

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **BELLFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Northfield, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103291

Headteacher: Miss T Cameron

Reporting inspector: Mr A Portlock  
21411

Dates of inspection: 13 - 15 January 2003

Inspection number: 246281

Full 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:	Vineyard Road Northfield Birmingham
Postcode:	B31 1PT
Telephone number:	0121 4642895
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P Thompson
Date of previous inspection:	2 - 5 February 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21411	A. PORTLOCK	Registered inspector	Design and technology	What sort of school is it?
			Physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
			Educational Inclusion.	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			English as an additional language	How well pupils are taught.
				What should the school do to improve further?
9146	M BRENNAND	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
29703	R BARTON	Team inspector	Science	
			Information and communication technology	
			Geography	
			Special educational needs	
31615	E RADLEY	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well is the school led and managed?
			Art	
			Religious education	
18331	J SUTCLIFFE	Team inspector		
22884	S SUTCLIFFE	Team inspector	English	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			History	
			Music	

The inspection contractor was:

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Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Bellfield Junior is about the same size as other primary schools. It caters for 217 boys and girls aged 7 to 11. It is situated in the Northfield area of Birmingham and shares the site with the adjoining Infant School from which most pupils come. An above average number of pupils (35 per cent) are eligible for free school meals. About one in ten of pupils are from ethnic minorities. Three per cent of pupils are Panjabi speakers: no pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The pupils' attainment on entry is varied but is below average overall. There are 17 per cent of pupils on the register of special educational needs, which is below the national average. Six per cent of pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need, which is well above average: most of these pupils live in various parts of the City and attend the hearing-impaired unit. Twenty per cent of pupils have left or joined the school at times other than at the normal times. Six pupils were excluded from school for a fixed-period last year.

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

This is an improving school with rising standards. It is well led and managed by the headteacher, with effective support from the deputy-headteacher. By the time the pupils leave the school, they have made good progress in mathematics and science, largely because of the good leadership and management and the improved teaching in these subjects. Standards in English have improved but standards in writing are well below average. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- There has been a significant improvement in standards in mathematics and science and the pupils achieve well in these subjects.
- The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics and science is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs, including those who are hearing impaired, make good progress because of the effective teaching and support provided for them.
- The effective leadership and management of the school have brought about good improvement since the last inspection.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in writing.
- Standards in art and physical education.
- The monitoring and assessment of the pupils' progress in the foundation subjects.
- The pupils' 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 made good improvement since the last inspection in 1998. Standards in English have risen in line with the national trend, whilst standards in mathematics and science have improved significantly. The school has improved well in nearly all of the areas identified at the last inspection:

- Standards in mathematics and music have improved but not in art: senior staff are committed to raising standards and have achieved significant improvement.
- The school has put a lot of effort into improving the home/school partnership.
- The teaching of reading has improved.

## 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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	E	E	C
mathematics	E	B	C	A
science	E	C	C	A

**Key**

well above average      A

above average          B

average                    C

below average          D

well below average      E

The results of the national tests since the last inspection in 1998 show good improvement. Standards in mathematics and science are now in line with all schools nationally and are well above similar schools. Standards in English have improved at a similar rate to most other schools. In English, particularly writing, boys do less well than girls and standards overall are not high enough. The school's targets need to be even more challenging in English and mathematics.

Standards in the work seen show that in reading they are just below average and those in writing are well below average. The pupils with special educational needs and those pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress, largely because of the additional support that they are given. Standards of the pupils' handwriting and presentation are variable between classes and in some are below national expectations. In mathematics, the pupils attain standards close to the national average by the age of 11, although fewer pupils are currently attaining the higher level 5. The standards have improved largely because of the improvements in teaching. Standards in most of the foundation subjects and religious education are average. There has been improvement in design and technology and music but not in art and physical education, where standards are below average and the pupils' progress is not as good as it should be. Co-ordinators of foundation subjects need to improve their knowledge of standards in their subjects in order to raise them further.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Whilst most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and enjoy school, a number, particularly in the oldest classes, lack concentration and the ability to persevere with tasks.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils apply themselves to their work in lessons and they play well together in the playground. However, there are a few children who find it more difficult to follow the rules and can be disruptive.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The good relationships contribute well to pupil's learning. The pupils are supportive of each other. Most pupils mix easily, both in lessons and in the playground.
Attendance	Below average. Whilst the good systems for monitoring and improving attendance have helped to raise the level of pupils' attendance, it is still below the national average and not well supported by a small number of parents.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection, especially in the amount of good teaching in mathematics and science and the reduction of unsatisfactory lessons overall. Only one lesson was judged unsatisfactory. Teaching in mathematics and science are good, whilst teaching in English is satisfactory. The teaching of numeracy skills is good. The teaching of literacy skills is satisfactory, although teachers need to provide more opportunities to write at length in literacy and other lessons.

The school meets the needs of pupils satisfactorily. The pupils are doing well in mathematics and science. The pupils with special educational needs, including those with hearing impairment, make good progress overall. Boys are performing less well in English, particularly in writing, than girls. In English, the more able pupils need to be challenged further and teachers' expectations need to be higher. The support given by learning support assistants in many literacy and numeracy lessons, as well as other lessons, to pupils with special educational needs is well used by the teachers. However, teaching for those lower attaining pupils, without special educational needs, is not as effective. The teachers' marking of the pupils' work is satisfactory overall but it is variable between classes in its effectiveness.

The teaching in most other subjects is satisfactory. In design and technology it is good overall. In ICT, teachers' knowledge and skills are improving and this is supporting the good progress being made by the pupils. In art, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall and the pupils' progress is unsatisfactory.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and all statutory requirements are met. It is enriched through a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The pupils with special educational needs and those with hearing impairment are well supported, enabling them to make good progress towards their individual targets.
Provision for pupils learning English as an additional language.	None of the pupils learning English as an additional language are at an early stage of language acquisition. They make effective progress and are well supported.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for the pupils' personal, health and social education is satisfactory. The pupils' spiritual, social and moral development are satisfactorily catered for. The pupils' cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The care and attention given to pupils' welfare, health and safety is good with appropriate procedures for child protection and health and safety. The school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring and assessing the pupil's attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science but not in other subjects.



This is a school that has a good relationship with its parents. The school has worked hard to involve parents in their children's schooling but the contribution which parents make to the work of the school is still limited. The school has very good education business partnership links with the local community and it has good links with partner schools, especially the adjoining Infant School.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The school is well led and is clearly focused on improving the school. This is a key factor in the improved standards. The foundation subject co-ordinators need to develop a better understanding of how the pupils are achieving in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and fulfil their statutory responsibilities satisfactorily. However, the workload falls to a small core of dedicated governors and this limits their ability to shape the strategic direction for the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Effective systems have been established for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. Priorities for improvement have been identified and these are well presented in the school development and improvement plans.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses the available funding effectively to support the standards achieved. Effective use is made of special grants and these are having an impact on raising standards.

Budgets are set following careful consideration given to the school's priorities and take account effectively of the principles of best value. The school is well staffed with a good number of teachers and learning support assistants. The school's accommodation is good overall. The classrooms are a good size, there is a good hall and a computer suite. Learning resources are satisfactory overall across the curriculum.

## 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 children like school and they behave well and make good progress.</li> <li>The teaching is good and the children are expected to work hard and achieve their best and they consequently make good progress.</li> <li>The school is approachable and it is well led and managed.</li> <li>The school helps the children to become mature and responsible and they are provided with an interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The amount of homework provided.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views but finds that the homework set is similar to most schools and follows a policy agreed by the parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The results of the 2002 national tests for the pupils at age 11 show that standards are average in science, below average in mathematics and well below average in English. This shows a significant improvement in mathematics and science over the last three years; the rate of improvement is higher than most schools and standards are well above average when compared to similar schools. In English, the rate of improvement is in line with most schools and when compared to similar schools, the pupils attain average standards. The pupils' attainment in writing, particularly for boys, is well below average and is significantly lower than the standards attained in reading, which are below average. The standards in the work of the current Year 6 pupils reflects these test results.
2. The school has worked hard over the last two years to raise standards and, with mathematics and science has been successful but with less success in writing,; the effective leadership, particularly in mathematics and science, and the good teaching in these subjects are key factors in the improvement. The school is aware that standards in writing are not good enough and that provision and teaching need to be better.
3. Whilst many pupils increasingly use an appropriate range of language when speaking to express their thoughts and ideas in small groups, they do not have sufficient vocabulary and confidence, when talking to larger groups. The pupils' standards in reading improve by the time that they leave school and they make satisfactory progress. More able pupils read fluently and expressively and have become discerning, independent readers. The pupils are taught well in using the library and in using books for research and enjoyment; this is helping to raise their standards and improving their confidence and skills. The quality of the pupils' writing, particularly boys is not high enough, and although a lot of work has been done by the school to improve the pupils' skills, the pupils' progress remains slow. There is much improvement, for example, in the use of adjectives and adverbs to make sentences more exciting and the pupils are aware of how to use speech marks and paragraphs. Whilst special educational needs pupils and those learning English as an additional language achieve well, given the extra support, more able pupils need to be challenged further and teachers' expectations need to be higher. The school is aware that standards in reading and, particularly, in writing need to improve by extending the opportunities for practising their skills learnt in literacy lessons when working in other subjects.
4. Throughout the school, the pupils with special educational needs, including those with hearing impairment, and those pupils who are learning English as an additional language make good gains in their learning. They make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The school provides good levels of support and this means that the pupils remain on task and achieve well. Less able pupils need greater support if they are to make appropriate progress.
5. Standards in most foundation subjects are average. This is similar to the standards found at the last inspection. There has been improvement in design and technology and music: there is now improved provision, more effective learning opportunities and teaching is better. This is not the case in art and physical education, where standards are below average and the pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. In art the pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their skills and, the scheme of work is not effective in providing a suitably challenging curriculum. In physical education, in some classes, the pupils need to be challenged more effectively to improve the quality of their performance and the teachers need to have higher expectations of what they can achieve. Co-ordinators of foundation subjects need to monitor how well the pupils achieve and

what the pupils need to do to improve more rigorously, if they are to support other teachers in raising standards in their subjects further.

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

6. The pupils' attitudes to work are satisfactory overall. Whilst most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and enjoy school, which is similar to that found at the last inspection, a number, particularly in the oldest classes, lack concentration and the ability to persevere with tasks. Most pupils are friendly and polite and are eager to talk about their school life. Those pupils who were interviewed spoke with interest about their lessons and the other activities provided for them. Most pupils are attentive in class, and keen to get on with their work. Even when they find a task hard, they are still willing to have a go and complete it as well as they can. The pupils listen well to one another and to their teachers and are increasingly willing to contribute to the classroom discussions as they get older.
7. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Most pupils do as they are told without fuss, so that the teachers do not have to waste lesson time establishing order. They apply themselves to their work and get it done. However, there are a few children who find it difficult to be attentive in lessons and can be disruptive. The teachers nearly always deal with this well. Most pupils play happily together in the playground. The school deals firmly with any unacceptable behaviour.
8. The personal development of pupils is good. The good relationships between most teachers and pupils and between pupils and pupils contribute well to pupil's learning. The pupils support each other well. Most pupils mix easily, both in lessons and in the playground. The pupils generally show respect for adults and for one another. Outside, the pupils share space and equipment amicably and no particular groups dominate the playground. Older pupils help and show consideration for younger ones, and they in turn feel happy and confident outdoors. The pupils respond well to the school's good provision for their personal development. The school teaches them to value themselves and others and gives them opportunities to take on responsibility and do their bit for the school community. They enjoy these opportunities, and flourish when given the chance to show what they can do. The School Council representatives take their role seriously, and talk about what they have achieved and their hopes for the future improvements. The pupils across the school accept those who have responsibility and co-operate with them. The school is a happy community, where the pupils are confident about themselves and supportive of others.
9. The pupils with special educational needs are interested in their work and show good levels of concentration in the classroom and on those occasions when they are withdrawn to work outside the classroom. They work well with other pupils and their attitude to work is good. The pupils with special educational needs are included in and are encouraged to take part in all aspects of learning activities. They have good relationships with the adults who support them when they are working.
10. Attendance at just under 93 per cent is below average, as it was at the last inspection, although it is improving. Whilst the good systems which are in place for monitoring and improving attendance have helped to raise the overall level, it is still below the national average. Unfortunately attendance is adversely affected by holidays taken during term time, a prime example being a local large manufacturing company's holiday week which coincided with 26 pupils being absent. All holidays must first be authorised by the headteacher but, despite her best efforts, changing attitudes continues to present a challenge.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

11. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and varies from very good to unsatisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection, especially in the amount of good teaching in mathematics and science and the reduction of unsatisfactory lessons overall. Of the 54 lessons observed, one-third of the lessons were good or better. Only one lesson was judged unsatisfactory compared to about nine lessons at the last inspection.
12. In the best lessons, the teachers have good class management skills that encourage the pupils to concentrate for sustained periods of time and to try hard. The teachers are committed to improvement and this can be seen in the way that they work together to plan, for instance, the literacy, numeracy and science lessons. For example, the highly focused teaching seen in mathematics lessons is raising, effectively, the pupils' knowledge, understanding and use of number. In mathematics, the teachers have good subject knowledge, their planning is good and they are consistent in carrying it out. Where teaching is less effective it lacks challenge and the teachers' expectations of how well the pupils can achieve are too low. In some lessons, the teachers' subject knowledge did not allow them to extend the pupils' skills and understanding sufficiently. For example, in less successful art and physical education lessons, the pupils were not given appropriate guidance on what they should to improve their work. The pupils were not encouraged to think about how well they were doing. In a very few lessons, the teachers did not deal with some pupils' poor behaviour well and this limited the progress that should have been made.
13. The quality of teaching in mathematics and science lessons is good overall. In English, it is satisfactory, with some good features, for example, in literacy lessons where the pupils are encouraged to write a variety of different texts. Teachers' expectations of their pupils are higher in mathematics and science than in English, where more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently. The quality of teachers' questioning is variable and whilst some teachers are effective in extending the pupils ideas, in some lessons the pupils' thinking is not developed in sufficient depth. The summing up session used at the end of many lessons is also of variable quality, for example, in a mathematics lesson, it did not ensure that all pupils understood fully what they had been learning. The teaching of numeracy skills is good. The school has put in place strategies for improving the pupils' literacy skills that are beginning to be effective. However, there are too few opportunities for them to produce sustained pieces of writing and the pupils are given insufficient time to develop their ideas fully. Many teachers' expectations are not sufficiently high and there are too few opportunities to extend writing in other subjects in sufficient depth. This is particularly true for boys.
14. The quality of teaching of those pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language is good. This is helped considerably by the good teaching of smaller groups led by the special educational need co-ordinator, hearing impaired teachers and learning support staff. The pupils are usually given careful support within class, but in some lessons not enough consideration is given to the varying needs of all pupils. The special educational need assistants who work with individuals and groups of pupils within the classroom give good support. Class teachers, together with the special educational need co-ordinator, write individual education plans and targets, and these are regularly reviewed. Individual education plans contain targets, which are usually realistic and well matched to the pupils' ability.
15. The teaching in most other subjects is satisfactory. Only in design and technology is it good overall. In music, the school is well supported by visiting specialist teachers but the school has identified that many teachers' confidence and their subject knowledge in music needs to improve. In ICT, teachers' knowledge and skills are improving and this is supporting the good progress being made by the pupils. In art, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall and, hence, the pupils' progress is unsatisfactory.

16. The teachers mark the pupils' work regularly, but the quality and effectiveness is variable. In the best practice, teachers write constructive comments, setting future targets for the pupils but in some classes, the comments do not help the pupils to know how they might improve their work or are too detailed.
17. The support given by learning support assistants in many literacy and numeracy lessons, as well as other lessons, is mostly well used by the teachers. For example, they support individual or small groups of pupils in the introduction to the lesson and work with groups in the main part of the lesson. This is having a positive impact upon raising the pupils' achievements. These pupils now complete their work, are more likely to be involved in class discussions and have a better understanding of the work. However, those lower attaining pupils without special educational needs support, make slower progress. The teachers provide literacy and numeracy homework for the pupils weekly that supports the work being done in class; it is given regularly and checked on its return by the teachers.

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

18. The curriculum is broad and balanced and all statutory requirements are met. There is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. The school rightly gives high priority to the teaching of English, mathematics and science with extra provision for extended writing in literacy lessons, which is the school's main priority at present. However, the school acknowledges that there needs to be greater opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills within other areas of the curriculum. The generous staffing allocation is used effectively to teach pupils in ability groups in these subjects and meet the needs of all pupils, although there is insufficient time, however, for some subjects to be adequately developed, namely history, art and religious education. The school does have plans, however, to restructure the school day and redistribute the time available more effectively. Each term the curriculum is further enriched by one of the following theme weeks: 'Citizenship Week', 'World Week' or 'Health Week'.
19. The teachers' planning for numeracy and literacy is satisfactory. The National Strategies are closely adhered to. Planning in other subjects is variable, often brief but just adequate. The headteacher monitors planning but there is no structured system for all subject co-ordinators to be involved. There are schemes of work in place for all subjects: these are mainly the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) schemes but some have not been adapted to suit the particular learning needs of the school or enough opportunities created for cross curricular links. The religious education curriculum appropriately follows the locally Agreed Syllabus.
20. The school keeps an up to date register of pupils with special educational needs and makes good curricular provision for those pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Need and for those who have individual education plans. The pupils with special educational needs take a full part in all aspects of the curriculum. Most of the pupils who are learning English as an additional language are part of the hearing impaired unit and receive effective support.
21. The curriculum is enriched further through a good range of extra-curricular activities, which include a school choir that makes a good contribution to life within the local community. A few older pupils are able to learn how to play a brass instrument. Other clubs include football training, gardening, cross-country running, school performance, cricket, rounders, science and cycling proficiency. All children take part in an annual school production, involving dance, music and drama.
22. The school has very good education business partnership links with the local community. Links with a local food manufacturer have helped to pay for a new computer suite and refurbish

the library. A local retailer provides the pupils with water bottles as part of their playtime refreshments. The pupils have good opportunities to visit both the food manufacturer and the supermarket. There are other visits from local businesses as part of the 'Themed Weeks'. The school has very good liaison with its adjoining Infant School and visits are arranged between staff and the pupils of the many local secondary schools that the pupils move to at age 11.

23. Provision for the pupils' spiritual education is satisfactory. It is promoted through collective worship, religious education and a range of curriculum areas. There is time for prayer and personal reflection during assembly. The pupils have opportunities to appreciate music and to reflect on how they feel about works of art. Opportunities are taken to raise the pupils' spiritual awareness, for example, when in history lessons, the pupils remove ancient Egyptian artefacts from a dark bag and reflect on their beauty. The pupils care for each other well, including those who are hearing impaired or are younger.
24. The school makes satisfactory provision for the pupils' moral and social development. Relationships within the school and in the playground are good. The school successfully uses opportunities within lessons to explore the concept of right and wrong and how to deal with disagreements. It makes good use of lessons in personal, health and social education to develop the pupils' understanding of the differences between individuals and to recognise this as a good thing. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to take part in tasks to help with the smooth running of the school, for example helping as school librarians or as dinner monitors.
25. The school supports a variety of charities and gets involved in a number of community projects. There are weekly assembly themes that provide the pupils with opportunities for reflection and the appreciation of others' talents and achievements. During the week of the inspection a series of assemblies on the theme of talents successfully culminated in a reflection on 'hidden talents'. The school also uses themed weeks to explore some areas in greater depth, for example, issues of citizenship.
26. Provision for the pupils' cultural awareness is good. The music curriculum includes appreciation of a wide range of music from around the world. This is studied in some depth. The pupils have opportunities to appreciate and make crafts from other cultures and different parts of the world. Most recently classes have produced their own ideas for Maori tattoos, North American 'Dream Catchers', Indian textiles, Russian icons, Islamic tiles, Naan bread and they handle clothing and artefacts from a range of religions. The pupils benefit from many visits and visitors. Year 6 pupils take part in a residential visit to Woodland Camp Outdoor Pursuit Centre. Within school the pupils can take part in a Shakespeare Workshop, listen to a talk about animals by the 'Animal Man', enjoy the Juno Musical Presentation or watch a visiting theatre group perform 'Snow White'. A range of visitors from the local community take assemblies, including members of the Music Service, the local secondary school, a member of the Education Business Partnership and the Local Outreach Service. The good range of visits provided include a number of trips to historical locations, local trips to the library, park or church, as well as visits to such places as the Botanical Gardens and a farm.

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

27. Overall, the steps taken by the school to ensure that it cares for its pupils remain good. The pupils' emotional and social needs are well looked after, supported by a healthy and safe environment. Systems for monitoring and improving academic performance are satisfactory.
28. Procedures for Child Protection are good. The headteacher is the designated person in charge of child protection and her training is up to date and all staff have been briefed on the recent procedural changes. Arrangements for health and safety are also good. All the statutory requirements are in place, with the secretary and site manager carrying out termly risk assessments. First aid provision is good. There is a first aid box in every class and two fully

qualified first aiders. All staff have also been trained to deal with allergies, asthma and diabetes.

29. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good but whilst standards have improved, they are still below average. Both the headteacher and secretary monitor the registers using computer technology to spot any trends and problems early. Parents are generally good at informing the school of any absence. However, those pupils who have poor levels of attendance are contacted via a first day telephone call by the learning mentor. The learning mentor also runs attendance projects for specific children. The Educational Social Worker comes in fortnightly to discuss any serious concerns and, together with the school, they have run a number of initiatives to raise attendance. In addition to these initiatives, the school has a number of incentives to encourage good attendance. These range from weekly awards for the class with the best attendance, to termly and annual certificates for individuals who achieve 100 per cent attendance.
30. Overall, procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are good, being overseen by the deputy-headteacher. Much of the emphasis is on promoting the positive, with good behaviour being recognised through a range of stickers, certificates and team points. These are awarded at the weekly celebration assemblies to which parents are invited. Arrangements for monitoring unacceptable behaviour are well understood by all members of staff who record incidents in class on a daily basis. Where behaviour continues to be a concern, parents are informed. Learning mentors also spend time counselling pupils who have particular behavioural difficulties. The deputy-headteacher has recently prepared a comprehensive Bullying Policy and led a half-day training session on bullying. The headteacher is aware that there are incidents of bullying, but on the rare occasions that they occur, they are dealt with very quickly. Parents, who had raised concerns about bullying, confirmed the school dealt with these effectively.
31. Good records are kept which show the progress of pupils with special educational needs and regular reviews and assessment of targets informs future plans. Individual education plans contain targets that are usually specific and well matched to pupils' ability. The school gives good support to pupils with special educational needs and makes good use of the support available from outside agencies. In class, these pupils often receive sensitive support to enable them to take a full and active part in lessons. For example, in a Year 5 science lesson where the teacher, through her very good questioning and praise, enabled the pupils with special educational needs to make their contributions and take a full part in discussions.
32. The assessment and recording of the pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science is satisfactory. The information collected in each of these subjects is used to track each pupil's progress and to set targets for their future work. The school analyses and uses this assessment information. This then informs the teachers about specific needs that should be included in their future planning and about particular curriculum developments that need to be addressed. For example, in science where the co-ordinator found that the pupils, in their work on separation had difficulty in explaining their ideas in their own words, using the correct vocabulary and explaining why things happen. These problems are being addressed and it is noticeable, for example in science lessons, how carefully the teachers introduce and explain scientific words. Procedures for identifying how well the pupils are achieving in other subjects, as the school has already identified, are limited. Some development has begun to take place in some subjects, such as ICT, but overall there is a lack of information to measure the pupils' achievements and progress, and to inform teachers regarding specific planning and curriculum needs.
33. Arrangements for monitoring personal development are good. The school uses a Progress Report Sheet on which to record issues, such as relationships with others, behaviour, independence, confidence, perseverance and reliability. These help in the preparation of the

annual reports, which contain a comment on social and personal development. A good personal, social and health education programme allows teachers to monitor development in an informal setting. Rewards and stickers for good acts further recognise non-academic achievement.

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

34. This is a school that has a good relationship with its parents. Since the last inspection much work has been devoted to addressing the key issue of working more closely with parents so that the links that the school now has with its parent body are good. Unfortunately these improved links have still to make an impact on the contribution which parents make to the work of the school.
35. Parents have good views of the school. Although very few parents attended the inspection meeting, 34 parents returned the questionnaire and inspectors spoke to parents during the inspection. Most parents think that their children like the school, that teaching is good and it is helping their children to make good progress, that the school is approachable and it is helping their children to become more mature and responsible. Parents raised concerns at the provision for homework but the inspection team found that the homework provided was similar to most schools and that the parents have been involved in establishing the homework policy.
36. Parents are now regularly consulted over a range of issues. Their views were sought over the revised bullying and homework policies together with the School Development Plan. The feedback on these was very positive. New parents are invited to attend an induction evening at the beginning of the term at which ways in which they can help with their children's education, particularly reading, are explained. Weekly assemblies, the annual school concerts and an annual open day provide additional opportunities for them to visit the school. Inspire Workshops, where parents work alongside their children in class have been a great success, as have the courses in ICT and First Aid. At the end of the school day class teachers are available for parents to raise issues and talk informally about the events of the day.
37. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept informed of their children's attainment and progress at regular parents' evenings or when they come into school. They are invited to review meetings to discuss their child's progress and future targets. The school tries hard to involve parents in their children's reviews but this is not always taken up. Parents are usually given or sent a copy of their child's Individual Education Plan.
38. The impact of parents on the work of the school is limited. Currently there is only one parent who helps out on a regular basis. The school has tried to address this by getting parents to come in for half a day each term. It is hoped that by doing so they can encourage them to do more. The number of parents who attend ranges from four to twelve.
39. The quality and quantity of information provided for parents are good. The school prospectus, class curriculum letters, consultation evenings, and particularly the newsletters, all provide good information for parents and a good insight into the work of the school. Parents were particularly pleased with the workshop explaining about statutory testing. The quality of the annual reports is good, with clear information on each child's knowledge and understanding and targets set to address weaknesses. Parents are also invited to comment on their child's progress.
40. In spite of the school's best efforts, the contribution of parents to children's learning at home and at school is limited. Whilst there is a homework policy and parents were given the opportunity to comment on it prior to its implementation, the parents questionnaire indicated that a number of parents are not happy with the amount of homework. In some families, parents support their children by ensuring that homework is completed but that is not always the case.



The parents of pupils with special educational needs support their children's homework well and this has a positive effective upon their learning. The school has run courses to help parents with their children's learning. Some, such as ICT and national tests, were well supported but nobody attended the workshop on reading. The below average attendance level is a further indication of the lack of support from some parents in ensuring that their children attend regularly.

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

41. The school is well led by the headteacher and over the last three years the leadership of the school has become clearly focused on improving the school. The headteacher is effectively supported by the deputy-headteacher and they work as a good team in leading the school. They, with the shared commitment of the staff and governors, have established some ways of securing improvements in the average level of standards achieved and subsequently the overall trend for improvement is now above the rate of improvement seen nationally.
42. The senior management team is large and the headteacher has worked hard to ensure that all individuals are clear about their roles as leaders and managers. All members of the management team are now appropriately involved in monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school in the core curriculum. The leadership of the school recognises their role in ensuring all staff share a common vision and purpose and, whilst the majority of staff are committed to ensuring that the pupils feel safe and valued, there is a need to ensure that all staff share a determination to raise standards across the broader curriculum. The school has put in place good arrangements for Performance Management, which include both teaching and non-teaching staff. Staff targets include challenging targets for raising pupil attainment.
43. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and fulfil their statutory responsibilities satisfactorily. However, they are less proactive in shaping the strategic direction for the school. This is largely due to the workload falling to a small core of dedicated governors rather than being evenly spread.
44. The school is well managed. Over the last two years good systems have been established for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. As a result of this monitoring training needs have been identified and appropriate support put in place in English and mathematics. The school has identified appropriate priorities for improvement and these are well presented in the school development and improvement plans. Aspects of subject management still require further improvement; there is a need to improve the quality and balance of the curriculum for several of the foundation subjects, and to raise standards of attainment across the curriculum. Whilst the school development and improvement plan is clear in identifying the actions that need to be taken in order to secure improvement, it does not always define specific criteria by which the staff and the governing body are able to measure and evaluate the success of the plan.
45. The special needs co-ordinator, senior management team and learning support assistants are effective in promoting the importance of special educational needs throughout the school. Good records are kept and there are effective procedures for the identification, monitoring and review of pupils' progress. The special needs co-ordinator has begun regular informal meetings with support staff to monitor the work that they undertake, and support staff are positive concerning the support he gives them. The co-ordinator also meets with individual teaching staff to discuss the position of their pupils on the special educational needs register. He monitors teachers' planning for aspects concerning those pupils with special educational needs, and has monitored the class work of these pupils. The school has a supportive governor for special educational needs. The headteacher oversees the management of the effective support for those pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Many of these pupils are hearing impaired and are well supported by the HIU in developing their skills.

46. The school is well staffed with good numbers of teachers and learning support assistants. Professional development for the staff is closely linked both to individual reviews and the school development plan, and learning support assistants as well as teachers are fully involved in the process. There are appropriate procedures for the induction of newly qualified teachers and others who are new to the school.
47. The school's accommodation is good overall. The classrooms are a good size, so that teachers can provide the full range of the curriculum and pupils are not restricted in the type of tasks they can undertake in lessons. Learning resources are satisfactory overall across the curriculum.
48. The school development and improvement plan gives an indication of costs and the school uses its specific grant effectively to support the identified priorities for improvement. The school's financial planning is good overall and the school receives good support from its financial officer in setting and monitoring its financial expenditure. The governors are kept well informed by the school's budgetary position. The school applies the principles of best value well. They have thorough processes for comparing their performance with similar schools and when purchasing resources. The school has good processes for consulting with parents and pupils about future developments. For example, they have looked effectively at how other schools have undertaken various developments before deciding what is best for the school, such as the establishment of the ICT suite. Taking into account the context of the school and the outcomes, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **HEARING IMPAIRED UNIT**

49. The pupils with hearing impairment achieve well for their abilities and make good progress towards their individual targets. They make good progress in their speech and language development because of the positive support and encouragement of the Hearing Impaired Unit (HIU) teachers and learning support assistants, and the school's own staff and pupils. The success of the school in developing the speech and language abilities of its hearing impaired pupils can also be seen in the open, confident and friendly way in which most of them talk to visitors to the school.
50. The pupils show an interest in their work and usually show good levels of concentration in the classroom. This on some occasions can be difficult if the background noise level of the class is too loud. They co-operate well with other pupils and their behaviour and attitudes to work are good. The pupils are included in and are encouraged to take part in all aspects of learning activities. In class these pupils receive good support to enable them to take a full and active part in lessons. When withdrawn to work in a group of their own or in a group with other pupils they work well and with interest. The pupils are included in and are encouraged to take part in all aspects of learning activities. They have good relationships with the adults who support them when they are working.
51. The overall quality of teaching is good. The two HIU teachers have formed good relationships with the pupils and are careful to provide a structured but language rich environment. HIU learning support assistants give good support to the pupils in class enabling them to take a full and active part in classroom activities. Class teachers are well aware of the difficulties that hearing impaired pupils face and work hard to include them in all aspects of class and school life.
52. The good support given to the pupils enables them to take part in all aspects of the curriculum and school life. They are involved in school visits, performances and pupil led assemblies. Some pupils are involved in after school activities, but this is made difficult because many of the pupils live some distance from the school and transport can be difficult for some parents to organise.

53. Good records, including videotape, are kept which show the progress of the pupils with hearing impairment and regular reviews and assessment take place, which inform their future targets.
54. The parents of pupils with hearing impairment are kept informed of their children's attainment and progress at regular parents evenings or when they come into school. The parents are invited into school to see their children in class assemblies and other performances and many parents do attend. Regular letters are sent home and parents are always contacted if a specific need arises. A daily home school communications book is also used, especially with younger pupils, so that teachers and parents have another form of contacting each other.
55. The teacher in charge of the HIU, although based in the adjoining infant school, is very involved with the work of the HIU staff who are based in the junior school. All the unit staff meet their pupils in the infant school each morning and so they and the 'teacher in charge' are kept aware of any issues that need to be addressed. The school and the unit have formed good working relations and the staff based in the junior school feel that they are part of a whole school team.

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

(1) The school should:

Raise standards in writing by:

- raising all teachers' expectations of what the pupils can achieve to match that found in the best lessons and classrooms in terms of quantity, fluency, accuracy, punctuation and presentation.
- setting more challenging targets, particularly for the more able pupils and boys. Examine the strategies needed to ensure those pupils are motivated.
- providing frequent harmonious writing 'environments' where pupils are able to work quietly, concentrate and become involved with their work and have sufficient time to complete a sustained piece of writing without interruption.
- extending writing across the curriculum so the habit of pupils achieving high standards of written work, in a variety of forms, is intrinsic to all subject areas.  
(paragraphs 1, 3, 57, 61, 70, 91)

Raise the standards in art and physical education by:

- providing staff training to develop further the teachers' knowledge, skills and confidence;
- sharing the expertise and good practice already in the school with all staff;
- providing opportunities for the subject co-ordinators to check on the standards achieved by the pupils.  
(paragraphs 5, 12, 74-8, 103 - 5)

Improve the ability of foundation subject co-ordinators to monitor pupils' standards and assess how well the pupils are achieving in their subjects and to support teachers in raising standards by:

- providing appropriate training, time and resources to carry out their responsibilities.  
(paragraphs 19, 32, 44, 78, 82, 89, 92, 97, 102, 105, 109)

Improve the attendance of the pupils by:

- continuing to work closely with all parents to ensure their full support in getting their children to school;  
  
(paragraphs 10, 29)

### **Minor issues:**

- Improve the pupils' handwriting and presentation. (paragraphs 62, 70)
- Improve the quality of marking where necessary. (paragraphs 16, 62, 72)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

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

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	4	15	34	1	0	0
Percentage	0	7	28	63	2	0	0

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents two percentage points.*

### *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)	0	217
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	75

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	13
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	37

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

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

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

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	25

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.4

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	1.1
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 (Year 6)***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	28	31	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	20	26
	Girls	25	21	30
	Total	42	41	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (67)	69 (79)	95 (90)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	20	20
	Girls	20	19	22
	Total	34	40	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (62)	68 (74)	73 (85)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
194	8	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
10	1	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
6	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	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.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.5
Average class size	27.3

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	134

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.6
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001/2
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	£
Total income	590213
Total expenditure	584546
Expenditure per pupil	2694
Balance brought forward from previous year	18449
Balance carried forward to next year	24116

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

217

Number of questionnaires returned

34

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	29	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	35	6	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	62	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	47	9	9	6
The teaching is good.	50	44	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	65	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	38	0	0	9
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	41	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	21	71	6	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	32	62	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	24	56	6	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	47	3	0	9



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

### **ENGLISH**

56. Whilst standards in English overall have risen in line with most schools over the last few years, the results of the 2002 national tests and the inspection findings, based upon the work seen in school, show that standards overall are well below average. Standards in reading are just below average and those in writing are well below average. Boys' writing standards are significantly lower than those of girls and their progress is unsatisfactory. Standards in speaking and listening improve well throughout the school and by age 11 their standards are in line with national expectations. The school's data indicates that in reading and writing the pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. However, in the work seen the pupils' progress in writing is slower. The pupils with special needs make good progress overall, largely because of the additional support that they are given.
57. In speaking and listening, there are many opportunities given to the pupils to develop their speaking skills, such as during literacy and numeracy lesson introductions and in response to effective teachers' questioning across the curriculum. The pupils also enjoy many opportunities to practise and adapt their speech to a wider audience when they participate in musical and dramatic productions. Most pupils are able to use a suitable range of language to express their opinions clearly in small groups and will exchange opinions enthusiastically. Many pupils, however, lack the breadth of vocabulary and confidence, to put forward a clear response to the whole class. The pupils from the hearing impaired unit are positively encouraged to voice their opinions in class and they speak with a good deal of confidence. Their fellow classmates support them well by listening with patience and interest. Most pupils listen with interest to stories, instructions and their fellow pupils.
58. The pupils' standards in reading improve satisfactorily by the time that they leave school and they make satisfactory progress. Above average pupils read fluently and expressively and are discerning, independent readers. The school adheres closely to the structure of the Literacy Hour and all pupils take part in frequent guided reading sessions. Strategies are taught within the group to help the pupils attempt unfamiliar words and appreciate the literature but there are limited opportunities for the pupils to practice these in other lessons. The pupils enjoy words and are inquisitive about their meaning. They can talk about characters in a story and identify different types of genre. Some pupils benefit from a member of the Birmingham Reading Volunteer Group who visits the school weekly. Some special educational needs pupils and those learning English as an additional language benefit from the extra support of classroom assistants.
59. The library is used well. All classes are timetabled to visit on a regular basis. The pupils are taught how to use the library during their first term within the school. Apart from changing books, most pupils have time at the start of the lesson to share their opinions of books read during the previous week. This generates interest and enthusiasm, though occasionally teachers' questions could be more focussed to bring out wider elements of the literature. The library is not well resourced, however, with a very limited range of non-fiction books. Due to the heavy usage many of the books are very worn and shabby. In Year 6, the pupils are given a good range of reading material to enjoy and can borrow up to four different books per week. They are enthusiastic about this choice and the independence of using their own Year 6 library. Many of these books can be changed daily as required. The pupils are encouraged to read in depth extracting and retrieving information using the skills of skimming and scanning.
60. Much work has been done to raise the quality of the pupils' writing, particularly boys, but progress remains slow. The pupils are encouraged in literacy lessons to write a wide variety of texts such as instructions, accounts, letter writing and summaries. They are encouraged to write for a wide range of audiences, such as younger children. There is much improvement in the use

of adjectives and adverbs to make sentences more exciting and the pupils are aware of how to use speech marks and paragraphs. They can set a scene. For example one Year 4 pupil described her fantasy land as '*where the sea is made of jelly, the seaweed from lollypops and the sand is like gold dust*'. They are able to describe a character or plan a simple story. However, there are few opportunities to extend writing across the curriculum in any depth. There is much room for improvement in the number of pupils who are consistently working at the higher levels. Special educational needs pupils and those learning English as an additional language achieve well, given the extra support. One pupil from the hearing impaired base, for example, described an alien '*as aggressive as space energy*'.

61. The quality of teaching and learning is mostly satisfactory, with weaknesses, particularly in the teaching of writing. The most effective teaching is where the teacher provides a learning environment that allows the pupils to concentrate quietly for a sustained period. The approach to spelling in English lessons is satisfactory. There are inconsistencies of expectation, however, in other areas of the curriculum. The marking of work is often thorough but very lengthy and complicated for a pupil to read and understand clearly. In some lessons, teachers do not set minimum standards of presentations or quantity of work to be completed during the lesson resulting in much unfinished work. There is a lack of challenge for the most able pupils. The teachers subject knowledge has improved and the introductions to lessons are usually brisk and well matched to the needs of all pupils. However, strategies for teaching writing need to have greater impact on raising standards. The learning support assistants help the special needs pupils well and help them to achieve a high degree of success in their work and in gaining confidence. The pupils overall benefit from the generous allocation of staffing and the ability to be able to set three ways across the year groups.
62. The co-ordinator has worked hard over the last few years to raise the standards in English. She has worked alongside the local authority adviser to analyse the assessment data available and has shared her findings with the staff. She has scrutinised books and monitored teaching and planning. Extra time to develop writing has been placed on the school timetable and there has been in depth analysis of gender issues. These findings form the basis of the next year's development plan in English. However, there is an urgent need to address the inconsistencies in teaching and expectations, making sure all staff reach the level of the best, if the pupils' standards are to improve. Even more challenging targets need to be set.

## **MATHEMATICS**

63. On the basis of the work seen during the inspection, the pupils attain standards close to the national average by the age of 11, although fewer pupils are currently attaining the higher level 5. Standards are significantly higher now than they were at the time of the last inspection. The standards have improved largely because the school has made sure that the teachers have a better understanding of how to teach the subject. The standards in the work seen are similar the results of the 2002 national tests.
64. By the age of 11, the majority of the pupils can successfully apply the formal methods of calculating addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The most able pupils use this knowledge to help them calculate the mean, median and mode from a set of given data. The majority of the pupils understand fractions and are able to reduce them to their simplest form, all but the least able pupils are able to convert fractions into decimals and percentages. Whilst the most able pupils are able to apply this knowledge and can solve problems, such as finding 35 per cent of £25. The least able pupils sometimes become confused when trying to apply the formal written methods of calculation and simple errors are common. They are too heavily reliant on these formal methods and are far less likely to use informal methods or jottings to assist them in solving a problem.

65. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and ranges from satisfactory to very good. The structure of the lessons is appropriate and the planning is good ensuring that the pupils make good progress year-on-year. In one very good lesson in Year 3, the teacher made very good use of the initial part of the lesson to explore the pupils' misconceptions about subtraction. Through careful questioning and exposition she was able to ensure that the majority of the pupils understood that when recording a subtraction sum it is necessary to write the largest number first. Throughout the lesson the teacher provided appropriate activities to challenge all of the pupils within the class, so that by the end of the lesson all pupils had made good progress in understanding how they could use addition and subtraction to solve a variety of problems. In a less successful lesson in Year 6, the opportunity to clarify the pupils' misconceptions through an appropriate plenary session was missed and several pupils who left the lesson were still unclear about how to use division to check the answer of a multiplication problem. In another lesson in Year 4, the teacher's knowledge of the numeracy strategy was not secure and subsequently there was confusion between the use of formal and informal methods of calculation. In the work seen in all year groups the pupils were far less likely to use informal methods of calculation.
66. The school has made a good start in using ICT to support learning in mathematics. There are some good examples of mathematics skills being reinforced and applied well in other subjects particularly science, but, this is an area which requires further development if it is to impact significantly on the quality of learning. Good use is made of the springboard and booster materials provided by the Numeracy Strategy to raise attainment and the school has been successful in raising the attainment of the least able pupils and the higher attaining groups of pupils.
67. The subject is well managed and there has been good progress since the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning is regularly reviewed. The co-ordinator is aware of the inconsistencies in the teaching and gives regular feedback to individual teachers in order to develop their practice. The co-ordinator has carried out a detailed analysis of the standardised tests in each year group. These have identified several areas of weakness in the pupils' learning. These are subsequently addressed through target setting and adapting the curriculum planning to focus specifically on the areas of greatest difficulty. The progress that the pupils make is tracked through the use of these standardised tests and teachers' own assessments of how well the pupils achieve against an identified set of objectives. However, this is currently leading the school to underestimate the level that some pupils might attain by the age of 11 and the school's agreed targets for mathematics are currently not sufficiently challenging.

## **SCIENCE**

68. Standards at age 11 are average and have improved significantly over the last four years. By the time the pupils leave at age 11, they have made good progress since starting the school. The pupils with special educational needs, including those with hearing impairment, also make good progress and there is no significant difference in the progress made by girls and boys. The inspection finding is similar to the results of the 2002 national tests.
69. By age 11, the pupils know how to carry out experiments and investigations to test their predictions and to gain new scientific knowledge. The school realises the value of this type of work and it is already developing it as a strong part of the science curriculum. The pupils understand that tests have to be fair and they use different methods of observing and measuring, including the use of computer linked sensors, when carrying out these tests. The pupils record their test results in various ways but too little use is made of computer programs to help with this part of their work. They know about different parts of their bodies and how diet and exercise can affect it. They know about micro-organisms and bacteria and how different types of cells in our bodies behave. In Year 3, the pupils classify materials into different groups and decide which properties of the materials make them useful for different purposes. The pupils'

knowledge of materials continues to develop so that in Year 6, when studying and making different mixtures of substances, they then separate them back into their original forms where this is possible. The pupils know about various forces, such as friction, and through their friction experiments they have learnt how it is measured and changed. They know some of the properties of sound and light. In Year 6, the pupils use their knowledge of the angle of reflection of light when studying the reflective properties of different materials, and from an investigation into drums in Year 5, they identify factors such as size, material and tightness that can affect sound. The pupils' presentation of their work varies and is sometimes of an unsatisfactory standard. The lower than average writing skills of the pupils also means that some pupils find it difficult to express their thoughts and conclusions in a clear written form.

70. The standard of teaching and learning is good overall and sometimes very good. The teachers plan lessons that have clear and appropriate learning targets. Their lessons often involve practical activities that keep the pupils involved and motivated to learn. These also help the pupils to find out about scientific knowledge in a more meaningful way. The teachers explain scientific words carefully so that the pupils can use them and understand what they mean. The management and discipline of the pupils is usually good and the teachers often use praise effectively to encourage the pupils and raise their self-esteem. The pupils are given opportunities to work together in pairs and sometimes in larger groups and this helps to develop both their scientific and language skills. Although the teachers often question the pupils well to extend and consolidate their learning they do not use a wide enough range of questioning techniques. For example, too many questions are directed to the whole group and answers are then too often taken only from the pupils who have their hands up. In very good lessons, the teacher gives more consideration to the needs of all levels of ability and provide activities and support that are well matched to the pupils differing abilities.
71. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and the information gathered is used to inform the teachers' future planning. The standard of teachers marking is generally satisfactory but is not of a consistent standard across the school.
72. The science co-ordinator is enthusiastic and committed to the improvement of pupils' attainment in science. She has already identified and begun work on a number of areas for development. For instance, the increased use of ICT, and the further use of practical scientific experiments and investigations. At the present time she does not monitor formally the quality of the pupils' learning but realises that this also is an important area for development.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

73. The standards achieved by the age of 11 are well below average and the pupils do not make the expected progress. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection and in this area the school has not made sufficient progress.
74. By the age of 11, the pupils use of line, texture and colour is of a lower standard than expected. Whilst, the pupils are able to mix colours and demonstrate an awareness of primary and secondary colours, they tend not to use a range of shades and tones of colour in their own work. Their use of tools, such as paint brushes is underdeveloped and they demonstrate a lack of care and skill when using them. However, the pupils are able to use clay effectively; they know how to join clay and use these techniques to create pots inspired by the Ancient Greeks and tiles with Islamic designs. Overall the pupils are provided with too few opportunities within lessons to develop their skills and to design their own work from a given starting point, this results in all pupils producing very similar pieces of work.
75. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory as it was at the time of the last inspection. By the time the pupils reach Year 6, they have a limited knowledge of techniques, such as

printing, and their use of tools, such as paint brushes, is underdeveloped. They have a limited knowledge of the work of other artists. However, the chosen activities in the scheme of work do usefully include art from a range of cultures and there are some colourful displays around the school which include examples of the pupils' representations of Russian Icons, Islamic tiles, Maori tattoos and Aboriginal art. In one lesson in Year 6, the pupils were exploring dyeing fabrics linked to their topic on Chemberkoli. The pupils completed the given task but showed a reticence to try out new or different ways of creating patterns when tie dyeing the material. There was little opportunity given for the pupils to compare their ideas and methods and to say what they thought about them.

76. The current scheme of work provides a list of useful ideas and activities and ensures that all pupils have access to a range of paints and materials including clay work. It provides some useful information for teachers on how to develop the skills of making clay pots from coils or slab work. However, the scheme of work does not offer sufficient guidance to teachers in other areas of art to support them in developing the pupils' skills and knowledge.
77. The subject co-ordinator recognises the limitations of the scheme of work and has plans to revise it. There are currently too few opportunities for the pupils to develop their own ideas and the use of ICT is underdeveloped. She has usefully collected samples of work from each class and year group but this work has not yet been moderated to agreed standards and therefore whilst the co-ordinator believes the work to be of a lower standard than would be expected, more work needs to be undertaken to develop a clear idea of what needs to be done in order to improve standards further.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

78. By age 11, the pupils' standards are average and overall they make good progress. This is an improvement upon the findings of the last inspection.
79. A wide range of examples of the pupils' completed work in all year groups shows that teachers have high expectations and that pupils produce thoughtful and carefully finished work. Year 6 pupils have used a variety of materials and components with care and reasonable skill, when producing well finished and constructed working models of fairground rides, using gears to allow controlled movement. They have also begun to understand and use pneumatics to develop movement in a diorama. Whilst there is less evidence of the designing, planning and evaluation of their work, there are some good examples, for instance, Year 5 pupils produced good designs, clearly labelled when developing ideas for a bedside lamp.
80. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In a Year 3 lesson, the class teacher was supported by the subject co-ordinator; they performed a short role-play to stimulate the pupils' ideas about what makes an effective bag for holding clothing for physical education. The pupils responded enthusiastically but their suggestions show their low level of understanding. In all lessons seen, the teachers developed good research skills through analysing a range of products and how they effectively suit their intended use. In a Year 5 lesson, the pupils produced models in paper of their ideas for a pencil case. The pupils had previously looked at a variety of such cases, considering such elements as size and materials. The pupils' responses to the teacher's questions are knowledgeable and at times imaginative. The teaching and approach is consistent throughout the school and this allows the pupils to acquire skills and understanding well as they move through the school and to make good progress.
81. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject, as she works regularly with different classes: during this term she is working with Years 3 and 6. She supports the teachers' planning and has put in place an effective curriculum that provides the pupils with a broad and appropriate range of learning experiences. However, there is no structured approach to assessing the pupils'

standards or progress. In most classes, very few opportunities to display and celebrate the pupils' work are taken.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

82. Standards at age 11 are average and the pupils have made satisfactory progress since starting the school. This is similar to findings at the last inspection.
83. By age 11, the pupils know about different aspects of other countries. For example, Year 6 pupils study India and they are able to identify it and Sri Lanka on a satellite map. They know the difference between an aerial view and a pictorial view and mark on maps the location and names of important features, such as mountains, rivers and cities. They can read and use simple co-ordinates and keys on maps and plans but their knowledge of more advanced co-ordinates and more detailed maps, such as ordnance survey maps, is limited. A school 'World Week' where each class chooses a country to study for that week enhances the pupils' knowledge of other countries.
84. The pupils know how settlements form and grow and why people move from area to area. They know about different types of environment, such as mountains and rainforests and know something of the people, animals and vegetation of these areas. The pupils know how the rainfall cycle works and about the journey of a river. In Year 3, the pupils draw graphs of rainfall when learning about the weather, while in Year 6, they use computer-monitoring equipment to measure environmental temperature changes. The use of ICT is underdeveloped but has been appropriately identified as an area for further development.
85. The school uses the local area of Northfield well. In Year 3, the pupils identify different types of jobs that people, such as their parents, may do. They look at how people travel to work and draw a graph to show the information they have gathered. In their work on buildings in the area they survey and then classify shops into different categories. This type of study is extended in Year 5 when the pupils study the issue of whether or not a by-pass should be built. This study involves the use of a number of geographical skills, such as map work and different surveys, and the pupils show a good understanding of the environmental impact of this issue. The pupils also develop their literacy skills in this work. They write different styles of letters, devise questionnaires, interview people, write up their findings and give their own personal thoughts on the issue.
86. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching seen. In the lessons seen, the teachers' knowledge of the subject was appropriate and clear explanations were given to the pupils. Most of the work expected of the pupils was at an appropriate level but there was sometimes a lack of challenge for the more able pupils.
87. The co-ordinator for geography has only held this responsibility for a short time. She does not at the moment monitor formally the quality of the pupils learning but realises that this is an important area for development. She also realises that other areas of the school's geographical work need to be developed. These include: the development of an assessment and recording system that can provide information concerning the progress of pupils and give information to help teachers in their planning; further extending the use of ICT; improving the pupils' mapping skills.

## **HISTORY**

88. The pupils' standards are broadly average. They make satisfactory progress and enjoy learning about the past. This is similar to findings at the last inspection.

89. In Year 3, the pupils are studying the 'Invaders and Settlers'. They begin to understand that when people move and settle into a new area there are good reasons. Using data collected from a questionnaire completed by members of their own family, they can explain many of the main reasons why adults move house today and are able to compare this to why the Romans invaded and settled all those years ago. They also walk along the Northfield Trail and discuss the buildings to try to understand how life was different in the past. The pupils develop a sense of chronology by time lines prominently displayed in the classroom. In Year 5, the pupils study Ancient Greece and link well with ICT when they use a clip art program to place many pictures within their text.
90. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, although there are weaknesses in extending the pupils' writing skills. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject areas and work is mostly well matched to meet pupils' interests. There is good use of timelines to reinforce pupils' knowledge of chronology. ICT is used effectively to extend knowledge of the Ancient Greeks. In Year 5, the pupils studying Ancient Egypt enjoy being archaeologists and carefully remove 'precious artefacts', such as old beads or a stone carved with hieroglyphics, from the 'black bag'. These cause much animated discussion, as does the discovery about how bodies were mummified. The pupils enjoy discussion and stay focussed on the given tasks. There is a limited range of source material or quality artefacts in some modules to extend the pupils' first hand experience and maintain interest. Some lessons lack variety and pace and some modules have insufficient time to develop all aspects fully. There are some good links between history and other subjects, such as mathematics, art and design and technology. There are no examples of good quality sustained writing, however, to extend literacy skills within history and very few stimulating displays around the school.
91. The school has adopted the national guidelines as its scheme of work but these have not been adapted to match the specific learning needs within the school. The subject co-ordinator has only a limited knowledge of the standards that the pupils are attaining and needs to monitor and assess how well the pupils are achieving. The pupils have many opportunities to visit places of interest. Year 3 visit Lunt Fort as part of their Roman module while Year 4 visit Aston Hall when studying Tudor England. A Tudor Guard and his lady visit the school to bring in weapons and articles of interest whilst Year 5 pupils visit the Birmingham Arts Gallery and Museum when studying the Egyptians. Year 6 pupils enjoy lessons when Professor McGinty brings history to life when he shares his experiences of World War 2. The subject makes a useful contribution to the spiritual and cultural development of the pupils.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

92. Standards at age 11 are average and the pupils make good progress. The pupils with special educational needs also make good progress and there is no significant difference in the progress made by girls and boys.
93. By age 11, the pupils confidently open, save and close the various programs that they work on. They use their word processing skills in other subjects, such as in literacy, where Year 6 pupils write and then illustrate, with imported pictures, a poem about an animal. The pupils use different fonts, colours and styles of print and this can be seen in the work of Year 5 pupils when they are working on a topic about the solar system. The pupils use their data handling skills to input and analyse information. They then show this information in different ways, such as different types of graphs. This work is evident in other subjects, such as mathematics, when Year 5 pupils collect information about team points and then form pie charts of the information. Also in Year 3, where the pupils input data on their favourite things and then print out column graphs of their results. The school has already identified that this type of work needs to be developed further in subjects such as science.
94. The pupils use spreadsheets to enable repeated calculations to be made. This is seen in the

work of Year 6 where the pupils input dimensions and a formula to help them to calculate the areas of different triangles. The pupils explore the possibilities that different drawing programs can offer and they use different drawing, colouring and visual effects to produce pictures, patterns and plans. For example, in Year 4 the pupils produce wrapping paper using repeated designs and in Year 6 the pupils design and draw their ideal school environments. The pupils use programs that simulate everyday situations, such as the frequency of traffic lights changing. In this they explore how different changes in timings and traffic volumes can effect congestion. In their work in science, the pupils use computer-linked sensors to study changes in temperature and speed. For example, in Year 6 when they measure environmental temperature changes, and in Year 5 when the pupils monitor the changing temperature of melting ice. Although the pupils use computers to gain information for use in different subjects from CD's and the Internet, the school realises that this is still an important area for further development.

95. Teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. The teachers' expertise in the subject is developing well, which is not only seen in their explanations and direction of the pupils but also in their reactions when equipment or software are not performing as they should. The teachers give the pupils opportunities to work together and this gives the pupils a good opportunity to develop their co-operative learning skills. When the teaching is good the level of work expected of the pupils is challenging and the pupils are kept busy and active. The pupils respond to this showing an involvement and enthusiasm for their work. In good lessons, technical vocabulary is explained carefully so that the pupils know what the words mean and can use them more confidently.
96. The subject co-ordinator has only held this responsibility for a short time but has already got a clear vision of what needs to be done. She is enthusiastic and committed to the improvement of pupils' attainment in ICT and her teaching in this subject is a good example to others. Although assessment and recording procedures are unsatisfactory at the present time, positive development in this area has already started. The co-ordinator has already identified and made good progress in developing other areas, such as increasing the use of ICT across the curriculum. At the present time she does not monitor formally the quality of the pupils' learning but realises that this is an important area for development.

## **MUSIC**

97. The pupils' standards are average and they make satisfactory progress in music and enjoy participating in musical activities. There is now adequate provision and sufficient opportunities are created for the pupils to compose and perform. This is an improvement to findings at the last inspection.
98. Year 3 pupils are able to compose rhythmic patterns based on a group of words with a different number of syllables. In Year 4, the pupils enjoy responding to different styles of music through drawing and language. They are able to identify some instruments used on the recordings. By Year 5, the pupils can use a pentatonic scale to compose and perform melodies with four beats. They are able to use combinations of minims, crotchets and quavers for this purpose and begin to name notes on a stave. Terminology, such as forte and crescendo, are being used and they understand the string, woodwind, brass and percussion sections within an orchestra. The pupils in Year 6 are enthusiastic about listening to music from India, Africa and China. They are able to appreciate the cyclic patterns and can compare the structure to western music.
99. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching seen. Effective use is made of the visiting peripatetic teacher who teaches modules with class teachers in attendance. She is able to demonstrate good teaching where lessons move at a brisk pace. The pupils tackle a variety of challenging and stimulating activities and high expectations of appraising, composing and performing are set. This support is enabling the non-musical members of staff to teach to at least a satisfactory standard when the same module



is covered the following year. Occasionally some teachers, however, lack the confidence and subject knowledge to pursue some composition work. A few pupils become restless when they have to listen for a long time rather than actively participating and there are a few instances when tasks at the same level are being covered by successive year groups and progress is not in place.

100. There is a school choir taken by the visiting specialist teacher. The pupils have the opportunity to sing in the community, including participating in a charity concert of 'Sinbad the Sailor' at the Birmingham Symphony Hall. The school also benefits from the services of a visiting specialist brass teacher, which allows some Year 6 pupils to have the opportunity to learn how to play the trombone or cornet and good progress is made.
101. The subject co-ordinator effectively uses the skills of the visiting specialist teachers to compensate for the lack of subject expertise on the staff. There are good quality resources, lesson plans and further ideas to support every music module being taught in the school. Effective whole school planning is in place. The range of instruments is adequate. There are some cross-curricular links with English and the subject makes a good contribution to the cultural development within the school. There is no structured assessment in place, however, monitoring is limited and the school recognises the need to further the use of ICT.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

102. By age 11, the pupils' standards are below average and the pupils make unsatisfactory progress. This is a decline in the standards found at the last inspection.
103. Whilst the quality of teaching and learning seen in lessons was at least satisfactory, the standards exhibited by the oldest pupils indicates that there has not been sufficient challenge and rigour in raising these standards. In a minority of lessons, progress was slowed by a number of older pupils whose poor behaviour and lack of interest meant that teachers had to give time to dealing with them. The teachers dealt with the situation satisfactorily and, in most lessons, the pupils' attitudes to the work were positive. In the best lessons, the good knowledge of the teachers ensured that the pupils knew what they were doing and effective teaching points were given to the pupils to raise their standard of performance. This was seen in a Year 3 lesson, where the pupils worked very well, thinking about what they had to do and being encouraged by the teacher to extend their skills when exploring different ways of moving using as many different body parts as possible. The effective organisation of the lesson provided plenty of opportunities for the pupils to practise and improve their skills. Year 5 pupils were learning to hold and use correctly a badminton racquet; the teacher provided a range of very good activities that focussed upon extending their skill. These lessons challenged the pupils and they responded well. In some lessons, however, the pupils were not challenged as effectively and teachers were less successful in improving the quality of the pupils' performance; their subject knowledge and expectations were not high enough. The pupils were not given sufficient opportunities to evaluate their own and other pupils' work and this meant that the pupils lacked a clear understanding of how well they were achieving and what they needed to do to improve.
104. The subject co-ordinator is a specialist in this subject. He is enthusiastic but has only a limited knowledge of the standards that the pupils are attaining and needs to monitor and assess how well the pupils are achieving. He supports the teachers' planning and has put in place an effective curriculum, linked to national guidelines. He is involved with pupils from many year groups who take part in clubs and after school activities. There has not been any recent staff training, although a day is planned for to develop the teachers' skills in teaching gymnastics.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

105. Standards for eleven-year-olds are broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
106. The pupils demonstrate a developing understanding of other world religions: for example they know why holy books, such as the 'Torah' and the 'Qur'an', are important respectively to Jews and Muslims, where they are kept and how they should be handled. The pupils are given opportunities to extend their knowledge through visits to local mosques, churches and synagogues. They gain an understanding of the importance of religious ceremonies, such as the Barmitzva within Judaism and Eid. The pupils are able to make comparisons between religions concerning different beliefs and customs about key events such as birth in peoples' lives. The younger pupils are introduced to ideas and beliefs of Christianity; they show a clear understanding of the differences between right and wrong and are able to apply their knowledge to develop the concept of friendship and different relationships.
107. The teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In the four lessons observed during the inspection, all of the teaching seen was satisfactory and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, made satisfactory progress. During one Year 4 lesson, the teacher grouped the pupils in different ways, firstly they worked together in pairs and then in larger table groups in order to explore the different roles and qualities that you need to have to work successfully within a group. This worked successfully and the pupils were able to identify a range of qualities they thought were necessary for working together. This formed a good basis for the further development of work on relationships.
108. The subject co-ordinator has established a coherent scheme of work, however, there has been little monitoring and assessment of how well the pupils are achieving and the standards they attain. There are limited examples of good quality sustained writing to extend literacy skills.