the finance officer and governors manage the school's finances very well and ensure value for money when purchasing resources. The headteacher is particularly good at building relationships both within and outside school. There are very strong ties between the junior and infant schools and effective relationships with many other local schools.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils like school, behave well and make good progress. • The school is well led and managed. • The teaching is good. • Parents are made to feel welcome in school. • Pupils are expected to work hard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like to be better informed. • Some parents think that homework is inconsistent. • Some parents feel that the school could work more closely with them.

Inspectors' judgements fully support the parents' positive views. The information provided for parents is better than in most schools, arrangements for homework are satisfactory and the partnership between school and parents is a strength of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The pupils make very good progress and achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science

1. At the time of the last inspection standards were above average in English, mathematics and science. Since then standards have been improved even further and are now well above average in all three subjects when compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds.
2. The pupils make very good progress in the speaking, listening and reading and good progress in writing. Throughout the school, there is a clear emphasis on learning and an expectation that pupils will achieve well.
3. Teachers provide many planned opportunities for the pupils to extend and develop speaking skills through discussions, expressing their feelings and opinions, and through their response to questions during lessons. Pupils display a well-developed vocabulary and express themselves in a clear and articulate manner. For example, pupils in Year 5 describe with great sensitivity the images and feelings provoked by a study of the narrative poem 'The Highwayman.' They use technical vocabulary such as 'similes' and 'metaphors' easily and confidently. Drama is very well used to allow pupils to develop their own ideas in small group discussion.
4. Throughout the school pupils enjoy reading and achieve high standards. They display confidence in their own abilities and read with fluency and expression. This is reflected in the high standards achieved in national tests. Pupils are expressive and responsive readers who convey the full meaning of a text when reading aloud. They select books that match their own particular interests and read a considerable selection of good quality children's fiction, including the work of both classical and contemporary authors. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils can understand a complicated text and make deductions and inferences from it. In one very good lesson observed pupils skilfully analysed different persuasive texts and identified techniques, such as exaggeration, promise and threat that different authors had hidden in their work.
5. Standards in writing are good. Writing skills are taught well in English lessons and as a result pupils make good progress. They are given opportunities to write in many different styles and for a variety of purposes. However, the opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend their writing skills across other subjects of the curriculum are not developed sufficiently. Year 3 pupils write with great imagination, using powerful adjectives and similes as they describe their adventures as the lion from a fable by Aesop. Older pupils experience a very good range of writing activities and are taught skills to enable them to write, for example, in journalistic and biographical styles. Their writing of ghost stories, reports of visits to London and descriptions of growing up in 2002 are coherent, well paced and use adventurous vocabulary. Pupils are particularly adept at writing openings that capture the attention of the reader. Clear attention is paid to teaching the structure of writing and improving spelling skills. Spelling lessons taught by

the English co-ordinator are highly imaginative and greatly enthuse the pupils. Year 6 pupils want to know how to spell words and work hard to devise useful spelling rules.

6. By the time they leave the school, the pupils' attainment in mathematics is well above average. The teachers' excellent preparation and planning, high expectations and their sheer enthusiasm lead to the lessons being lively and stimulating. This approach throughout the school enables the pupils to make very good progress from Year 3 to Year 6. A common feature of lessons is the emphasis that the teachers place upon the pupils understanding the strategies used so that they can readily apply their understanding to new situations. This was evident in a Year 3 lesson where the teacher led the pupils to use their existing knowledge in order to understand the strategies needed to add three two-digit numbers successfully. Similarly in Year 6, in the process of the pupils learning the concept of probability, the teacher encouraged the pupils to make their own deductions using their secure understanding of fractions. This kind of teaching enables the pupils to gain a very good knowledge and understanding of all of the required aspects of the mathematics curriculum. This is commendable, but most impressively they also have the confidence and initiative to apply these learned strategies to a whole range of new situations. By Year 6 they are able to think logically through quite complex problems involving a number of different operations.
7. By the end of Year 6, the pupils' attainment in science is well above average. Throughout the school, the pupils have many opportunities to carry out their own investigations. They make predictions and hypotheses and devise and organise tests to investigate these. For example, Year 4 pupils extended their good understanding of how sound travels by setting up an investigation to enable them to test the effectiveness of communicating with each other using varying lengths of string stretched between two plastic cups. The pupils understanding of how to produce valid results increases well as they move through the school. In a Year 6 lesson the pupils systematically investigated how easily different sized crystals would dissolve in water, being well aware of what constitutes a fair test. They organised themselves confidently and worked collaboratively in small groups, readily sharing responsibilities and ideas. Their conclusions from the investigation showed a secure grasp of the process. Discussions with the pupils indicate that they have very good knowledge and understanding across many aspects of science.

Teaching is very good

8. The quality of teaching is very good. This strength of the school enables the pupils to make very good progress across a wide range of subjects. Teaching is particularly strong in English, mathematics, science, art and design, music and physical education. The specialist teaching of music throughout the school has enabled the pupils to receive a consistently high level of tuition and achieve very good standards. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection is summarised in a table in Part C of this report.
9. The teaching is characterised by very good relationships with the pupils, high expectations, a brisk pace to lessons and well-defined routines. This results in a very good working atmosphere. The use of time targets is a feature of many lessons and this method was used to great effect in a mathematics lesson in Year 3 where the pace of learning continued at a high level throughout. Much of the work is made enjoyable and this is assisted through the use of humour and the enthusiasm shown by the teachers. Learning objectives are shared with the pupils and, apart from the over use of worksheets in some lessons, the pupils are expected to use their own initiative to a great extent. The philosophy of 'ask don't tell' was used very effectively in a very

good science lesson in Year 6 where the pupils carried out their own investigations with great maturity and minimal assistance.

10. In English, the school has effectively implemented the literacy strategy. There are strengths in the guided reading sessions with teachers having a secure knowledge of how to develop pupils' reading skills. Teachers make a careful selection of texts, plan thoroughly to the school's format and use questioning very carefully to extend pupils' thinking and to help them express themselves fully. Management and organisation of classrooms allows lessons to proceed at a brisk pace and excellent and productive relationships are formed. A strength of teachers' marking is the good quality of their comments and targets for improvement. All staff value pupils' work and class books are presented attractively.
11. For mathematics lessons the pupils are organised into ability groups across each year group. This system is used well to provide appropriate work and, combined with the very good teaching, enables pupils of differing abilities to make very good progress. The numeracy strategy is being implemented very well. Most lessons include a brisk quick-fire mental arithmetic session, followed by group work at a challenging level for all pupils and concluding with a class session to sort out any problems and consolidate and assess the progress made. The resources for teaching mathematics are very good and are used well. In one very good mathematics lesson the teacher used an interactive whiteboard to demonstrate to the whole class the specific techniques and skills needed for the production and analysis of challenging number sequences. This was followed up in the information and communication technology (ICT) suite by immediate, individual opportunities for pupils to practise, refine and use what they had seen. Pupils gained a very quick understanding of the procedures and devised many precise and imaginative sequences of their own.
12. ICT was considered to be a weakness at the time of the last inspection when standards were rated as below average. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since then and much of it is now good. This is resulting in the pupils making good progress and standards have risen to now be in line with national expectations. Tasks set for each ICT session are clearly focused. Activities are well organised, with programs and equipment carefully prepared beforehand so that pupils make best use of time. All supervising adults have a good knowledge of the programs. Where teachers use the classroom computers regularly the good progress observed in lessons in the ICT suite is extended and enhanced well.
13. Assessment procedures are very good. Teachers have worked hard to develop comprehensive systems and an appropriate policy to guide their use. They record pupils' progress against key indicators and identify class and individual strengths and weaknesses in knowledge and understanding. Effective systems track pupils' progress and predict their attainment. Good procedures help teachers monitor progress in developing subject skills. This assists them when planning what the pupils are to learn next. The marking of pupils' work is very good across the school. Comments to indicate to pupils where they have performed well and what they need to do to improve are used consistently. Target setting is very well used for both groups and individuals.
14. The provision for special educational needs is very good. A very effective, school-wide system identifies pupils with special educational needs. The support staff have a high level of awareness of how to cater for pupils with differing needs and where possible ensure that they participate in their own target setting and reviews. There is a close liaison with parents at every level. The records provide extremely accurate profiles of individual needs, thus enabling specific work to be

planned and for progress to be monitored effectively. The school succeeds in keeping all of the pupils included and integrated.

The headteacher, assisted by supportive governors and a dedicated staff, provides very effective leadership

15. The school has been very successful in improving considerably on the good standards reported by the last inspection in 1998. This has been brought about by the sheer hard work and commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors and the ongoing support of the parents. The guiding hand and driving force behind the success of the school is the headteacher. Of the more than 100 responses to the parents' questionnaire 98 per cent were in agreement with the proposition that the school is well led and managed. The inspectors fully endorse this opinion. The headteacher leads a hard working and dedicated staff very well. Very high expectations and a constant striving to maintain and improve the school's standards and the quality of education are shared goals. This is evidenced in the high standard of the pupils' work, presentation and behaviour; in the thorough and effective planning, assessment and marking carried out by the teachers; and in the high quality displays in each classroom and around the school.
16. There is a continual striving to provide the very best for the children at Colmore. The school not only provides a high quality education in the basic skills of English and mathematics but also enables the pupils to experience a broad range of high quality experiences across the curriculum. Of particular note are the opportunities for the pupils to develop their talents in the arts and sport. The headteacher explores every avenue to gain extra funding, support and recognition for the school. In this respect, grants have been obtained for many improvements including the new kitchen; support from other educational institutions has been gained (particularly for sporting activities); and the school's achievements have been recognised through the presentation of prestigious national awards such as the Investors in People Award, the Arts Mark Gold Award, Active Mark Gold Award and the School Achievement Award in consecutive years.
17. The management structure is organised in a way that ensures that all teachers are involved, supported and valued. Planning and preparation are carried out in year groups. This rigorous process is successful in its own right but is enhanced considerably because most year groups have a representative on the school's senior management team. These representatives also play a key role in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching to ensure that standards are maintained across year groups and the whole school. Over and above this, each teacher in a year group takes part in one of the three school focus groups that discuss in depth specific school developments. The school's improvement plan has a clear focus on raising standards. All staff are involved in the formulation of this plan with particular expectations of the curriculum co-ordinators. In discussion with the headteacher, particular targets for the year are set, which are then evaluated to assess success. Co-ordinator responsibilities also extend to the management of a sizeable subject budget.
18. The school has been very successful in improving its levels of attendance since the last inspection. Attendance levels have been driven up from 90.5 per cent to 95.9 per cent, which represents a rise from well below the national average to well above. This has been brought about by the headteacher and senior management team tackling the issue on two fronts; raising the profile of attendance to promote it fully and chasing up every absence rigorously. The key to this success has been the designation of a member of staff to be responsible for attendance. This person chases up absences on the first day and nips any potential problem in the bud and liaises closely with the headteacher and the education welfare officer to sort out any more complex

cases. Efficiency has been improved through the use of computerised recording and monitoring systems. The school has also introduced a range of incentives for pupils, from merit stickers for individuals to monthly awards for classes. This means that pupils are constantly reminded that the school expects them to attend well. Parents also get regular reminders in the weekly newsletters, so that they know the routines for requesting or explaining absence.

19. The governing body works hard and supports the school effectively. It is well led by the chairperson who visits the school on a regular basis and has a very good understanding of the school's development. The governors show great commitment to the school by not only meeting as a governing body but also as members of various committees including finance, curriculum, staff and premises. This enables the governors to keep close oversight of developments and ensure that all statutory responsibilities are carried out. The headteacher also keeps the governors very well informed through her comprehensive and very useful termly written reports. These documents are particularly effective in keeping the governors right up to date with developments towards the targets in the school's improvement plan. The finances of the school are very well managed although there are a few minor points from the recent auditor's report that still need to be fully addressed. There was a very large carry forward figure from the 2001-2 financial year. However, this amount has been justified due to the amount needed to be held over to pay for various commitments, mainly the new kitchen and dining room.
20. The headteacher is particularly good at building relationships both within and outside school. There are very strong ties between the junior and infant schools and effective relationships with many other local schools. Although the ethos of the school is very much geared to sustaining and raising standards, great emphasis is also placed on developing positive and caring relationships between the pupils. The caring, sharing and belonging aspect of school life is evident at all times in the way that the pupils interact with each other and with adults. Individuals are respected, opinions valued and there is a genuine feeling of pride in being a part of the school. The warmth and appreciation towards the school orchestra and choir from all of those gathered for an assembly represents this feeling well.

A very rich curriculum, both within and outside lessons, is provided

21. The curriculum is broad and balanced with an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Although the school is particularly strong in English, mathematics and science, it has not let the demands of these subjects impair its ability to provide many rich and imaginative opportunities for the pupils to learn across the whole curriculum. In particular, the school's provision for the arts and physical education are of a high standard. The expertise of the staff and extra-curricular provision are used very well to support the development of these subjects
22. Art makes a significant contribution to the overall atmosphere of the school. It plays a major role in creating an exciting and vibrant working environment where displays of high quality work show the pupils' considerable achievements in this subject.
23. The planning of work for the school, by an outstanding co-ordinator, produces continuously excellent activities that often extend over a number of lessons. This gives pupils the opportunity to develop their skills and become confident in the use of many different materials. This way of working is a major contributory factor to the very high standard of achievement. An excellent example of this approach occurs in Year 6 where pupils study the use of symbolism in the works of artists such as Marc Chagall and Picasso and then depict personal symbols in their own pictures. At a later date they add pastel patterns and gouache paints to heighten the effect.

When dry, the pictures are further enhanced with stippled highlights that produce stunning effects. These pieces of work were quite remarkable; not only did they demonstrate very good use of materials but showed that all pupils in the class had been very perceptive in the way they had combined the symbols into unique, imaginative pictures.

24. Throughout the school there are an exceptional number of stimulating, exciting, imaginative and thought provoking displays of quality art. Pupils' work is displayed on boards, in a wide variety of frames and on open shelving. Pupils are provided with a very wide range of opportunities and make excellent progress as they revisit a particular style, technique or skill and refine it over time. Excellent use is made of the work of great artists to inspire and stimulate. Artists as diverse as Hockney, Turner and Julian Opie are studied as a stimulus to produce imaginative abstract designs, beautiful watercolour sunsets or innovative portraits.
25. The children are offered a wealth of opportunities to develop their musical talents. Many of them have specialist brass, woodwind and string tuition each week with 13 particularly gifted and talented pupils receiving extra tuition funded by the local education authority. The school orchestra comprised of pupils, ex-pupils, teachers and parents rehearses weekly under the expert guidance of the school's music co-ordinator. The standard of performance, as witnessed in a school assembly, is exceptionally high.
26. The music co-ordinator takes all of the music lessons, thus enabling the pupils to receive a high standard of teaching throughout the school. In the two music lessons observed during the inspection, the standard of teaching was very good. The pace of lessons was brisk, very high expectations were made of the pupils and as a consequence they progressed very well. In Year 3 the pupils quickly learned to read rhythm from different forms of notation and in Year 5 they effectively used rhythm patterns to create their own compositions. The high standard of singing from the whole school in assembly is a good indication of the quality of the teaching.
27. Over and above her classroom responsibilities the music co-ordinator provides her expertise to the lower and upper school choirs in the form of extra-curricular activities. The standard of the choirs can be gauged by the fact that they have been invited to perform with the Birmingham Festival choir and been recorded for BBC radio programmes. Certainly the standard of performance in assembly was first class.
28. Within the school's curriculum there is a high level of participation in different forms of drama. Visiting specialists who lead workshops and regular trips to local theatres enrich these experiences. Opportunities are maximised for the pupils to share their feelings in cross-curricular role-play situations. For example, in a Year 5 lesson on Ancient Greece the pupils were able to feedback thoughts on how it would feel to be a soldier, woman or child at a time of conflict. Their portrayal of the situation and era was extremely impressive. The pupils enjoy active involvement in lessons and give confident, uninhibited performances of high quality. Year 3 pupils take part in workshops held by Birmingham Royal Ballet as part of the Dance Track project designed to identify gifted and talented young dancers.
29. The provision for and the standards achieved in physical education, in particular sport, are very good. The physical education observed during the inspection was of a high standard. In a Year 5 gymnastics lesson the pupils made very good progress in learning to perform a sequence involving a jump, balance and roll. Each year group is timetabled for a block of swimming and this plays a significant part in enabling 85 per cent of the pupils to be able to swim 25metres by the time they leave the school.

30. Of particular note in the physical development of the pupils is the very good range of sporting activities provided outside of normal lessons. These are provided by the teachers and by coaches from other educational institutions and include football, cricket, cross country running, hockey, basketball and Gaelic football. The provision of such a wealth of opportunities allows many of the pupils to participate and develop their skills across a wide range of activities. The school participates in many inter-school competitions and has recently won the local and Birmingham cross-country running championships and the South Birmingham indoor football tournament.
31. The school also runs a computer club for Year 5 pupils and a French club for pupils of all ages. There are a good number of educational visits, both locally and further afield, together with an annual residential visit. The teachers work hard to provide such a good range of activities in order to meet the needs and interests of the pupils and this has a very positive impact upon the pupils' personal and social development.

High expectations within a caring and stimulating learning environment bring out the very best in the pupils

32. The school is successful in creating an ethos that is firmly based on care and respect for others. It creates a calm and purposeful atmosphere where there is a very clear emphasis on pupils' personal well being. The school is a harmonious community in which everyone is valued and the effective involvement of all pupils is central to its work. The cultural diversity of the pupils is celebrated and particularly so during special occasions such as Diwali, Eid and Black History month. The school values the individual, seeks to develop the whole child and works to enable all pupils to achieve their full potential.
33. A major strength of the school is the high quality of relationships established and sustained throughout the school. These create a mutual respect, promote responsibility and form a strong foundation for effective learning. All staff are very good role models for pupils. They are warm and encouraging. There is a strong sense of teamwork amongst the staff and this has a positive influence upon pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
34. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of community and citizenship and to contribute to school improvements through the elected school council. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and fulfil them very well. Recent discussions about meals and organising comic relief activities have been particularly productive.
35. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of their own and other cultures. These occur throughout the curriculum and in an impressive range of educational visits. Pupils understanding of different ways of life, beliefs and traditions is evident in the attractive and thought provoking displays around school. It is particularly apparent in art, music and drama. The school displays and uses many good quality prints of the works of artists including Van Gogh and Georgia O'Keefe. Pupils listen to a wide variety of music including folk songs and classical symphonies. An excellent range of musical tuition is available in the school and during the inspection the school orchestra played beautifully in a celebration assembly. At the end of the assembly the orchestra accompanied the whole school as they sang in a deeply moving and inspirational way.
36. Pupils are helped to develop their self-esteem and social skills by learning the importance of sharing, co-operation and compromise. They participate regularly in group discussions and

respond very well to tasks that require them to work together. For example, organising paired or group projects and raising funds for children less fortunate than themselves.

37. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They are friendly, eager to talk to visitors and are proud to show them around their school. They are keen to learn, and work with concentration and commitment, taking full advantage of the many interesting learning experiences they are offered. Pupils are very keen to contribute their ideas to discussion and persevere with any aspects of work they find difficult.
38. Pupils' behaviour is very good. In lessons and around the school, pupils are polite, sensible and considerate. The oldest pupils conduct themselves with high levels of self-discipline and set a very good example to others. Outside of lessons, pupils play amicably in the attractive school grounds, with older pupils taking good care of the younger members of the school community.

The school has a very good partnership with parents and the community

39. The school has worked hard at improving its links with parents since the last inspection and has been very successful. Its partnership with parents is now very good. This is because the school listens to parents and does its best to meet to their needs. Staff are accessible to parents in the playground at the beginning and the end of the day. Weekly newsletters from the headteacher also help to keep parents very well informed. The school supports parents very well by providing them with childcare facilities on site before and after school, running a regular playgroup for pre-school children and holding a carers' and toddlers' session each week for very young children and babies. The school also organises courses for parents to improve their skills and qualifications.
40. Information for parents is very good. The governors' annual report in particular is excellent in its quality and presentation. Parents receive lots of helpful curriculum information via the prospectus, letters from class teachers and sheets on how to help with English, mathematics and science. Reports to parents on their children's progress have improved since the last inspection and now contain useful targets for improvement. Parents have three formal opportunities each year to discuss progress with their children's teachers, and consultations are well attended. Parents support the school well. The Friends' Association works hard to organise events to raise significant funds for both the infant and the junior schools. Parents, teachers, friends and former pupils also join in with the school orchestra, so that it truly does represent the community.
41. The school's partnership with its neighbouring infant school is excellent. The two schools work very well together on co-ordinating their approach to the curriculum and with pastoral care so that pupils can move seamlessly from one school to the other. The infants and the juniors also collaborate closely on making the most of the facilities available on their shared site. The before and after school club has been a joint venture benefiting both sets of parents, while the excellent refurbishment of the dining hall has helped make lunchtime a very positive part of the day for both infant and junior children. There are also very good links with a number of local secondary schools, particularly those with specialist status. These have provided excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and interests in areas such as sports, technology and the creative arts.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Although standards in English overall are above average there is scope for further improvement in writing in other subjects

42. Whilst the overall development of writing skills is generally good, the pupils' achievement is not as high as it could be. In English lessons much focus is placed on developing pupils' writing and in providing opportunities for pupils to develop and rehearse their skills in a wide range of styles including reports, notes, instructions, articles and biographies. Pupils have many opportunities of good quality to draft, edit and revise and evaluate their work. Accordingly they achieve well. However, many pupils have only limited opportunities to enhance these skills still further in other subject areas. Teachers miss opportunities to provide relevant and meaningful writing opportunities in subjects such as religious education, geography and history. Too often pupils have to complete undemanding and tedious worksheets requiring, for example, only low level sequencing skills from pupils who demonstrate much higher achievement in English lessons. Too few opportunities are identified in these different subject areas to allow pupils to record, recount, describe or explain activities in their own words.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

43. In order to further improve standards and the quality of education, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- **Improve the standard of writing further** by providing meaningful opportunities for the pupils to write at length in other subjects as well as in English.
(See paragraphs 5 and 42)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

25

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

22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	36	48	12			

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		362
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		55

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		38
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English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	63

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	42	49

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	33	40	40
	Girls	43	42	47
	Total	76	82	87
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (89)	90 (88)	96 (94)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	35	39	37
	Girls	40	42	45
	Total	75	81	82
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (80)	89 (85)	90 (85)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	239	0	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	13	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	7	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	20	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	36	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	12	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	5	0	0
Chinese	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.6
Average class size	30.2

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	123

Financial information

Financial year	2001-02
	£
Total income	913,559
Total expenditure	880,623
Expenditure per pupil	2,419
Balance brought forward from previous year	52,596
Balance carried forward to next year	85,532

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	362
Number of questionnaires returned	112

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	34	2		
My child is making good progress in school.	50	46	1	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	61	3		1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	59	8		
The teaching is good.	52	48			1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	50	13		1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	30	1	1	
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	35	2		
The school works closely with parents.	41	48	9		2
The school is well led and managed.	65	33	1		1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	37	2		2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	37	8	1	