

# INSPECTION REPORT

**HOLLY HILL METHODIST C of E INFANT  
SCHOOL**

Rubery

Rednal

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103479

Headteacher: Mrs J Frost

Reporting inspector: Peter Kerr  
23583

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> November 2002

Inspection number: 246303

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	New Street Rubery Rednal Birmingham
Postcode:	B45 0EU
Telephone number:	0121 4538700
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	John Richardson
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23583	P Kerr	Registered inspector	Mathematics  Music  Physical education	What sort of school is it?  The school's results and pupils' achievements  How well are pupils taught?  What should the school do to improve further?  How well is the school led and managed?
11450	Lee Kuraishi	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development  How well does the school care for its pupils?  How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21893	Vivienne Brittain	Team inspector	Foundation Stage  Art and design  Design and technology  History  Geography	
20003	Susan Metcalfe	Team Inspector	Educational Inclusion  Special educational needs  English as an additional language  English  Science  Information and communication technology	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This voluntary aided Methodist / Church of England infant school and nursery caters for 191 children from the age of three to seven in an area of social and economic deprivation on the edge of Birmingham. Twenty-four pupils are from minority or mixed ethnic backgrounds, including Asian, African and Caribbean, but all speak English as their first language. Children enter the Nursery with well below average attainment. About half of the pupils claim free school meals and about one in four pupils have special educational needs, including physical, behavioural, speech and learning needs. These figures are higher than in most schools. Four pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school is involved in many national and local initiatives including Excellence in Cities. It has won many awards for its work including Achievement Awards from the government in 2001 and 2002. The school's mission statement is: 'Achievement through Christian Care and Commitment'.

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

This is a very good school, whose work clearly reflects its mission statement. It provides very well for the pupils' personal development and enables them to achieve very well to reach above average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 2. It caters well for pupils with above average attainment as well as for a number of pupils with very challenging behaviour. The quality of teaching is good. Management is very good and leadership is excellent. The school manages its finances very well and provides good value for money.

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

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are high and pupils of all backgrounds and abilities achieve very well.
- Good teaching promotes good learning and personal development.
- The curriculum provides a good range of rich and varied learning opportunities for all its pupils.
- The headteacher and governors provide excellent leadership and very good management.
- There is an excellent team spirit in the school and classroom assistants make an invaluable contribution to the pupils' learning.

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

- Opportunities for child-initiated learning in reception.
- Opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Excellent improvements have been made since the school was last inspected in January 1998. All the key issues raised at that time have been successfully addressed. Standards in English and mathematics have risen from very low to above the national average and pupils' achievements in all other subjects are now at expected levels or better by the end of Year 2. Attendance rates have also been improved from below to above the national average, and the quality of supervision at lunchtimes is now good. The school's prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents now fully comply with legal requirements. Leadership has improved and is now excellent. This has led to improvements in teaching and pupils' progress as well as the successful integration of a growing number of pupils with behavioural difficulties into the school. The excellent team spirit has enabled new staff to settle in quickly and make a significant contribution to the school's work. The school's excellent reputation in the area reflects these continuing improvements.



## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	A	A	A	A*
Writing	A*	A	A	A*
Mathematics	A*	A	B	A

Key	
Very high (in the top 5% nationally)	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

These results represent very good achievement for the pupils, reflecting the extra effort the school has put into these subjects since the last inspection. This inspection found that:

- standards in reading, writing and mathematics in the current Year 2 cohort are above average, confirming that the school is on course to maintain the positive trend in test results in 2003;
- the pupils' literacy skills are particularly well-developed. They listen carefully, to understand what people say to them, and are confident in speaking to each other, to adults and to the class or school. They read for meaning and express themselves well in writing;
- pupils of all abilities, including the more able, achieve well because teachers plan suitable challenging activities for the different attainment group in each class. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well relative to their prior attainment because of the very good support they receive. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve as well in lessons as other pupils do. Girls and boys achieve equally well.

Children enter the Nursery with below average attainment overall, and particularly low achievement in communication, language and literacy and mathematics. They make very good progress in the Nursery and Reception to achieve the learning targets for children of this age by the time they begin Year 1, but their achievements in creative development are not as marked as in the other areas of learning. Good progress is maintained throughout Year 1 and Year 2. Pupils achieve very well in science, information and communication technology and dance to reach above average standards. They make particularly effective use of computers to aid their learning, for example in English, mathematics, art and design and music. Standards are average in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and other aspects of PE.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils enjoy coming to school and participate enthusiastically in all the activities provided.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The majority of pupils behave very well. A small number of pupils exhibit very poor behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Good overall. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are very good. Most pupils also get on very well with each other, but a small number of pupils do not appreciate the effect that their poor behaviour has on others.
Attendance	Good. The school's persistent efforts have raised attendance rates to above average and ensure good punctuality.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

- Teaching is good overall, with much very good teaching, especially in the Nursery and in English lessons. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection.
- Teaching is very good in the Nursery, where a lot of the learning takes place through guided play activities. Teaching is good in the Reception classes, where whole class sessions and teacher-directed activities are very effective in teaching the basic skills. The balance between child-initiated and teacher-directed activities is not as good in Reception as it is in the Nursery.
- The teaching of English is very good throughout the school. This is the subject on which the school has placed greatest emphasis and in which teachers are most confident. Literacy skills are taught very effectively in English lessons. However, opportunities are missed to promote writing in other subjects.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers ensure that pupils learn the basic skills of numeracy in a systematic way and apply them to everyday situations such as shopping. Learning through investigations is well established in some classes, but not in all.
- Teachers have consistently high expectations for effort, good behaviour and achievement.
- Teachers and classroom assistants are particularly skilful at managing pupils with special educational needs, including poor behaviour habits. They do this without significant disruption to other pupils' learning or damage to the self-esteem of the pupils concerned.
- Lessons meet the needs of pupils of different ethnic backgrounds and abilities including those with special educational needs. Teachers ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons, through the questions they ask and the activities that they prepare.
- Assessments of pupils' attainment are used very effectively to ensure that lessons build on existing knowledge and skills in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology and increasingly in other subjects.
- Pupils respond very positively in lessons. They show great enthusiasm for learning when lessons are stimulating and put in a lot of effort to do well. When given the opportunity, pupils express their ideas very creatively, for example in dance. Their rate of learning is good overall.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad range of good quality learning opportunities for all its pupils, both within and outside lessons. Improvements are needed to the outdoor learning facilities in the Nursery and Reception. Plans are in hand to do this.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school is very successful in providing for pupils with a wide range of special needs and enabling them to achieve well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for the pupils' personal development overall, with particularly effective provision for their moral and social development. It encourages mature and thoughtful attitudes.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school offers a very good standard of care, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils. It does its best to minimise the effect the poor behaviour of a very few pupils has on the majority.

The school works very closely with parents in the best interests of their children.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent leadership by the headteacher generates an excellent team spirit and ensures a focus on achievement. Very good management by the head, deputy head and senior staff ensures that the school's work is geared towards realising this aim and securing high standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have an excellent understanding of the school. They set high expectations for the quality of its work and offer a very high standard of support to staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The governors and senior staff continuously check the quality of teaching and strive to ensure that the pupils' achieve as well as they can.
The strategic use of resources	The headteacher and governors put all available funds to good use according to the school's educational priorities.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of the curriculum and teaching and the progress made by their children.</li> <li>• The way the school cares for pupils with special educational needs.</li> <li>• The open and friendly nature of the school.</li> <li>• The improved progress of children who transfer to the school from other schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents are concerned about the effect the behaviour of a minority of pupils has on their own children. Complaints include bad language and bullying.</li> </ul>

Fewer than ten questionnaires were returned and only eight parents or carers attended the meeting, so it is impossible to say how widespread the concerns expressed above are. The inspectors agree with the positive views expressed. The inspection found that the school does its best to ensure that the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils does not adversely affect the education or personal development of others, but on a very few occasions, some distress and hurt is caused to some pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics rose dramatically from below average at the previous inspection to well above average in 1999. They have remained well above average overall ever since. In 2000, the results in writing and mathematics were very high – in the top five per cent in the country. In 2002, the mathematics results were lower than in reading and writing, but not significantly. Compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils claiming free school meals, the school generally achieves very high results. In 2002, they were very high in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. A significant feature of the results is that the proportion of pupils attaining above average results is much higher than in similar schools, reflecting the good provision the school makes for more able pupils.
2. The inspection evidence confirms that pupils in Year 2 are on course to reach above average standards in all three subjects in 2003, maintaining the positive trend in the schools test results. This represents very good progress and very good achievement because these children entered the nursery with well below average attainment overall. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment achieve very well because of the support they receive. Higher-attaining pupils achieve very well, especially in the key subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, because lessons make them think and extend their understanding. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and make very good progress towards their individual learning targets. Pupils from ethnic minorities achieve as well as other pupils in all classes and boys and girls achieve equally well.
3. Children enter the Nursery at the age of three with much lower levels of knowledge, understanding and skills than would normally be expected for children of this age. The children's communication, language and literacy skills are particularly poor, as is their mathematical knowledge and their personal and social development. They make very rapid progress in the Nursery, but their attainment is still below average when they transfer to the Reception classes. Good progress is maintained in the Reception year so that by the time they have completed the Foundation Stage at the end of this year, most children have achieved the nationally expected early learning goals for this age group. This means that pupils' attainment is broadly average when they begin the National Curriculum in Year 1. Their accomplishments are greatest in literacy and mathematics and in their personal and social development because of their relatively low starting points and the emphasis on these aspects of their development throughout the Foundation Stage. Good progress is evident in the children's physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. They achieve well to reach expected standards in these areas of learning. They reach expected standards in creative development, but do not achieve as well in this area as in the others because of reduced opportunities for creative activities in Reception.

4. Standards in English are good and pupils achieve very well, reflecting very good teaching. Pupils listen well in lessons and in group discussions. Regular sessions on the computer, during which they follow instructions through headphones, help them to listen carefully. They speak confidently enough in small groups and to larger audiences, but this aspect of their development is not as strong as their listening. They read well, with higher-attaining pupils reading a wide range of texts with fluency, accuracy and expression. The content of their writing is very good, but the quality of their handwriting and presentation needs improving.
5. Standards in mathematics are above average. Pupils have good basic numeracy skills and perform mental calculations with enthusiasm and good levels of accuracy during lessons. They have a good knowledge and understanding of shape for their age, and use the basic metric units for measuring length, weight and capacity with greater than expected confidence. Higher-attaining pupils achieve well because of the opportunities they have to explore patterns and follow through more challenging tasks. They make particularly good progress in these aspects of their work when supported by classroom assistants. On other occasions, however, the most able do not extend their understanding quite as much as they could because not all the teachers have the confidence to encourage exploration and investigation.
6. The pupils' results in school-based assessments in science at the end of Year 2 were very high in 2002, both compared with all schools nationally and compared with similar schools. The inspection found that standards are above average in science and pupils achieve very well. A strong feature is the way the pupils gain much of their knowledge and understanding through experimentation. On occasions, progress is hindered by an over-reliance on worksheets. This limits the extent to which the pupils explain their experiments in writing.
7. Pupils achieve very well in information and communication technology to reach above average standards. Of particular note is the extent to which they use computers and other information and communication technology equipment to aid their learning in other subjects. They do this more effectively than most pupils of their age. Pupils achieve well in art and design, design and technology, geography, music and physical education to reach average standards. In the dance aspect of physical education, pupils achieve exceptionally well to reach above average standards. They express themselves with grace and control as they create their own movements to music. Standards in history are average. Although pupils' achievements are satisfactory, they do not learn as effectively as they do in geography. This is because there has been less continuity in the leadership and management of history than geography. However, a subject leader has now been appointed to lead developments in history, and has drawn up plans to redress this slight imbalance in standards.

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

8. Due to the dedication of the staff and their strong Christian commitment to high quality care, the pupils' behaviour, personal development and relationships have improved from satisfactory to good since the last inspection. Their attitudes are very good.

9. All parents agree that their children enjoy coming to school and develop very positive attitudes to learning. This makes a strong contribution to the good progress they make and the standards they achieve. Pupils of all ages show a great interest in the wide range of activities made available and they value their own achievements and those of others. The pupils' collaborative attitudes have a very positive influence on their learning. In a Year 2 design and technology lesson, for example, one girl helped another pupil who was stuck by saying: "If you can't write properly on the curve, turn the paper around". This enabled the lower-attaining pupil to make progress.
10. The pupils' respond particularly well when good teaching enables them to understand the task well. They work quickly and independently in these circumstances, which helps their learning. Pupils love getting the right answer and all concentrate well, which enables them to stay on task to the end and this has a positive effect on their learning. In most lessons teachers share the objectives with pupils, who respond in a mature way and pay good attention to the lesson. In lessons where pupils are not given this opportunity, the level of concentration is not so high.
11. Most pupils behave well and are very respectful and considerate towards each other. Through the supportive behaviour policy, pupils quickly learn the behaviour that is expected of them. As a result they learn to take turns and share, and most resolve their differences without using physical force or angry words. At break times, pupils engage in a range of activities, some of which are boisterous but very good-natured. However, a very few boys have severe behavioural problems. The teachers and classroom assistants manage these pupils extremely well, but from time to time, particularly when there is only one adult with the class, some of the children find it impossible to control their anger. On these occasions, bad language or hitting out at other pupils causes the pupils responsible to be removed from the class. There were no exclusions during the year preceding the inspection, but the school has to work very hard indeed to keep some of these very disturbed pupils included in lessons. The majority of pupils know that other pupils and staff will value their efforts for behaving sensibly.
12. Relationships are good overall. Most pupils have very good relationships with members of staff and with each other. They are generally polite and courteous and can be relied upon to carry out any tasks required without prompting. For example, they put the chairs away in an orderly manner at the end of assemblies. The good relationships in the school engender good personal development for all pupils. The staff know the pupils well and understand their needs. As a result, the pupils grow in confidence and develop self-assurance. Pupils respond well to the responsibilities that are provided for them within the school and take the initiative well when they have the opportunity. They respect their school and take good care of resources and school property. Mutual respect and tolerance are most noticeable features of the school. Pupils of different gender, ability and ethnic background work happily together, learning naturally about each other's points of view. Pupils have a good understanding that other people's beliefs may be different from their own.
13. Attendance has improved considerably since the last inspection from below to above the national average due to the school's tireless efforts to ensure that pupils attend school whenever possible. There are no unexplained absences.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching is good overall, with no unsatisfactory teaching and much teaching that is very good. This is an excellent improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory in one in ten lessons and good or better in one third with only a small amount of very good teaching. Teaching was good or better in 29 of the 39 lessons seen during this inspection and very good or better in 13 of them, many of these in the Nursery and in English lessons. One excellent lesson was seen.
15. Teaching is good overall in Nursery and Reception, with very good teaching in the Nursery, where a very good balance is achieved between child-initiated and adult-directed activities. In the Reception classes, the children enjoy a wide range of activities that are particularly effective in promoting language and social development. Direct teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is particularly effective, enabling the pupils to achieve very well in these key areas. This prepares the children well for the full literacy and numeracy lessons they will experience in Year 1. During the inspection, a successful balance between child-initiated and teacher-directed activities was not quite achieved in the reception classes. The children did have opportunities to choose activities, but, during some of these, teachers and classroom assistants were too quick to guide the children towards fixed outcomes. This was partly because of nervousness about the inspection process. Planning for the year as a whole includes sufficient opportunities for learning through child-initiated activities. The school is aware of the need to keep this at the heart of nursery and reception provision. There are some good opportunities in Reception for children to express themselves creatively, for example through music, but opportunities to paint freely are limited.
16. The main strengths in teaching throughout Year 1 and Year 2 are:
  - high expectations of all pupils to work hard, behave well and achieve as well as they can;
  - close and very effective teamwork between teachers and classroom assistants, enabling the pupils to gain maximum benefit from the available adult help and so learn at a good rate;
  - meticulous planning of lessons to ensure that they meet the needs of all pupils, with specific questions and tasks for the more able and support for all who need it;
  - very effective use of formal and informal assessment procedures to ensure that lessons build on existing skills in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, and increasingly in other subjects;
  - very good relationships with the pupils, good classroom organisation and very good management of the pupils, with high expectations for effort and achievement.
17. The teaching of dance is particularly effective in most classes in Years 1 and 2. The pupils respond to stimulating lessons with creativity and sustained effort to produce standards of performance that are higher than in most infant schools. The quality of teaching observed was good in art and design, design and technology, science and geography and was satisfactory in history and music.

18. Pupils generally respond very positively to any opportunities to express themselves creatively, whether it be through art, music, writing or dance. Their rate of learning and personal development is very good on these occasions. They also persevere well when asked to undertake extended tasks, such as making bigger and bigger squares in mathematics and counting the numbers. They are keen to learn, and apply themselves well to most tasks. In lessons in which teachers lack confidence and expertise in the subject, opportunities are missed for pupils to explore and develop their own ideas to the same extent. This was observed, for example, in some mathematics, music and dance lessons, while in other lessons in the same subjects, the teachers' expertise facilitated good creative learning. In some subjects, such as science, the pupils' progress is held back on occasions because of the difficulty they have remembering key words that they have learned.
19. Teaching is very good in English, enabling pupils to make very good progress from a low start and to achieve very well. Teachers are particularly skilled at enabling pupils of all levels of prior attainment to learn at an appropriate rate and achieve suitably high standards in this subject. The basic skills of literacy are taught very effectively in English lessons. Pupils have opportunities to apply and develop them to some extent in other lessons, but this is an area for further improvement, especially with regard to the use of worksheets in other subjects, for example science and history, which limit the pupils' opportunities for written self-expression.
20. Mathematics is taught well overall, with due regard to the basic skills of numeracy. As a result, the pupils are confident in their knowledge and understanding of number and shape and the metric system of measurement. Sometimes teachers miss opportunities to extend the pupils' learning through exploration. Nevertheless, the very good use teachers make of assessment information to provide suitably challenging work for pupils at different attainment levels ensures that pupils achieve very well overall.
21. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good, with some very good features. In the Foundation Stage, teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the children's needs and match activities well to their individual requirements. In Years 1 and 2, teachers and classroom assistants work together very closely to ensure that pupils with individual learning targets make good progress towards them, especially in English and mathematics lessons. In other lessons, for example art and design and music, teachers ensure that these pupils have the support they need to complete the same tasks as the rest of the class. Teachers and classroom assistants (including Inclusion Assistants) support pupils with behavioural needs very effectively. A very small number of pupils exhibit very unusual behaviour traits. The school does its very best to fully include these pupils in all lessons and activities, but members of staff need more training on how best to manage the most challenging behaviour. The learning of the four pupils with statements of special need is well planned and supported by classroom assistants. This support is often given in a group context to develop social skills and modify behaviour.

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



22. The school's curriculum meets all legal requirements. It covers the Foundation Stage for pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes and the full Key Stage 1 National Curriculum and religious education for Years 1 and 2. It meets the needs of all children and pupils well, especially in its provision for their personal and emotional development and the improvement of their basic literacy skills.
23. The Foundation Stage curriculum prepares the children in Nursery and Reception well for Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum. It is securely based on the nationally recommended six areas of learning for young children and provides a good range of interesting and relevant activities to enable children to learn well. Planning for each subject in Years 1 and 2 ensure that lessons develop knowledge and skills systematically. Subjects are linked together very effectively through common themes each term for each year group. Information and communication technology is widely used throughout the school to support other subjects, including literacy, numeracy, design and technology and music. The school's strategies for teaching literacy are very good, with very good teaching and learning in English lessons. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to speak, listen, read and write in a range of situations, but in some subjects, opportunities for writing are too limited. Arrangements for teaching numeracy are good. Basic skills are taught well in mathematics lessons and pupils have good opportunities to use them in other subjects.
24. Enrichment of the curriculum is good. A wide range of educational visits enhances the pupils' education. These include theatres, the ballet, museums, botanical gardens and concerts. They contribute well to the pupils' social skills and independence as well as to their knowledge and understanding. The range of extra activities provided during and outside school hours is very good indeed for an infant school. Reception children have the opportunity to be members of their own art club. Sports, music, dance, drama are well provided for in Years 1 and 2. Pupils take part in performances in the community and have won local competitions. The school makes sure that all pupils are fully included in all activities and have equality of access and opportunity regardless of gender, ethnicity, background or prior attainment.
25. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support to enjoy a full curriculum. This aspect of provision has improved since the previous inspection. Support is primarily targeted towards literacy and numeracy, but pupils with emotional or behavioural needs are also very well supported. Teachers and classroom assistants are very effective in helping to raise their confidence and self-esteem and enabling them to take part in most activities. Training and support from experts outside the school enables teachers and classroom assistants to include pupils with specific difficulties, such as autism, as fully as possible in lessons. Pupils who exhibit very poor behaviour are taken out of the classroom when their behaviour becomes offensive or dangerous. This option is always a last resort, however, so that disruption to their education is kept to a minimum.
26. The arrangements for pupils' personal, social and health education are very good. For example, a well-planned and structured scheme - 'Education for Citizenship' - enables pupils to develop an understanding of what being a member of a community means. The 'squaddies' system is a practical application of this, in which older pupils volunteer to ensure that nobody is friendless and all have someone to play with at playtimes. Sex education and the development of an awareness of the dangers of the misuse of drugs and medicines prepare pupils well for future life. Key messages are reinforced well in science and literacy lessons.

27. The school has very good relationships with nearby schools, nurseries, pre-school playgroups and parents and toddlers groups. The links with the nearby junior school are also very good. Teachers from the two schools meet regularly to ensure a smooth transition for the pupils.
28. The community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. For example, the local police, fire, first aid and medical services come to the school to undertake health checks and contribute to personal development programmes. The school is also involved in an education business partnership and has links with the community worker and Church ministers. The pupils also use their considerable artistic and musical talents to support many community events.
29. Provision for the pupils' personal development is very good overall. Very good provision is made for their moral and social development and good provision is made for their spiritual and cultural development. Central to the school's work is the way it leads pupils towards a clear set of values based on its Christian commitment. Good relationships, based on caring for all individuals equally, are at the heart of this provision. The pupils are taught to value themselves and each other, and to understand and follow the rules that govern the school community. For many of them, the expectations within school are at odds with those in the wider world in which they live. The school helps them to understand this and to strive towards higher standards of behaviour and more positive attitudes and relationships. All but a very small number of seriously disadvantaged pupils are brought to an understanding of right and wrong and do their best to behave well and care for one another. Thoughtful assemblies and class discussions place all these considerations into a spiritual context. Opportunities are taken to encourage pupils to appreciate the wonders of the natural and man-made world, for example in science and geography lessons. In art and design, music and dance lessons, pupils are given very good opportunities to develop their aesthetic appreciation. Good provision for the pupils' cultural development includes the many visits outlined above as well as the range of stories, poetry, art and music from around the world that they are introduced to in lessons. The school also prepares the pupils well for life in a more multicultural society than that represented by their immediate area, for example by a demonstration of Divali customs by visiting Hindus. However, the customs of some of the ethnic minorities represented are not always fully appreciated and celebrated as much as they could be.

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

30. The care and support offered to the pupils are very good. The school has a warm and caring atmosphere where all teachers and support staff know the children and their families well and are fully aware of their needs. The school has good induction procedures for new pupils. As a result, pupils establish confident and trusting relationships and settle down quickly in the school. Parents' response to the questionnaire and pupils talking to the inspectors confirm that the school provides a caring environment where all pupils feel safe and secure.
31. The school complies with the locally agreed child protection procedures. These provide clear instructions about action to be taken and how cases will be followed up by other local authority agencies. Teaching and non-teaching staff are aware of the procedures and know what action to take if the need arises. Mid-day staff are aware of the procedures but they have not had formal training. Pupils with special educational needs, including emotional needs, receive good support from appropriate agencies.
32. The school pays good attention to health and safety matters. Governors undertake regular risk assessments of the premises and the cleaner in charge takes very good care

to ensure that the buildings, equipment and the school grounds are free from health hazards. The general cleanliness of the buildings and the upkeep of the grounds are of highest standards. Teachers and support staff promote hygiene very well as part of the curriculum. For example, head-lice leaflets have been distributed to parents and the dental nurse visits school regularly. Visits from a chef to talk about hygiene and rewards for good toilet behaviour also contribute to good hygiene. There are good arrangements for first aid and the school cares sympathetically for sick pupils. The school immediately informs parents in case of an emergency or if a pupil becomes ill whilst at school. The pupils' use of the Internet is closely supervised so that they do not have access to unsuitable sites.

33. Procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality are very good. A computerised attendance system provides very good information, including overall figures for individual pupils. The assistant learning mentor uses the information effectively to support pupils and parents with attendance difficulty. The class with best attendance is presented with a trophy in the school assembly. This promotes competition for good attendance and punctuality among pupils. Attendance registers are marked in accordance with the legal requirements and the teachers ensure their safekeeping.
34. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very effective overall. A system of mutually agreed, simple, but very effective, school rules supports positive behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to behave well through range of strategies such as praise, good work stickers, award of certificates and praise in assemblies. Vulnerable children are supported well in the playground. 'Squaddies' look out for children who are on their own, and offer them friendship and help. All staff understand the school's procedures for dealing with difficult behaviour, but they need more specific training and advice on how best to handle the most aggressive and unacceptable behaviour.
35. Parents feel that rewards and sanctions are appropriate and are applied consistently to motivate pupils to behave well or to reflect on their unsociable behaviour. They confirm that pupils' behaviour is generally good and has improved since the school was last inspected. However, a small number of parents expressed concern about bullying and intimidation by some boys. The inspection findings confirm that whilst most pupils behave well, some pupils behave inappropriately. However, the school is aware of this situation. Incidents of bullying are taken seriously and good systems are in place to deal with any concerns.
36. Procedures for tracking and supporting pupil's personal development are very good. Older pupils are encouraged to support younger pupils and those who are in need of help, for example. Parents are provided with regular reports on their children's personal development. Pupils speak positively about transfer procedures to the junior school. The newly appointed assistant learning mentor is very effective in drawing on the expertise of other agencies to support pupils and their families who have social or learning difficulties. For example, the child and adolescence mental health services are working with the school to promote the mental health of the under-fives and their families. Co-operation and funding was also obtained from Birmingham City Council Education Services for supporting a course for parents on Anger Management.

37. Educational support and guidance are good. The school has used test results and other assessment information very effectively to raise standards in English, mathematics and science. These systems continue to be improved. Good procedures have also been effective in tracking the development of pupils' information and communication technology skills and ensuring rapid progress. In other subjects, teachers have used informal whole class assessments well to pitch lessons at the right level of difficulty. More rigorous systems are now being introduced to enable teachers to track the progress of individual pupils more effectively in every subject. The school is wisely introducing these in a measured and manageable way so that teachers have a workable system that supports their efforts to plan increasingly effective lessons. Pupils with special gifts or talents are identified and supported, as well as pupils with special educational needs so that all pupils are helped to make good progress relative to their prior attainment.

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

38. The school's partnership with parents is strong. Parents are pleased with the quality of education provided for their children and with the standards achieved by the school. They praise the approachability, professionalism and friendliness of the staff. They are pleased that their children develop such positive attitudes to learning and make good progress. All parents agree that their children like school and that the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. The inspection confirms these positive views and agrees with comments made by some parents that there is a small number of pupils who disregard rules of behaviour and act in an aggressive manner which can be distressing to others.
39. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting confirmed that arrangements for settling their children in the school are flexible and very supportive. The teachers meet with parents before their children start school and focus on promoting the partnership between home and school so that the school gets to know the children quickly and a supportive partnership continues through out the child's school life. Those parents who spoke with the inspectors felt comfortable in approaching the school to enquire about their children's welfare and progress. All parents feel that school values them as partners in their children's learning. They are welcome to the many activities provided by the school. Inspectors observed parents talking to teachers and helping their children to settle down in the class. The school values this contribution from parents and makes good use of such opportunities for an informal chat about any concerns.
40. Information for parents is presented in an attractive, user-friendly way that keeps them up-to-date. The school prospectus, for example, is easy to read and contains useful information, including how to make contact with the school. Homework tasks involve parents, who respond well and offer good support for their children's learning. Pupils' annual progress reports are good. They give clear information about how well children are doing and how parents can help them to improve.
41. There are good opportunities for parents to visit school, such as parents' evenings, open mornings, presentation assemblies, class assemblies and literacy workshops. Parents are kept informed about these events through regular newsletters and the

school calendar and a strategically placed notice board in the school, which displays notices on information of interest to parents.

42. The school values consultation with parents and seeks their views through formal and informal feed back. A smaller number of parents help in classrooms than is found in many schools but they make good contribution to the pupils' learning. Some parents expressed concern that homework is not marked regularly. Inspectors found that marking of homework varies between year groups but is generally satisfactory.
43. Parents and grand parents work in partnership with the school to support the children's learning and behaviour. There is a small parents' association. It organises many school events, raises substantial money for school funds and has contributed to major developments, including substantial equipment for the pupils' play area. Parents organised a successful cycling day to raise funds and they have contributed towards a buffet meal for a parents' training courses.

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

44. The leadership provided by the headteacher and chair of governors is excellent. They work together very closely and effectively to ensure that the work of the school reflects its mission statement, which is: 'Achievement through Christian Care and Commitment'. For example, they successfully led the drive to improve standards following the last inspection without diminishing the quality of care and guidance offered to pupils and provision for their personal development. Excellent collaboration between the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior staff provides a very strong sense of purpose so that all members of staff feel that they are part of a united team working towards a common goal.
45. Governors give excellent support to the school. The chair of governors gives a strong lead in gathering information about the school's performance and ensuring that the governing body plays a full and active role in shaping the direction of the school and holding it to account for the standards achieved. Although Methodist and Church of England ministers sit on the governing body and provide spiritual support for the school, its main work is evidently geared towards enabling all pupils to achieve well, regardless of faith, ability, background or gender. The governors are rightly concerned about the balance between the support given to pupils with emotional difficulties and ensuring that all other pupils have full opportunities to learn effectively. They share these concerns very clearly with parents in their Annual Report. They also ensure that the school's main priorities are clearly reflected in the school development plan.
46. The headteacher is very effective in delegating responsibility to other members of staff and enabling them to fulfil their roles very effectively. All teachers have therefore been able to play a key role in raising standards in one or more subjects. This has been particularly evident in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. In these subjects, the teachers responsible have provided good quality training for staff, kept a good overview of standards by looking at pupils' work and helped teachers improve their teaching. This has ensured very high quality provision and high standards. The very positive and supportive whole-school leadership also motivates teachers to tackle recently accepted responsibilities with

enthusiasm, for example in history, where key areas for improvement have been identified very quickly.

47. The management of the school is very good. Very effective systems are in place to guide all aspects of the school's work. A clear school development plan sets out the school's educational goals and the school's resources are very effectively marshalled towards achieving them. The headteacher and governors work very closely together to ensure that all the funds allocated to the school are spent on their allotted purpose. The school's underlying aims continue to guide this work. For example, when the school becomes aware that a child with specific needs is to be admitted, appropriate training is arranged for the members of staff most closely involved. The deputy headteacher, who is responsible for special educational needs, manages this and all other aspects of provision for this group of children very effectively.
48. The school is very thorough in comparing its performance with other schools and striving for excellence. The governing body draws on a wide range of expertise, which it uses well in ensuring that best value is achieved in all spending decisions. A very productive but relaxed link is maintained with the community centre, with which some facilities are shared, and parents are fully consulted and informed about major developments.
49. Procedures for supporting staff in their professional development and improving the contribution they make to the work of the school are very good. Classroom assistants as well as teachers are involved in formal discussions about their individual needs and responsibilities and how these tie in with the school's priorities. This promotes equality and helps to cement the team spirit among the staff. The decision to deploy a deputy headteacher as well as headteacher as non-teaching staff gives the school leeway to release other teachers to fulfil management roles and undertake training without having to rely on supply teachers. This ensures minimum disruption to the smooth running of the school.
50. The administration of the school is very effective. The secretary and clerical assistant are very competent. They run the office in a relaxed and friendly but very efficient way, making full use of up-to-date computer technology. The headteacher has complete confidence in them and is able to rely on them to look after the day-to-day running of the school. Very good examples were observed during the inspection of information being provided very promptly and efficiently to enable the headteacher to deal quickly with matters as they arose.
51. Staffing levels are good and the school has good resources to support the full curriculum. The building is bright and welcoming but is too small to meet some current needs. In particular, there is insufficient office and meeting space. For example, the headteacher often has to meet with parents and other visitors in either cramped or open areas, making confidentiality difficult. The governors have plans in hand to extend office facilities, but do not yet have sufficient funds to do so.

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

52. In order to continue raising standards in all parts of the school and in all subjects the governors and headteacher should:

1. review and enhance the role of child initiated learning in reception (paragraphs 3,15,55,61,63,68)
2. provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English (paragraphs 6,19,23,74,83,93).

In addition, governors should consider including the following in the school's development plan:

- arranging specific training for staff in how best to handle pupils who exhibit extremely challenging behaviour (paragraphs 21, 34)
- making more imaginative use of ethnic diversity in school to prepare pupils for life in multicultural society (paragraph 29)
- providing formal training for all staff in child protection procedures (paragraph 31)
- improving the quality of handwriting and presentation (paragraphs 4,72)

The inspection evidence also supports the governors' judgement that providing more office and meeting space is a high priority.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	39
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

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

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	12	16	10	0	0	0
Percentage	3	30	41	26	0	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25	166
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	90

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	24

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.4

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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



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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	26	21	47

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	25	25
	Girls	21	21	20
	Total	43	46	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (93)	98 (97)	96 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	21	26
	Girls	20	16	21
	Total	43	37	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (97)	79 (95)	100 (97)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	8
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	5
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	142
Any other minority ethnic group	11

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.8
Average class size	27.6

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	220

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	551,196
Total expenditure	537,760
Expenditure per pupil	2,923
Balance brought forward from previous year	57,552
Balance carried forward to next year	70,988

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	191
Number of questionnaires returned	9

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	44	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	33	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	22	0	0	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	56	33	0	11	11
The teaching is good.	78	22	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	56	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	89	0	11	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	22	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	33	56	0	11	0
The school is well led and managed.	67	33	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	33	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	33	11	0	33

### **Summary of parents' and carers' responses**

Fewer than ten parents returned the questionnaires. These were very supportive of the school with no significant reservations.

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Apart from individual complaints, the eight parents at the parents' meeting were very supportive of the school. They especially appreciated the support given to pupils with special educational needs. Some parents expressed concern about the unacceptable behaviour of one or two boys. They were concerned about the effect of bad language and in one case intimidating behaviour on their children. The inspection found that some boys do behave in unacceptable ways, but that the school manages these pupils, who have severe emotional problems, very well on the whole, keeping the impact on other pupils to a minimum. However, inspectors commend the school's plans to provide teachers with more training in handling the most aggressive behaviour.

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

## **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

53. Good provision for the Foundation Stage at Holly Hill gives the children a secure basis for their future learning. The children enter the Nursery with a wide range of attainment that is well below average overall. Many have poor communication skills and their personal and social development is limited. Their mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world are also well below average. The children make very good progress, so that, by the time they leave the Nursery, they are working just below expected levels in these areas of learning. Children also achieve well overall in the Reception classes. They achieve very well in the key areas of literacy, mathematics and personal and social development. Some are on course to exceed the nationally expected early learning goals in these areas by the end of Reception. There are no differences in attainment between boys and girls or between children from different ethnic groups. Very good provision for those children identified as having special educational needs ensures that they take part in all activities and make equal progress to other children.
54. Teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was satisfactory. It is now good overall, and very good in the Nursery. Key strengths in the teaching include:
- very good teamwork between teachers and nursery nurses to ensure that lessons meet the learning needs of all children;
  - very good class management and relationships ensure that children settle down well and grow in confidence;
  - very good teaching of personal and social development and of basic skills for literacy and mathematics, enabling children to achieve very well in these key areas.
55. A very good balance between teacher-directed learning and child initiated activities is achieved in the nursery. Many activities enable the children to learn through investigation and play. In the Reception classes, the direct teaching is very good, but occasionally these lessons go on for too long and some children become restless and inattentive. Pupils have a range of opportunities to initiate their own activities, and sometimes these are effective in enabling them to learn through exploration. Occasionally, however, teachers, classroom assistants and other helpers are too anxious to direct the children towards expected outcomes.

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

56. Children already have positive attitudes to their learning. They enjoy coming to school and form good relationships with the staff. In all classes children work and play happily with a good degree of independence and with increasing confidence. Routines are well established so that children know what is expected of them and feel secure. As a result of this their behaviour is good. Children's concentration in group and class sessions is growing. They are beginning to listen to each other and most know how to take turns in speaking. They are learning to persevere and stay on task when working independently at a chosen activity. Many children in the Nursery still prefer solitary play activities, but in Reception classes, children are beginning to co-operate and to

play together, for example, in role-play areas. This demonstrates their increasing maturity.

57. An appropriately high emphasis is placed on personal and social development during the first term in both the nursery and reception in order to facilitate learning in other areas. Most children say 'please' and 'thank you', for example, because of the emphasis on politeness. Staff listen to what children have to say and value their contributions. They are sensitive to the needs of the children and strive to increase their confidence and self-esteem. Praise is used well to acknowledge achievements. For example, when a Nursery child noticed that the 'w' for Wednesday was the same as the 'w' for windy the praise she received made her proud of what she had found out. Expectations for self-care are high. Children are expected to show some personal responsibility, for example, when changing for physical education lessons and many are able to do this without adult support. They are encouraged to have a go first and then ask an adult for help if needed, enabling them to develop independence.

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

58. Children make very good progress overall in this area and achieve very well. Many children enter the Nursery with poor communication skills. Their vocabulary is limited but they soon learn to speak in simple sentences and with developing confidence within a group. In the Reception class most children are willing to speak in whole class sessions and they are learning to listen and take turns in conversation. They have learned a wide range of action rhymes and enjoy performing them. Children have regular opportunities in all classes to share their news and to talk about their experiences. They enjoy listening to stories and sit attentively for an appropriate length of time. Children are developing their early reading skills well. Most recognise their name card when they register themselves. They know the format of a story and recognise that print has meaning. Several children in the Nursery regularly choose to read books in the quiet room. They 'read' to themselves and to adults, using the pictures and their own words, with some children using words from the story. In Reception classes children are beginning to recognise rhyming words and repeating patterns. High and average-attaining children have just started to read simple texts. They recognise a small number of known words and they attempt to make sense of unknown words using initial sounds and picture clues. Lower-attaining children can explain what is happening in stories read to them and they use pictures to predict what might happen next. Many are beginning to learn 'key' words and know the sounds of some letters. In the Nursery early writing skills are well developed and most children make marks to represent writing. Many children in the Reception class incorporate correct letter symbols into their writing and 'read' back what they write. Some higher-attaining children are beginning to write simple sentences using known sight words. They enjoy practising correct letter formation, for example when using their fingers on a wet, painted surface.
59. Teaching is very good in the Nursery, particularly in the development of spoken language in both formal and informal situations. Milk time is used well for this, for example. Children take it in turns to offer fruit and milk to their classmates asking, for instance, "Would you like a banana?" to each child, who has to respond appropriately. In teacher-directed activities children are given time to express their thoughts and

ideas. The basic skills of reading and writing are taught very well in Reception, in short, well-focused sessions, in which children learn very quickly. For example, when reading a large book with the class, teachers point to words as they read and emphasise that words carry meaning. Letter sounds are taught well and reinforced in activities such as matching objects to their initial sounds. Very good use is made of informal times such as registration for consolidating literacy skills. For example, when pupils record the weather, they consolidate their knowledge of letters, sounds and words. The children are introduced to a wide range of books to stimulate their interest. The children take books home daily to share with parents, which helps to develop their interest and skills. In reception children are encouraged to use their early writing skills to share their news. Good opportunities are always available for writing, during role-play, for example as the receptionist in the 'Health Centre'. Displays of children's writing around the classrooms reinforce the message that it is important and valued.

### **Mathematical development**

60. In the Nursery children have a wide range of mathematical development. Some higher-attaining children can count objects up to 10 or more correctly whilst others have little understanding of the concept of number. Through well-planned practical activities, including play, children develop an understanding of number, pattern, shape and measurement, with appropriate vocabulary such as 'big' and 'little' and 'full' and 'empty'. They learn about two-dimensional shapes through a variety of activities, including matching their name cards to shapes on a board. In one Reception class children are beginning to understand the concept of one more and one less and most were able to order numbers correctly to 10. Average-attaining children in another class make cube towers accurately to ten and put on a 'hat' with the relevant numeral. Many are beginning early addition by rolling two dice and counting the dots and some can record their answers.
61. A wide range of structured and unstructured learning activities is provided. These are well chosen for interest and enjoyment and matched closely to the children's level of understanding. Teachers make use of every opportunity to encourage children to count, to recognise numerals and to do simple addition and subtraction as they play. For example, when singing 'This old Man' children used their fingers to count, and when playing skittles, they consolidated their understanding of 'one less'. Good use is made of a wide range of computer programs to consolidate learning in all aspects of mathematics and many children use these independently. Occasionally, whole class lessons are too long, leading to some loss on interest and concentration among the children.

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

62. The children's natural curiosity is nurtured by effective teaching that gives plenty of opportunities for them to explore the natural and man-made environment. For example, using the stimulus of the book of the week, about an African child, Nursery children have been finding out about African fruits and animals. Activities were planned to enable them to touch, taste and smell fruits such as pineapples, avocado and passion fruit and to learn their names. In one Reception class, the very good use of role-play, when a 'christening' was carried out by a local minister, gave the children some understanding of Christian beliefs. In both year groups children use construction materials competently to build recognisable structures and vehicles. They use

computers regularly to reinforce work on all areas of learning, using the mouse and keyboard with expected levels of confidence.

63. Staff-led activities are used well to teach and consolidate new vocabulary related to the topic. In Reception classes, learning is good, and often very good, in activities led by the teacher. For example, in one lesson, the children were taught very effectively how to make a floor robot move and most were successful. Good planning ensures that the children are then encouraged to explore and apply what they have learned through activities of their choice. During the inspection their learning was not as effective as it could have been during one such session because the teacher again directed their learning.

### **Physical development**

64. Children in both the Nursery and Reception classes control tricycles and other wheeled vehicles with skill and confidence and are beginning to develop an awareness of space. In the gymnastics lesson seen, children showed good co-ordination and control as they travelled under, over and through the apparatus. They listened well to instructions and had learned the routines of physical education lessons, paying good attention to safety. Finer physical skills are less well developed in the Nursery. Good teaching ensures that, by the time they are in Reception, most pupils can hold tools such as scissors, pencils and paintbrushes correctly.
65. The quality of teaching in the gymnastics lesson was very good, enabling the children to achieve very well. Warm-up activities helped children to recognise changes to their bodies as they exercised. Good support and encouragement was used to help children to refine and improve their movements, including demonstrations by particular children. Class management is good and children listen and behave well; this has a positive effect on their learning. Teachers' planning shows that ball skills will also be developed during the year.
66. Activities in the classroom are well chosen to develop fine physical skills. For example, in one Reception class, children practised drawing straight-edged and curvy shapes then cutting them out. Assessment is used well to identify children who need extra support in developing control with hand-held implements.

### **Creative development**

67. Achievement is satisfactory in this area of learning. Opportunities are given for children to express their feelings through a range of media and materials. Most of the examples of artwork seen on display in Reception classes were outcomes of structured activities rather than free painting and drawing, so there was insufficient evidence to judge the quality of this aspect of their creative development. Children know a wide range of songs and rhymes and sing together with real enjoyment. Their response to music and rhythm is good when an appropriate stimulus is given. When listening to the 'Moody Jukebox', for example, children were able to respond to feelings the music evoked in them. In the same session they were able to choose percussion instruments to match a range of creatures, considering their movement and size and to make a good

attempt at performing together. Through the sensitive intervention of adults, children are learning to play together imaginatively in the role-play areas.

68. Teachers' planning shows that an adequate range of activities is provided to enable children to express their feelings whilst they explore and create. An activity in the Nursery, for example, gave the children the opportunity to choose from a wide range of materials, including glitter, to create colourful and attractive collages. In the Reception classes, children have fewer opportunities for free choice painting. Children enjoy singing because of the obvious enthusiasm of the staff who join in with the actions. The staff's involvement contributes to the good progress in developing tuneful singing and children's sense of rhythm. In Reception classes, thoughtfully prepared role-play areas are linked well to the class topics to enable the children to build on their own experiences through imaginative play.

## **ENGLISH**

69. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were low in English, but pupils were making satisfactory progress. Since then, there have been good improvements in speaking, listening and reading and very good improvement in writing. This is reflected in the standard of work seen as well as in the school's results in national tests at the end of Year 2. Pupils now make very good progress and achieve very well to reach above average standards overall by the end of Year 2. Speaking skills are as expected for the pupils' ages and abilities. The school has worked hard to improve standards in each area. Extra opportunities are provided for individual and group reading, spelling and handwriting practice and pupils are challenged with interesting and thought-provoking work, especially higher-attaining pupils.
70. Throughout the school, pupils' listening skills are good and their speaking skills are improving. All pupils, including those who learn more quickly and those who have special educational needs, demonstrate a wider range of skills than at the time of the last inspection. The school makes particularly effective use of discussion of a range of issues to extend the pupils' skills. For example, they listen to stories as a stimulus for their discussions, then form their opinions about why characters act as they do and give simple reasons for their point of view. Pupils learn to use the question to provide part of the answer, think about what others have to say and discuss a topic rather than shouting and arguing. They gain confidence in speaking to a large group, for example when they take part in assemblies. Most lessons end with a period of reflection when pupils explain what they have done and learned. These sessions show that pupils are becoming increasingly aware of their listener's needs as well as of themselves as speakers.
71. Standards in reading are good. Pupils make good progress in using their knowledge of sounds and letter patterns to build up words. They understand the difference between 'author' and 'illustrator'. Older pupils confidently use a content page and scan a passage looking for a particular word. This was well illustrated when a group of Year 1 pupils wanted to spell the word 'wolf' from the Little Red Riding Hood story. They skimmed their way down the text to find what they wanted. They also use these skills when researching from non-fiction books. Higher-attaining pupils express their opinions about key characters and major events in stories and use the vocabulary displayed in the room with confidence. When led by teachers to read together in the literacy hour, pupils read with expression, though the less confident forget to do so when they read aloud at other times. Higher-attaining pupils read in a lively and intelligent way, with fluency and expression. Most read a range of fiction and non-fiction accurately. Pupils examine the way punctuation is used in stories and talk confidently about the characters and the plot. Lower-attaining pupils gain confidence in and enthusiasm for



reading through well-focused support. All pupils are encouraged to take books home so that their parents can help them to improve. The school has a very good range of reading materials, including structured reading schemes and a range of group reading texts to enable pupils to experience the enjoyment of reading with others.

72. Standards in writing are above average. Pupils write in a range of styles, for example letters, stories, instructions and reports. By the end of Year 2, pupils use full stops and capital letters to accurately build sentences. The spelling of commonly used words is correct and pupils have a very good grasp of letter sounds. Higher-attaining pupils write imaginative stories and poems and develop their ideas logically. They are aware of the need to use inverted commas for speech and are beginning to use commas to shape increasingly complex sentences. A good range of punctuation, including exclamation marks, capital letters question marks and bullet points, adds emphasis to their writing. Handwriting and presentation skills are satisfactory, but not at the same high standard as other aspects of the pupils' writing.
73. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, especially for older pupils. Teachers use their very good knowledge and understanding of National Literacy Strategy to plan well-structured lessons. They share lesson objectives with pupils and use review time at the end to check what has been learned. They work effectively with pupils, listen carefully to them and help them order their ideas. As a result pupils make good gains in learning. Teachers effectively question pupils both to make them think and to assess what they know and understand. They provide good visual support for pupils, for example by displaying lists of frequently used words to reinforce spelling and reading. In the literacy hour teachers choose interesting texts, many from different subjects including science and history. These stimulate pupils' interest and have a positive impact on their response to literature and their own creative writing. Teachers use assessments of pupils' work effectively to help plan future lessons. Marking is helpful to the pupils. Older pupils are told what they have done well and provided with written guidelines on how they can improve their performance. Marking for younger pupils is usually ticks and praise but teachers talk to them about the quality of their work and how to improve. Teachers use reading and spellings as homework to reinforce and extend pupils' learning. Pupils respond positively to the very good teaching. They enjoy lessons, take part with confidence and work hard. Most behave well and have good relationships with adults and each other. Pupils with special educational needs respond well to the very good quality of provision made for them and make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.
74. The pupils have some good opportunities to apply and extend their literacy skills in other subjects. For example, they write instructions and label diagrams in design and technology and in science they record their observations and investigations. However, the use of worksheets sometimes limits opportunities for pupils to express themselves fully in writing, for example in science and history. Information and communication technology is used very well to support all aspects of English including listening and reading for understanding. For example, pupils gain great enjoyment and learning through reading books such as 'Ridiculous Rhymes' on the computer, where they follow a poem on the screen and listen to it being read via headphones.
75. English is well led and is in a good position to continue to improve. The teacher responsible has worked hard to raise standards especially in listening and writing across the school through checking the quality of teaching and leading staff training. The very good tracking of pupils' progress through the school and the setting of

individual targets for improvement are having a positive impact on standards. Resources for English are good with many new group reading books and information texts purchased to enrich the curriculum. The library is a stimulating and challenging environment to encourage pupils to enjoy reading and developing independent research skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

76. When they begin Year 1, pupils have gained expected levels on knowledge and understanding of number, shape and measure following good progress in the Foundation Stage. Throughout Year 1 and Year 2, lessons build systematically on this so that pupils continue to make good progress. They achieve very well to reach standards that are above the national average and well above similar schools by the end of Year 2, as measured by national tests. This is an excellent improvement since the last inspection, when standards were below average.
77. By the end of Year 2, pupils have good number skills. Average attaining pupils order, add and subtract tens and units numbers and know which numbers add together to make 10. They also understand the connection between multiplication and division. Higher-attaining pupils understand and use numbers beyond one hundred; for example, they know that 300 is half of 600. They add and subtract numbers up to 20 in their heads when they are working out practical problems, such as shopping bills. A good proportion of the year group – nearly one in three – are on course to reach above average levels of skill. This is what makes overall standards above average. Pupils gain a good level of knowledge, understanding and skills across all aspects of mathematics. For example, they know the names of simple shapes and basic facts about them such as the number of sides and corners. They weigh and measure using metric units such as kilograms and centimetres, tell the time on analogue and digital clocks and use graphs to show things like the spread of birthdays in the class across the year.
78. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with some very good features. Lessons follow the National Numeracy Strategy, with a strong emphasis on improving mental arithmetic skills. In lively introductions to lessons, teachers encourage pupils to explain how they work sums out to help them consolidate and extend their learning. The pupils respond to these challenges with enthusiasm and effort, showing great pleasure in getting sums right. Teachers prepare activities that enable the pupils to apply newly learned skills according to their ability, often in a practical way, and classroom assistants provide very useful support during this part of the lesson. They are particularly skilled at getting reluctant pupils to engage in lessons and in encouraging all pupils to do their best. Very good quality learning was observed when Year 2 pupils were encouraged to follow up their own idea of extending work on square numbers to illustrate all the examples up to  $11 \times 11$ . The pupils were highly enthusiastic about the venture, collaborated very effectively and showed great satisfaction in the completion of the task. Teachers show a very good awareness of individual pupils' needs in the way they target questions and support pupils. In some lessons however, teachers lack the confidence to encourage the pupils to go beyond the set task. This prevents some of the higher-attaining pupils from exploring different ways of solving difficult problems. Despite this area for improvement, the majority of

pupils, including higher-attaining pupils, achieve very well, especially in the basic skills of numeracy. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because they are provided with suitably simplified tasks and good support from classroom assistants, who know their needs well. Pupils relate well together during practical work, generating a purposeful working atmosphere. Teachers manage to keep the pupils learning actively throughout most lessons, and generally make good use of a range of resources, such as 100 squares, to clarify ideas and make lessons more interesting.

79. Very good leadership and management of the subject help teachers to make the most of their lessons. The subject leader attends courses to keep up to date with developments in the subject and ensures that plentiful, well organised and accessible resources are available. She has established a very useful, manageable system for tracking and recording pupils' progress over time and keeps an overview of standards and teaching through observing lessons and checking pupils' work. The school acknowledges that teachers are not quite as confident in mathematics as they are in English, and plans are in hand to provide more training as mathematics becomes a priority in the school development plan.

## **SCIENCE**

80. Standards have risen significantly since the previous inspection from below average to above average. This is reflected in the school-based assessments at the end of Year 2 and in the quality of the work seen during the inspection. Pupils of all abilities, including higher-attaining pupils as well as those with special educational needs, achieve very well.
81. Pupils in Year 2 show good scientific understanding in all aspects of the subject. Most pupils know the difference between natural and man-made materials and have a good understanding of how the properties of materials affect their use. For example, they know why metal is a good choice for the legs of a table and glass for windows. Pupils know that heat can change materials, for example that chocolate becomes runny on warming but can change back to solid on cooling. They have a good understanding of the basic elements of electricity and know that metal, but not plastic, will conduct electricity, and that a break in a circuit will stop the flow of current. Pupils have found out that two bulbs in series in a single circuit will shine less brightly than one. A higher-attaining pupil was able to suggest that this was because they both shared the same electricity. Much of the pupils' knowledge and understanding is gained by investigation and they are beginning to understand how a test can be structured to make it fair. Higher-attaining pupils are constrained to some extent, however, by the use of work sheets. The pupils have a good understanding of the concepts they have studied, but often forget key words.
82. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and lessons cater well for pupils of all levels of prior attainment. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection when some teaching was unsatisfactory. Detailed planning provides challenging work which meets the needs of pupils with differing levels of attainment. Well-led discussions at the start of lessons enable teachers to assess what pupils already understand so this can be built on. There is a good stress on the use of key

scientific vocabulary and pupils are encouraged to use these words in their responses. All lessons are well organised and resources well prepared so that pupils settle down quickly to their tasks. Support assistants and parent helpers are well briefed and give good support. This is especially helpful to pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to take a full part in lessons and to make equal progress to others. Learning was very good in one Year 2 class because of the high level of challenge. Pupils were shown one type of switch in an electric circuit and asked to explain how it worked. They then used this knowledge, working in pairs, to discover how to make a switch using different materials. Questioning was used effectively to enable pupils to think through their ideas before starting their practical work. As a result good experimentation was seen and all pupils were successful. In another Year 2 lesson, although progress was good, it was held back to some extent because the level of challenge was lower and a lack of resources meant that pupils had to work in larger groups. Pupils are eager and keen to investigate and this has a positive effect on their learning. When set a challenge they show good perseverance until they have succeeded. They are developing the skills to work co-operatively. The investigations the pupils undertake enhance their spiritual development as they are enabled to explore and appreciate the natural and man-made world.

83. Literacy skills are reinforced satisfactorily in science. In literacy lessons good use is made of science books related to the topics as non-fiction texts. However, writing skills are less developed because the use of work sheets in some lessons limits written responses, particularly of higher-attaining pupils. Planning indicates that numeracy skills are reinforced in investigations, when pupils take measurements and collect and interpret data. Information and communication technology is sometimes used to record results in different forms and CD-ROMs have been bought to support some topics.
84. Good leadership and management have ensured good improvements in provision since the previous inspection. The commercial scheme of work that has now been put in place enables pupils to gain much of their knowledge and understanding through investigation. The assessment of what pupils understand and can do is very good. The information that is gathered is used very well to plan lessons to take the pupils forward from where they are. The subject leader analyses assessment data to look for areas of weaknesses in teaching so that this can be used for future planning. She checks on the quality of teaching and learning by lesson observation and by looking at the pupils' work, and takes action when required. For example, last year, a relative weakness in the teaching of science skills was identified and the new scheme put in place to remedy this. There is a good range of resources to support the subject.

## **ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

85. Pupils make good progress and achieve well to reach expected standards by the end of Year 2 in both subjects. This judgement is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Photographs and samples of work show that the pupils use two and three-dimensional materials to design and make a good range of pictures and models with evident skill. All pupils use sketch books, but the work within these tends to show finished pictures instead of the systematic and careful practice of skills. Their observational drawings are of good quality, however. They use a range of media,

including paint, wax and dye in their two dimensional work and a variety of materials, including clay, to make three-dimensional models. Less work was seen in design and technology, but the quality of it is average, both in designing and making. During the inspection, for example, pupils were designing bags and packages to carry sandwiches and pieces of party cake. They considered the shape of the package, how to make handles strong enough and showed a good awareness of the different purposes of the product by thinking about what logo to use to advertise their cake shops. They used information and communication technology effectively to design the picture and text to go on their cake boxes. Pupils evaluate their designs to ensure that they fit the purpose they were designed for and suggest improvements. They use a range of tools and resources, such as brushes, scissors and glue, accurately and with due regard to safety, demonstrating their independence by getting them out and tidying them away efficiently. The standards of pupils' finished products are good and work is mounted carefully and displayed with pride. This was evident in the corridor where pupils' portraits of the queen that had been used in a competition were displayed as an art gallery for all to visit.

86. The quality of teaching and learning is good and lessons cater for all levels of prior attainment. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to their art and design and design technology work. Lessons ensure that pupils develop vocabulary, knowledge and skills progressively, with due emphasis on experimenting and evaluating. Pupils enjoy their work. They co-operate amicably over resources and form good relationships with adults and pupils alike. The subjects are well led and managed. A thorough review has established suitable priorities for future development, including augmenting the current scheme of work and improving the systems for tracking pupils' progress. The school has a good range of resources although storage space is a problem. Through the investigations and appreciation of art, design and inventions from different countries and cultures, the subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' personal development and their preparation for life in a multicultural society.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

87. Pupils achieve well to reach average standards by the end of Year 2. This is an improvement on the position at the time of the previous inspection when standards were below average.
88. By Year 2, many pupils have a good knowledge of their own environment and can express their views about what they like and dislike and what can be improved. The study of the island of Struay in Scotland has enabled them to talk about similarities and differences between their own locality and the island. They know the difference between natural and man-made features of the environment and understand terms such as 'island', 'river' and 'mountain'. Pupils understand the use of maps and plans and can identify places on a plan of the locality. They use simple co-ordinates to find places on a map. Most pupils can find some countries on a globe and they know that the areas around the poles are cold and areas around the equator are hot. In both year groups pupils become familiar with different localities and climates through following the travels of a toy bear and they enjoy talking about what they have learned.

89. Teaching is good overall. In both lessons seen there was clear planning which identified the objectives and relevant activities to achieve these. Geographical vocabulary was identified and pupils were encouraged to use it. In a very good lesson in Year 2, excellent class management strategies were used to motivate pupils who were restless. When a prolonged question and answer session seemed inappropriate, the teacher quickly changed plans and modified the pupils' tasks. As a result they soon settled down to the lesson. Both the teacher and support assistant consistently provided good support for the pupils as they worked, discussing their ideas. Questioning was used effectively to challenge their thinking. For example, pupils were asked to consider: "should a shop be quiet?" and "does it matter if a shop isn't bright and cheerful?" They responded very positively and made good gains in their learning by suggesting sensible ways of making their local shopping area more attractive. In a satisfactory lesson, in which pupils made sound progress, the initial input was too long and some pupils became restless and inattentive. Pupils recorded their understanding of the function of local buildings in pictorial form and this denied higher-attainers the opportunity to explain and consolidate what they understood. However, the end of the session was used well to challenge pupils to think of facilities which could improve the locality. Geography makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural and social development. The local environment is used well by all classes and visits are made further afield.
90. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Since the previous inspection more detailed whole school planning has improved provision and the quality and range of learning opportunities are good. Assessment procedures are now in place and records kept of what pupils know and can do so that this can influence future planning. Resources, which include CD ROMs and computer programs, are good and are well chosen to support topics. There are good literacy links, for example through the use of geography books in the literacy hour. By observing lessons, the teacher responsible has a good overview of the subject and her analysis of assessment data shows that standards are rising over time.

## **HISTORY**

91. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and reach average standards by the end of Year 2, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Only one lesson was observed, so judgements are based mainly on a scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with Year 2 pupils and with staff.
92. Pupils in Year 2 know the reasons for the Gunpowder Plot in 1605 and have a simple understanding of the reasons why Guy Fawkes and others acted as they did. They know what conditions were like during the Crimean War and how Mary Seacole helped the soldiers. They understand that conditions in hospitals for soldiers were very different from hospitals today, with rats spreading disease and a lack of cleanliness. From an early age pupils use time lines to map changes over time and they are developing their understanding of terms such as 'last week', 'last year' and 'long ago'.
93. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers plan relevant lessons and activities to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills throughout the school. Teaching was satisfactory in the lesson seen. Effective questioning helped

pupils to consolidate their learning from other lessons. The activity to watch part of a video recording was well chosen to help pupils achieve the objective of the lesson. Clear instructions were given on what they were trying to find out. However, the teacher's expectation that the pupils could take notes at the same time as watching the video recording were over ambitious. As a result, the pupils were not able to watch and listen with full attention and learned less than they could about conditions in the Crimean War. Resources are good and chosen well to support topics. For example, a good selection of historical texts is read during the literacy hour. This is a good support for the teaching of reading as well as providing more time for the study of history. There are however, too few opportunities for extended writing because worksheets are used too often for recording. Whilst these are sometimes appropriate they can limit the opportunities for pupils, especially those of higher attainment, to develop their thoughts and ideas. History makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural and social development, for example through visits to venues such as the Black Country museum. Good assessment systems have been introduced, but have not been in place long enough to judge their effect on standards.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

94. Standards have steadily risen since the last inspection and are now above average. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment make good progress and achieve well.
95. The pupils are very confident and competent in their use of computers for a range of purposes. All pupils enter their password to gain access to the computer, select from a range of programs complete their task and log off, leaving the computer ready for the next user. They use a mouse to move the cursor round the screen and click to enter different parts of programs and to activate different tools. Many are becoming dextrous in their use of the keyboard. Many older pupils save their work and exit efficiently from programs at the end of lessons. Throughout the school pupils practise their writing skills using a word processing programme. They write directly on the screen, spacing words correctly, for example. They draft and redraft their work to produce a neat, accurately spelt and readable piece of writing before printing it out to put in their portfolio or exercise book. Pupils also listen to stories and poems on the computer, following the text on the screen, reading for understanding. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning in subjects such as music, art and design and design technology. During the inspection for example, Year 1 pupils were using a program to write their own repeat phrase tunes, while reception children listened to a range of music and identified the mood conveyed by what they could hear. Year 2 pupils were designing a seasonal picture to add to a calendar using mathematical shapes. Pupils also use computers to support their food technology work when making lists and instructions, using bullet points and ordinal numbers. The curriculum is broadly planned so that, as they move through the school, pupils build up a good skills base across a wide range of information and communication technology equipment such as cassette recorders and the digital camera.
96. The quality of teaching is good with much very good and even excellent teaching occurring. As a result pupils develop confidence as well as a secure skills base across good range of techniques. All adults have a good understanding of the programmes that are available. Teachers teach computer skills well, encouraging pupils to 'have a go'. They have high expectations of pupils' ability to use the equipment correctly. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to experiment independently within practice sessions, for example when they use art or music programs and the result is an improving understanding of their work. Teachers share their own expertise and knowledge with each other and with pupils and make on-going

assessments of pupils' achievements to guide learning further. Pupils respond positively. They take care when working and make sure that they do not interfere with the work of others. Pupils practise their skills and support each other with explanations and demonstrations. Pupils use the Internet to gain access to information, and good procedures are in place to ensure that they cannot use unsuitable sites.



97. Leadership and management of information and communication technology are good. The subject leader has oversight of the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school and gives effective support to teachers, who have made good improvements to their expertise and confidence. Classroom assistants have also undertaken full training. They give very valuable support in the computer suite, helping teachers and pupils during lessons. The school also employs a part-time technician to minimise the effect on pupils' learning of equipment failure. The subject leader is building up a portfolio of work samples that show the standards the pupils have reached relative to the criteria of the National Curriculum. Teachers are beginning to use this information effectively to make sure that lessons are pitched at the right level. Resources are good and are continually updated. Besides the equipment in the computer suite, including peripherals such as scanners and the digital camera, all classrooms have at least three computers each. These are mainly older machines, but they are being steadily replaced with more modern machines that can be linked to those in the suite. Overall, pupils have better access to up-to-date computers than in many schools.

## MUSIC

98. The school has maintained the average standards reported by the last inspection. Provision has been improved and pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 2, pupils sing a range of songs in tune with appropriate expression and including two-part rounds. They listen to a variety of music from around the world and from different times in history, in assemblies and in lessons. The school has been successful in continuing to provide good quality musical experiences for the pupils during the recent national emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Throughout Years 1 and 2, pupils have opportunities to experiment with musical instruments and compose and perform their own musical pieces. Good examples were seen in Year 2, in a lesson in which the pupils composed musical accompaniments to the dance movements they had previously made up on the theme of fireworks. They showed an ability to collaborate together to produce the desired overall effect of matching the music to the movements. Pupils use pictures, symbols and letters to record the pieces they have composed so that they can play them in the future. Information and communication technology is used very effectively, for example to enable pupils to compose pieces of music on computers and to record the pieces they perform on tape. Teachers make good use of these recordings to enable the pupils to evaluate and improve their compositions. Pupils with talent have opportunities to play recorder and guitar, and to sing solos in public. A very moving example was observed during the inspection when a Year 2 pupil sang 'Silent Night' during an assembly.
99. Only one full lesson was observed during the inspection. Teachers' planning, the pupils' singing and recordings of previous compositions indicate that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Pupils' attitudes to music are positive because they are given opportunities to explore possibilities and express their own ideas. They make particularly good progress when music is linked to creative dance, showing good levels of insight into how music creates a mood and suggests different types of movements. In some lessons, the pupils' progress is held back somewhat by the teacher's lack of confidence in teaching music. The ideas behind the lesson plans are good. Activities are interesting and are pitched at the right level, with a good variety of instruments readily available. However, the teachers' lack of experience

shows when opportunities are missed to draw ideas together and get the pupils to refine their compositions and to extend and improve their use of the instruments. The subject leader is aware of this area for development and has already put in a lot of work to support colleagues and improve their confidence. The school is therefore well placed to continue improving the quality of provision and raising standards.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

100. The only evidence seen for standards at the end of Year 2 was in dance. In this aspect of the subject, pupils achieve very well indeed and reach above average standards. They move with control and grace, expressing their ideas creatively and showing a very good capacity to evaluate and improve their own work. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils were observed developing their interpretation of the music 'Still Life at the Penguin Café' to produce the effect of a 'moving painting' in the style of the English painter L. S. Lowry. The overall effect they produced was striking. Individuals moved with poise and confidence, with a good awareness of the others around them but also with great concentration on their own movements. Their performance clearly reflected very good learning over a period of time, with attention to basic skills in devising, performing and refining movements to produce a desired effect. A similar quality of movement was seen in a brief observation of a Year 1 dance lesson. The enthusiasm and skill shown by the teachers in these lessons is reflected in the pleasure the pupils evidently have in their learning and the effort they make to create and improve their own movements.
101. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in two of the four lessons observed and good in the other two, but it is clear from the pupils' skills and positive attitudes that the quality of teaching and learning over time is good. Most of the teachers enjoy teaching the subject, especially dance, and are skilled at it. This is having a very positive effect on the pupils' personal development as well as on standards. A significant feature of the successful lessons is the extent to which pupils are encouraged and supported to develop their own ideas. The teachers intervene to give encouragement and offer suggestions for improvement and also involve the pupils regularly in evaluating each other's efforts. This helps them to develop their own ideas for improving the quality of their movements. Pupils made significantly less progress in the dance lesson in which the teacher lacked confidence in the subject.
102. Good leadership and management ensure that the subject has a suitably high profile in the school and that all pupils get the opportunity to develop their skills in a wide range of activities.