

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WHITEHOUSE COMMON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Sutton Coldfield

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 132007

Headteacher: Mr Martyn Collin

Reporting inspector: John D Eadie  
20191

Dates of inspection: 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Inspection number: 248880

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Cotysmore Road  
Sutton Coldfield

Postcode: B75 6BL

Telephone number: 0121 464 1918

Fax number: 0121 464 1911

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Giles Wheeler

Date of previous inspection: No previous inspection, new school in September 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20191	Mr J Eadie	Registered inspector	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?
10478	Mrs A Smith	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?
19765	Mrs P Shannon	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Music	How well is the school led and managed?
12013	Mrs J Joy	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology	
12172	Mrs W Knight	Team inspector	Science Geography	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?
25384	Mr R Bonner	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education	
22397	Mr S Fowler	Team inspector	Educational inclusion Special educational needs English as an additional language English History	

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number on roll aged three to eleven	458 (Much bigger than average)
Of these, 44 attend part-time in the nursery and 60 are in the reception classes.	
Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	5.6% (Below average)
Percentage of pupils whose mother tongue is not English	2.7% (Above average)
Percentage of pupils identified as having special needs	8% (Well below average)
Percentage of pupils with statements of their special needs	1.4% (Below average)

This is a community primary school situated in a residential area in Sutton Coldfield in the suburbs of Birmingham. Most housing in the area is privately owned and much of it is detached although the school also draws a number of pupils from a less affluent area. Most of the pupils are white or mixed race. There are a small number of pupils of Asian heritage, some of whom speak a language other than English as their mother tongue. None is at an early stage of learning English. Most of the pupils who have special educational needs have a range of learning and behavioural difficulties. The pupils have above average attainment on entry to the school, though this is declining and the current reception class had average attainment on entry.

### HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Whitehouse Common Primary School is a very good school. Standards are above average by the time the pupils leave, due largely to the good quality of teaching. The leadership of the school is excellent and management is very good. The school gives very good value for money.

#### What the school does well

- Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by the time the pupils leave.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.
- The school is excellently led and is very well managed.
- Very good provision is made for the children in the nursery and reception classes.
- Excellent provision is made for the pupils' moral and social development. As a result the pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good.
- The pupils are very well cared for.
- There is a particularly effective partnership with parents.

#### What could be improved

These areas for development should be viewed in the light of this being a very good school. They are not weaknesses, rather pointers for further improvement.

- The allocation of time for some subjects of the curriculum and the use of time during the school day.
- The provision of more appropriate work for the most able pupils and some pupils of lower ability.

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

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

This is a new school, created by the amalgamation of separate infant and junior schools in September 2000, and there is therefore no previous inspection report. However, in its short life the school has made considerable progress. Standards have risen significantly and the school has been awarded a School Achievement Award by the Department for Education and Skills. There is a very good shared commitment to improvement and the school is very well placed to continue to move forward.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests. The similar schools referred to are those with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	N/a	B	A	A
Mathematics	N/a	B	A	A
Science	N/a	A	A	A

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

There are no results for 2000, as this was a new school in September of that year. Standards have risen significantly in the short life of the school. Challenging targets were set for performance in the tests last year and these were not met in English or mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 2 were also very good in the national tests last year, being in the top five per cent of all schools in writing and mathematics and well above average in reading. Standards of work seen in Year 6 during the inspection were above average in English, mathematics and science. The particular group in Year 6 this year did not do so well in the tests for seven year olds in 1999 as those in previous years. Standards in most other subjects are average, although those in art and design and religious education are above average. The vast majority of pupils achieve well during their time in the school, though there are times when the most able and some pupils of lower ability do not achieve as well as they could.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school, work very hard and are enthusiastically involved in all the school has to offer.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in and around the school is very good. There was one entirely justified temporary exclusion last year, which was fully supported by the parents of the pupil involved.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils are developing very well into mature and responsible young citizens. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Rates of attendance are well above the national average. Almost all pupils arrive at school on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good, with a high proportion of good or better teaching. All teaching observed was at least satisfactory. The teaching of English and mathematics is good and the pupils learn the skills of literacy and numeracy well. The teaching of the pupils with special educational needs is very good, enabling them to take a full part in all class activities and make good progress relative to their abilities. There are a number of general strengths of the teaching. One of the major of these is the consistency found in teaching, the result of a very comprehensive teaching and learning policy created by the school. A very good learning environment has been created, with stimulating classrooms, the teachers organising and managing their classes very well and relationships being very good. The pupils have responded very well to this, are very involved in lessons and concentrate well. The teachers have high expectations of their pupils' performance and of their behaviour. The pupils consequently work hard and the teachers make very good use of praise to encourage them. The learning support staff are valued members of the team in classrooms and contribute significantly to the learning, not only of those pupils for whom they are specifically responsible, but others as well. The teachers are usually careful to meet the needs of all pupils in their lessons, but occasionally the most able and some pupils of lower ability are not given appropriate work.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and suitable curriculum for the pupils. However, time is not always used as effectively as it might be and standards in some subjects suffer – geography and history for example. The curriculum is significantly enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities and other opportunities such as visitors into school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for those pupils with special educational needs. Their needs are identified early and good individual plans are made for their progress. Support staff contribute significantly to their good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The pupils with English as an additional language make the same progress as their classmates. This is largely because almost all join the school with a good command of English. However, the school has no policy to address the needs of pupils who join with less English and there is no member of staff with specific responsibility for overseeing the progress of these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good provision is made for the pupils' personal development. This provision is excellent for the pupils' moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school places a high priority on providing a caring and purposeful learning environment, where the children feel valued and safe. Procedures for measuring the pupils' progress are thorough in English, mathematics and science. The systems for using these procedures to plan for the next stage of pupils' learning, although satisfactory, are not so well developed. There are few systems in other subjects.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	There is a very effective partnership with parents, who are very supportive of the school. Very good information is provided for parents.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and	The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the school. He is very

management by the headteacher and other key staff

well supported by the new deputy headteacher and other staff with management responsibilities. There is very good teamwork amongst the staff, although a number of management systems are quite new and have not yet had time to become fully effective.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities very well. They are knowledgeable and very supportive, and a particular strength of their involvement is their role in strategic planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is very good at analysing its strengths and areas for development. Very good plans are made to address the latter.
The strategic use of resources	The school is well staffed, resources for many subjects are good and the accommodation is very good. All resources available to the school are used very well. The school does all it can to obtain the best possible value for money. Spending decisions are always taken in the light of the pupils' best interests.

### **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 school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• Their children are being helped to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Their children are making good progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents feel that they do not receive sufficient information about their children's progress.</li> </ul>

As can be seen from earlier sections of this summary report, the inspectors wholeheartedly agree with all positive parental views. The judgement of the inspection team is that parents receive good information about what their children can do, but reports do not contain sufficient information about their progress.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

1. The pupils make good progress and achieve well to reach above average standards by Year 6.

Strengths in pupils' achievements are:

- the good progress made by children in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup>;
- the good progress pupils make from Years 1 to 6;
- above average standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 6;
- above average standards in art and design and religious education in Year 6.

Areas for development are:

- the pupils' abilities in investigative and experimental science;
- the standards achieved by the highest attainers;
- the standards achieved by the pupils who are not identified as having special educational needs (SEN) but are lower attainers.

2. Standards in the subjects of the curriculum seen in lessons and in the scrutiny of pupils' work are displayed in the following table.

Standards	At the end of Year 2	At the end of Year 6
English	Well above average	Above average
Mathematics	Well above average	Above average
Science	Above average	Above average
Art and design	Above average	Above average
Design and technology (DT)	Average	Average
Geography	Average	Average
History	Average	Average
Information and communication technology (ICT)	Average	Average
Music	Average	Average
Physical education (PE)	Average	Average
Religious education (RE)	Above average	Above average

3. The children make good progress in the Foundation Stage to reach above average standards. Although attainment on entry is generally above average, this is declining and attainment on entry for the children currently in the Foundation Stage is only average. They make particularly good progress in their communication, language and literacy, their mathematical development and their creative development, and reach

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<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage contains the children in the nursery and reception classes.

well above average standards in these areas of learning. Standards in these areas are higher because of the teachers' very good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the very many opportunities created for learning.

4. The results of the 2002 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds give the attainment of the pupils in Year 2 last year as being in the top five per cent of all schools in writing and mathematics and well above average in reading. When compared with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were in the top five per cent in writing and well above average in reading and mathematics. The teachers' assessments of the pupils' attainment in science indicated that this was also well above average. The school has been working on increasing the proportion of pupils gaining higher levels and this was successful, with a very good proportion of these levels being gained in these tests. In the two years that the school has been taking the tests standards have been consistently high. Standards found in the inspection are not quite as high, reflecting the different abilities of the pupils in the current Year 2.
5. In the national tests for eleven year olds in 2002, attainment was well above average in English, mathematics and science when compared with all schools. In comparison with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, attainment was also well above average in all three subjects. Comparisons with test results for seven year olds in 1998 show average progress overall, though the school has statistics to show that these pupils made good progress during the two years that the school has been in existence. Once again the proportion of higher levels gained was higher than expected and was well above average in all three subjects. Standards rose significantly from the tests in 2001. Aspirational targets were set for the pupils' attainment and these were not quite met in English and missed by rather more in mathematics. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls in the tests at the age of seven or eleven. Standards found in Year 6 during the inspection were above average in English, mathematics and science. These pupils did not score so well in the tests for seven year olds four years previously and they had most of one year significantly disrupted with staff illness. Progress for them has therefore been slower, although they have made good progress in Years 5 and 6.
6. As can be seen from the above table, standards are above average in art and design and RE in Year 2 and Year 6. In art and design, the pupils are achieving above average standards due to the opportunities that they have to work on large projects and with visiting artists, particularly in the school's Art Week. In RE, standards are above average as pupils have good understanding and have good insights into responsibilities and morals.
7. The pupils of all ability levels generally achieve well and make good progress due to the good teaching. However, although there are a number of opportunities for the gifted and talented pupils, some do not always achieve as well as they could. There are a number of very good opportunities in music and PE, for example, for those with particular gifts. The school has also been addressing the needs of the higher attainers and has been very successful in raising the proportion of higher levels gained in the national tests. However, there are occasions in lessons in most subjects when those pupils of highest ability are not really challenged and their learning extended. The school has recognised this and has put in place a plan to address the particular needs of these pupils. There are also occasions in lessons when the teachers do not provide appropriate work for those pupils of lower ability who have not been identified as having SEN. The pace of these lessons sometimes progresses too quickly for these pupils and they struggle to make adequate progress. Once again the school has identified

this as an area for development and all teachers are working to address the needs of these pupils.

8. The pupils identified with SEN make good progress in relation to the targets set for them. They are provided with extremely good levels of support from their teachers and the learning support assistants. The pupils' targets are regularly evaluated and reviewed, and new targets are set to aid progress when required. These targets are specific, appropriate and measurable and this helps to ensure that good progress results. The pupils are removed from the school register for SEN when they have achieved the required standards.
9. Most of the pupils who do not speak English as their first language join the school with a good command of English. As a result, they make similar progress to most other pupils. Many of these pupils attain above average levels in the national tests in Year 6. On the occasions that they lack specific vocabulary, they are supported from within the school. In one science lesson, for example, a pupil was provided with some necessary scientific words by both the class teacher and his peer group. However, the school has no policy to address the needs of pupils who join the school with limited command of English and there is no member of staff with specific responsibility for overseeing the progress of these pupils.

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

10. The pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and standards of behaviour are well above average. Relationships within the school are equally good, reflecting the clear examples set by the school and its staff.

Strengths in this area are:

- the pupils enjoy coming to school;
- the pupils are very keen to learn;
- the pupils behave very well in class and around the school;
- the pupils get on very well with each other and with the adults in the school.

An area for development is:

- the promotion of independent learning across the school.

11. The pupils are very keen to come to school and have very enthusiastic attitudes towards their learning. They settle down readily and are very eager to participate. Pupils are capable of high levels of concentration. Skilled teaching encourages this desire to learn: a good example of this was seen in a Year 4 literacy lesson that explored rhythm in poetry. The pupils took great delight in this experience, were fully involved and were keen to contribute their best efforts.
12. Behaviour around the school is very good. The pupils are particularly well behaved in lessons and respond very readily to requests from their teaching staff. They are equally courteous and polite to visitors. The pupils play well together in the various playgrounds and enjoy the opportunities the wonderful grounds offer in fine weather.
13. The children in the Foundation Stage work well in small groups and alongside each other. There is a fully inclusive atmosphere in lessons. Care is taken to include all children and to make sure that no new children are isolated or upset. Good support is in place for children who have special learning or behavioural needs. The school helps children develop positive attitudes to disability through the use of puppets with a range of impairments. There are very good relationships between the staff and children. The

staff make sure the children know what behaviour is expected and use lots of praise. Children respond very well to this. They enjoy learning, behave well and work hard.

14. The pupils understand the school and class rules and think they are fair. Behaviour in the dining rooms is good and the pupils have good table manners. No instances of oppressive behaviour were seen during the inspection: pupils themselves consider bullying is rare and recognise that the school sorts out such problems quickly. One pupil was justifiably excluded for a fixed period last year and the parents of the pupil supported this action.
15. There is a welcoming atmosphere in the school. The pupils are friendly and helpful, making visitors feel welcome. When working in pairs or larger groups, as they often do, the pupils know how to take turns very well, collaborate productively and listen carefully to each other's opinions and ideas. Even the youngest children work well together and are developing good speaking and listening skills. These skills stand the pupils in good stead throughout their school life and are much in evidence in classrooms. A PE lesson in Year 5 provided a lovely example of the very good relationships that exist within this school. In this lesson all pupils were fully involved in a game of rounders. They organised the equipment very sensibly and were very appreciative of their classmates' personal achievements, giving spontaneous applause when one pupil succeeded in the activity after a number of attempts.
16. The parents are very clear that the school helps their children to become more mature and responsible individuals. The inspectors agree with these views. The pupils are keen to help in the running of the school. The many jobs available are undertaken conscientiously and range from class monitor duties to organising the music for assemblies. The pupils themselves support many charitable events and each year organise a Blue Peter appeal. The pupil council's efforts have produced a number of benefits for the school community. Current initiatives are concerned with healthy eating plans for the school and the organisation of playtime 'friends', pairing older and younger pupils. Whilst pupils do undertake projects requiring personal research in and out of school, these are mainly based on topics within the curriculum. Opportunities that allow pupils to work independently, for example on an assignment selected by themselves, are insufficient and practice varies between teachers.
17. The school is successful in maintaining an attendance rate well above the national average for primary schools. The registration process is conducted briskly and efficiently.

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

18. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. All teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory, with a good proportion very good or better. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good, always being good or better during the inspection.

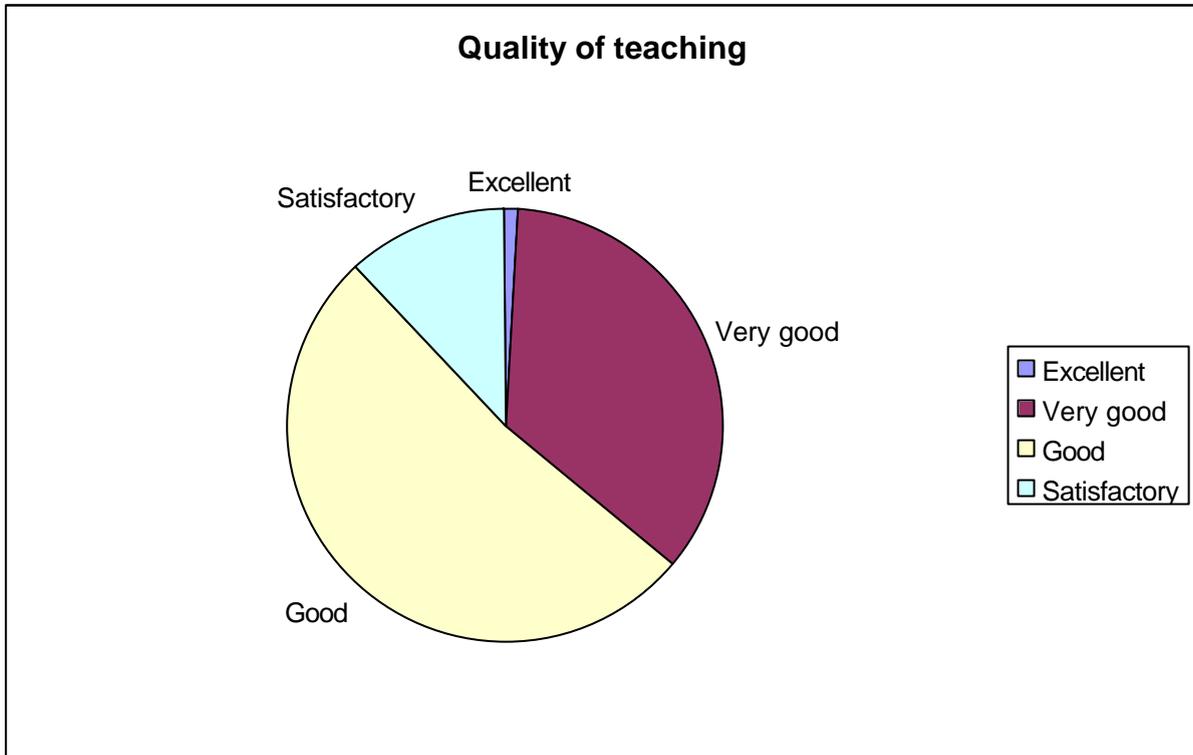
Strengths in teaching and learning are:

- the teaching of basic skills;
- the teachers' high expectations of the pupils' performance and behaviour;
- the teachers' very good management and organisation of their classes;
- the very good relationships within classes;
- the very good use that teachers make of learning resources;

- the significant contribution that support staff make to the pupils' learning;
- the pupils' very good knowledge of their own learning.

Areas for development are:

- the consistency of planning for higher and lower attainers;
- the inconsistent quality of marking.



19. As can be seen from the pie chart above, nearly nine in ten lessons observed was good or better. This uniformly good quality teaching is having a significant impact on the pupils' learning and their progress. Much of the uniformity of the teaching is due to the very clear and useful teaching and learning policy that was created in the school's early life. This has ensured a consistency of approach and, along with the associated training and monitoring, has had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning. For example, the teachers have very good skills of management and organisation. They have created a very stimulating classroom environment for their pupils. The general guidelines for classroom organisation are laid out in the teaching and learning policy, but this does not curb individuality and there are many excellent displays which enhance the pupils' learning.
20. The teachers manage their classes very well. The success of this is based on the very good relationships that exist between pupils and adults and between the pupils themselves. This mutual trust and respect has a considerable effect on the pupils' willingness to learn and their desire to try hard for their teachers. This is also linked to the teachers' high expectations of the pupils' performance and behaviour. In many lessons observed these high expectations were met with very good behaviour and a real willingness to concentrate and achieve the task set.
21. The most successful lessons observed demonstrated other strengths of teaching. For example, in an excellent lesson in the Foundation Stage, the very good use of excellent resources and the valuable and well-planned contribution of other adults in the class

reinforced the children's language skills very well. In this lesson, the children's use of language was developed excellently by the structured use of role-play, with very positive and helpful intervention by the adult supervising this activity. The very good use of resources was a feature of many lessons seen. For example, in a number of mathematics lessons, the oral starter was given focus by the use of a number stick or other equipment. The use of support staff and other adults, including parent volunteers, makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning throughout the school. For example, in a very good RE lesson observed in Year 4, the learning support assistant was giving very good guidance to enable the pupils of lower ability to take a full part in the lesson. These pupils were enabled to make very good progress in this lesson because of this well-planned support.

22. The basic skills are very well taught throughout the school. The school took this as a priority in its early days and the skills, particularly those of literacy and numeracy, are very well learnt by the pupils. The basic skills of ICT are also well taught and well learnt. Part of the success of this is the use of the ICT co-ordinator to teach a range of classes. Her expertise and enthusiasm for the subject are ensuring that the pupils in these classes are learning the skills very well.
23. In almost all lessons the learning objective<sup>2</sup> for the lesson is displayed at the start of the lesson. The teachers invariably make reference to this at the start of the lesson and in many cases ask the pupils to copy it at the start of their work. For some pupils this can take a little time, time that could otherwise be spent on the set task. The teachers make very good use of these learning objectives, returning to them at the end of most lessons and establishing whether the pupils have understood. This is giving the pupils very good understanding of their own learning.
24. The teachers are usually very good at meeting the needs of all the pupils in their classes. However, there are occasions when the most able pupils are insufficiently challenged in lessons. Although the teachers sometimes ask questions with real levels of challenge to ensure that these pupils are thinking deeply, they do not always do this. There are also occasions when these pupils are given tasks which they can do easily and their rate of learning is not fast enough. In some lessons, the pupils who are less able but not identified with SEN make insufficient progress. This happens when the teacher does not plan activities specifically for them, making them do the same task as other pupils. They struggle with these tasks and their progress slows. There are inconsistencies in the marking of the pupils' work. There are occasions when guidance is given on how pupils can improve that is not followed up to see whether the pupils have taken note of this advice.
25. The teaching of pupils with SEN is very good. The pupils learn very effectively at their own pace because of the good quality individual learning programmes that are provided and the support that they receive from teachers and learning support staff. The learning support staff are very effective because they liaise closely with the SENCO<sup>3</sup> and teachers and feel part of a professional team. They give good support both to individuals in their care and to groups of pupils within lessons.

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<sup>2</sup> Learning objectives are the skills, knowledge and understanding that the teacher is aiming that the pupils should learn during the lesson.

<sup>3</sup> The SENCO is the co-ordinator for SEN.

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

26. The school provides a good, balanced and suitable curriculum for the pupils, which meets statutory requirements. Very good provision is made for the pupils' personal development. The school operates as a caring community and aims to develop pupils' self-esteem, to help them to relate to and be positive with others, and to develop an understanding of the need to contribute to the wider community. It is very effective in fulfilling these aims.

The strengths of the school's curriculum and provision for personal development are:

- the enrichment through use of 'focus weeks', productions and visitors;
- the quality of the planning for children in the Foundation Stage;
- the variety and regularity of extra-curricular activities;
- the excellent provision for pupils' moral and social development;
- the very good provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

An area for development is:

- the use of time, including allocation to certain subjects.

27. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is particularly rich and stimulating. Planning for these children is carried out very well and includes detail of how children of this age progress in all the necessary areas of learning. The teachers and other staff work very well together as a team and all know clearly what it is that they need to do to help the children learn at the optimum rate.

28. The planned curriculum for the pupils from Years 1 to 6 is broad and relevant, and includes all the required National Curriculum subjects and RE. Literacy and numeracy skills are well taught using the National Strategies so that pupils acquire basic skills of reading, writing and calculating early and use them to support learning across the curriculum. The pupils who need additional support are catered for through relevant programmes including 'booster groups'. However, the way the timetable is organised results in unnecessarily restricted provision for some subjects, particularly DT, geography and history. These subjects do not appear each term on the class timetables, and in some cases, such as geography in Year 4, are taught in only one term out of three. The school loses effective use of up to half an hour a day, however, by allocating time to 'start of day' and 'start of afternoon' activities. While some of these are useful, such as sessions when the pupils practise basic numeracy skills, others such as unsupervised handwriting practice by pupils with neat, legible script are not. Moreover, procedures for bringing pupils in from the playground allow further time slippage. Because of these factors standards in some subjects are currently not as high as they could be.

29. The school makes good provision for personal, social and health education including participation in the Healthy Schools award. The curriculum is regularly enriched by special events which inspire pupils and staff, and add breadth to the provision. The school production, for instance, gives the opportunity for pupils to pursue their particular interests in dance, drama, music or backstage provision. There are regular 'focus weeks' and the one for science increased the pupils' chances to use the school grounds, to research famous scientists and to conduct more practical work. The pupils in Year 6 were particularly enthusiastic about such opportunities. The pupils benefit from the school's environmental learning assistant. Her expertise is used very well to enhance the pupils' learning opportunities as they are involved in planting and harvesting of their own crops. Visitors such as the school nurse, local police officer

and representatives of environmental organisations are invited both to provide wider perspective and to reinforce learning. Community contributions are included such as games skills training by Aston Villa Football Club, but the school is aware that such involvement is not as fully developed as it could be. Good use is made of the school grounds to make the curriculum relevant, particularly in science.

30. The pupils also appreciate the many opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities. The clubs that are offered at lunchtime and after school mainly cover a range of sporting, musical and artistic activities. The clubs change from term to term to provide for the widest possible range of activities. Provision includes outside providers, school staff and parents, and many pupils benefit. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 also have valuable opportunities for residential visits which include fieldwork. There are some useful links with local secondary schools recognised for their expertise in foreign languages and arts. The new opportunity for reception children to learn French and opportunities for pupils with particular talents in drama have been created through these arrangements.
31. Overall, the school is effective in ensuring that all pupils are given equal access to the statutory curriculum and all other activities provided. Although pupils with SEN are withdrawn from lessons for additional literacy support, their teachers try to ensure that they are given opportunities to catch up with anything that they have missed. Clear procedures are in place, which closely follow the new Code of Practice for SEN. The pupils' individual education plans are of good quality and are reviewed each term. Care is taken to ensure that the work provided for pupils with SEN is closely suited to their needs. The pupils with statements are provided with most suitable support, in line with the requirements indicated, and their statements are reviewed annually. All pupils with SEN are involved in the full range of school activities.
32. The pupils' spiritual development is promoted very well through whole-school themes, for example 'Celebrating Difference', RE lessons and assemblies. At the beginning of the school year the school provides specific opportunities for pupils to consider issues relating to gender, race and disability. Through listening to specially chosen stories and poems, pupils learn to respect difference and understand human feelings and emotions. These themes are pursued throughout the year in assemblies and during the time set aside for pupils to discuss issues that are important to them. Assemblies, together with the multi-faith curriculum, also enable pupils to gain insights into values and beliefs of the principal world faiths and provide opportunities to reflect about their personal experiences and explore relationships with others. In lessons, the pupils' ideas and opinions are respected and valued and pupils are encouraged to share their thoughts and concerns. In their class work pupils are encouraged to reflect on the beauty of nature and the world around them. For example, in a lesson in Year 1, the pupils drew pictures of flowers and other colourful things in God's World, and then considered what it would be like if there were no colours. In other classes, the pupils have written poems about rain and love, and carefully drawn beautiful shells and sea urchins.
33. The school promotes a clear understanding of right and wrong and pupils know how to behave. The schools' programme for the pupils' personal, social and health education encourages pupils to respect qualities of politeness, kindness and patience. From the earliest days in the nursery class, the children are encouraged to consider how their actions affect others. Values are fostered through the caring, supportive and very good relationships that exist between staff and pupils and the very good example set by all those working in the school. Assemblies give strong support to the teaching of the principles that distinguish right from wrong, fostering such values as perseverance and

respect for one another, and there is a strong sense of care for one another permeating the school. In response, the pupils try hard with their work, show courtesy to adults and speak politely to one another and to adults. Through their study of events in the Bible or more recent events, for example the plight of the Jews during the Second World War, the pupils are provided with opportunities to discuss and consider issues relating to moral codes, prejudice and bigotry. The school effectively promotes the importance of caring for the environment, and the wide range of projects where pupils have been involved in developing the school grounds exemplifies this.

34. The school provides a very wide range of opportunities for pupils to work, play and pursue social activities. Positive relationships are successfully promoted and pupils are encouraged to show consideration and sensitivity to the needs of others in the school, in the local community and throughout the world. In many lessons, the teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to co-operate and to work without support. Care is taken to ensure that those pupils who are identified with SEN are fully integrated into the life of the school. The pupils who are new to the school are helped by other pupils to settle quickly into daily routines and to make new friends. Many pupils undertake duties in their classrooms and older pupils have specific responsibilities for organising a range of activities, for example running the school tuck shop and scanning books in and out of the school library. A group of pupils also produce and edit a school newspaper, which is enjoyed by all those that read it. The development of the class and pupil council system has provided pupils with important avenues where their opinions can be shared and on occasion acted upon. As a result of their work, the pupils in Year 6 now teach younger pupils playground games and benches have been purchased for the pupils to sit on during playtimes. Pupils are also provided with opportunities to perform together in musical ensembles, the school choir and in school productions. Pupils are involved in raising money for a range of children's charities and organise a 'tabletop sale' themselves to raise money for Blue Peter appeals.
35. The pupils are given a variety of opportunities to develop an appreciation of their own and other cultural traditions in a number of curriculum areas. Work on world religions in RE lessons and their study of ancient Greece and Egypt, extend pupils' understanding of cultures both past and present. The pupils' work in geography lessons effectively promotes their understanding of the wide diversity of cultures to be found in countries across the world, for example in India and St Lucia. The school provides opportunities for pupils to develop an appreciation and knowledge of music and musicians, for example Aaron Copland, in lessons and through extra-curricular activities, including instrumental tuition. Music from other cultures, for example Senegal, is sometimes used in assemblies to create the right atmosphere for the reading of a story or poem. Pupils study the work of many artists, including Pablo Picasso, Van Gogh and Paul Klee, and consider examples of art from other peoples, for example Australian aborigines. Art weeks are used well to support this area of the school's work. In lessons, pupils study the work of Shakespeare and make visits to theatres to see productions of his plays, for example *Macbeth*. The pupils have some opportunities to explore the wide range of cultures to be found in the locality. For example, one group of pupils from Years 4 and 5 made a video of Birmingham's industrial and cultural heritage. Opportunities are occasionally missed in this area of the school's work.

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

36. The school makes very good provision for the welfare, health, safety and personal security of its pupils. The school makes satisfactory provision for the assessment and monitoring of the pupils' academic performance and monitors their attendance well. Very good procedures exist for monitoring the pupils' personal development.

Strengths in this aspect are:

- the high priority of pastoral care and concern for pupils' well-being;
- the good procedures for ensuring child protection;
- the good procedures for promoting attendance;
- the very effective procedures for promoting good behaviour;
- the very good procedures for promoting the personal development of pupils;
- the good assessment of literacy and numeracy;
- the good assessment in the Foundation Stage.

Areas for improvement are:

- to use the results of assessment to plan for the progress of all pupils;
- to create assessment systems for those subjects which presently have none.

37. There is an extensive range of policies and procedures in place to ensure health, safety and security matters are given a high priority. Regular fire drills are held each term to ensure that safe evacuation procedures are well rehearsed. Procedures for child protection are good; the headteacher is the designated person and, together with another member of staff, has attended appropriate training. All staff are made aware of these procedures. Several members of staff are fully trained in first aid and this is sensible in view of the distance between the various buildings. A good policy has been produced for safe use of the Internet.
38. Procedures for monitoring attendance are effective. Despite very good levels of attendance, the school continues to monitor absence carefully and is alert to any changes in patterns of attendance.
39. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are very effective. Pupils and staff have discussed the behaviour code and this is on display throughout the school. High standards of behaviour are expected at all times and the straightforward rules are considered fair by pupils and applied consistently by staff. The emphasis is on looking for and rewarding good behaviour. The pupils respond very well to the various achievement awards. The school keeps good records of any instances of poor behaviour. Before the inspection some parents had expressed concern regarding the arrangements for lunchtime supervision. The inspection team judged that the current arrangements, 17 supervisors plus a senior supervisor, are entirely suitable for the size of the school and the nature of the site. The supervisors are fully included in appropriate staff training, for example first aid, behaviour management and play activities.
40. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development, relating directly to a principal aim of the school – 'Investing in Futures'. The teachers know their pupils very well and are alert to their needs and concerns. Some individual targets include personal aims and pupils are happy to explain these when asked. The pupils' views are explored in class discussions in circle

time<sup>4</sup> and can be channelled through the class and pupil council system. The pupil council has been running for the past two years and the evidence of its many achievements can be seen in the entrance halls of both buildings. Issues have ranged widely, from extra equipment for the playgrounds to letters to parents regarding parking problems. Interestingly, some older pupils feel that their views, as expressed on the special class whiteboards, are not always reaching the agenda of the class and pupil councils. The general sections in the pupils' annual written reports, although sometimes brief, are useful and reflect a clear knowledge of each pupil by their teacher and the headteacher.

41. Assessment procedures and the use of assessment in literacy, numeracy and in the Foundation Stage are good. The assessment procedures in science are good. However, the information gathered in science is not used to ensure that work is appropriate for the abilities of all pupils, particularly the higher attaining pupils. Clear records are kept for the assessment of the pupils with SEN, and effective monitoring by the co-ordinator and class teachers contributes to the good progress of all groups of children. The pupils with SEN are regularly assessed and a wide variety of information is recorded to help identify their current attainment. The information gained is used most effectively to provide suitable new work for the pupils.
42. There are no formal assessment procedures in any other subjects of the curriculum. As a result work is not always matched well to pupils' abilities. This is particularly so for more able pupils and those less able pupils who have not been identified as having SEN.

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

43. Parents are very pleased with the school and supportive of its aims. This judgement is based on an analysis of the parents' questionnaires, the pre-inspection parents' meeting and conversations with parents during the inspection.

Strengths in this aspect are:

- the very positive views parents have of the school;
- the significant contribution made by parents to the daily life of the school;
- the very good quality of information provided by the school;
- the openness of the school, particularly the headteacher.

An area for development is:

- the subject sections of the annual written report to parents.

44. The inspection team agrees with the very positive views parents and carers hold of the school. The school provides very good quality information for parents. The prospectus is comprehensive, clear and easy to read. Newsletters are friendly, regular and informative. Curriculum and topic details are circulated at the beginning of each academic year. Displays around school, particularly in the entrance halls, offer much information concerning the school and its pupils. The school's website provides an alternative source of information for parents and carers offering, as it does, a 'Stop Press' page and a parents' forum. The headteacher has used questionnaires to canvass the opinions of parents. The school has analysed and published the results of these and the most recent exercise has generated a commitment for the school to make a 'contribution to activities in the local community'. Workshops on literacy and

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<sup>4</sup> Circle time is an opportunity for pupils to discuss issues in their classes, in an informal and non-judgemental way.

numeracy have been held recently and regular induction sessions are offered to parents new to the school. The provision by governors of a 'surgery' for parents prior to each governing body meeting is also very useful. The school has worked very hard, and with success, to inform and include parents in the life of the school.

45. The headteacher and staff make every effort to offer an open-door policy to parents and carers. This positive and welcoming stance is much valued by parents who feel confident of a warm welcome and fair hearing. There are also three meetings each year for parents to meet their child's teacher and to discuss progress. A progress folder contains examples of pupils' work over time and this offers teachers, pupils and parents an opportunity to judge the development of skills and understanding. The annual pupils' reports make clear statements about what pupils know and can do but they do not give any real indication of what progress has been made since the previous year nor do they tie in with the target-setting observed in school. In this respect the inspection team agree with the view of some parents that they do not receive sufficient information on the progress made by their children in the curriculum subjects. However, the school does provide good information for parents and carers about the progress of children with SEN. Individual education plans are well written and parents are regularly involved in the review process.
46. Parents and carers are involved in many aspects of school life and their contribution is particularly important and valued. Parents help in the classroom, particularly in the lower classes of the school. Their skills and talents are varied and the school welcomes them all. Recently a group of parents responded to a plea from the headteacher and they have now painted one of the school halls. The Parents' Association works hard to organise a wide range of social events for the school. These are well supported by parents, pupils and teachers and raise significant funds for the school. Recent donations were used to buy playground equipment and a range of musical CDs.

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

47. The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the school. From the time the new school opened, following amalgamation of two schools, he has provided inspirational leadership. He is dedicated to the success of the school, children and staff. He is well supported by the new deputy headteacher and other staff with management responsibilities. Although the deputy headteacher is recently appointed, the head and deputy are forming an effective partnership. They are approachable and lead and support with humour and authority. The governing body is knowledgeable and very effective. There is a very strong team spirit and everyone works well together, on behalf of the pupils.

Strengths in leadership and management are:

- the excellent leadership of the headteacher;
- the atmosphere created where children are valued and there is a very effective learning environment;
- the good opportunities provided by the faculty<sup>5</sup> system for teamwork and developing its effectiveness;
- the rigorous systems in place for monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning;
- the very good school self-evaluation and taking of effective action;

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<sup>5</sup> The school has organised teachers into groups of subjects for management purposes. These are literacy, numeracy, science, arts and humanities.

- the knowledgeable and very effective governing body;
- the very good use and management of finances;
- the good number of well-qualified and experienced teaching and non-teaching staff;
- the very good accommodation;
- good resources for most subjects.

Areas for development are:

- there is no named co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage;
- there is no named co-ordinator to manage the needs of pupils who do not speak English as their mother tongue.

48. The vision of the headteacher, governors and staff is clearly established throughout the school. The school is successfully achieving its aim of developing 'a strong sense of self-esteem and aspiration' in its pupils. There is a clear sense of purpose and commitment to high standards. This is reflected in the rise in standards each year, which resulted in the school gaining a School Achievement Award. The school and governors are committed to establishing a socially inclusive curriculum that values all pupils' contributions. The school's values are evident throughout the school with the school's reward systems on display in every learning area. Children are helped to be part of this vision by their participation in decision making, through the pupil council and class councils. There is a very strong emphasis on seeking parents' views through the regular use of questionnaires. The vision statement of the school talks of valuing the individuality of all children and an inclusion policy has been developed to support this aim. The school achieves this goal very successfully and all pupils and adults share relationships that ensure that the school operates as a very harmonious community. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities towards inclusion and any concerns are identified and monitored. During the week of the inspection, pupils in Key Stage 2 experienced a very powerful and thought-provoking inclusion assembly, which was taken by a visiting speaker.
49. The school is managed very well on a day-to-day basis. The whole school works together as a harmonious community, and cares for the pupils. Office staff are very welcoming and extremely efficient in their responsibilities. The school uses new technology effectively to support office systems and also to monitor standards and attendance. Communications with parents are very good. Parents appreciate the openness and flexibility of the staff. They particularly value the leadership and management of the headteacher, together with the school's responsiveness to their suggestions. The headteacher and staff are seen as friendly, accessible and caring.
50. The headteacher's delegation of management responsibilities is very good. Clear structures are in place across the school, including a senior management team, phase leaders and a number of faculties covering all areas of the curriculum. These utilise staff leadership skills well and provide opportunities for staff across the school to work together collaboratively. Staff have positive views about the usefulness of this relatively new middle management faculty structure. Year band teams include support and teaching staff. Staff have job descriptions that outline clearly their roles and responsibilities. The senior management team work effectively, helping the head in meeting the school's aims. They maintain an overview, with the head, of the standards the school achieves.
51. The subject co-ordinators have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and have begun to take on aspects of their monitoring role. Their opportunities to monitor and influence fully the quality of teaching and learning are linked to the school's identified priorities in the school improvement plan. This means that some co-ordinators have

had less opportunity to take their subjects forward. The management of the Foundation Stage is good. The headteacher and the Key Stage 1 manager have an overview. They ensure that the curriculum needs of the children in the nursery and reception classes are fully considered in all whole-school decisions. There are regular meetings and the nursery and reception staff work very well together as a team. However, there is no one with responsibility for leading the Foundation Stage on a daily basis. This is a missed opportunity for staff with early years expertise to have a leadership role and take responsibility for organisational decisions. The acting SENCO is very enthusiastic and manages this aspect very well. She has clear procedures for dealing with pupils with SEN and a good understanding of the Code of Practice. She works well with other teachers and both the learning support and integration assistants. She is keen to develop her role and is hoping to complete national standards training. The governor with responsibility for this aspect has a background in SEN and consequently gives good support to the school.

52. The governing body is very effective. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and responsibilities very well. They are knowledgeable and very supportive. A particular strength of their involvement is their role in shaping the direction of the school. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are very well informed by the head and subject co-ordinators. The governors are developing their own systems for determining priorities. For example, they are matched to classes and some make school visits. This helps them have a view on standards and pupils' learning. Committees are well organised and governors have many strengths which they have brought to the school. They work in close partnership with the school to achieve the school's aims and share its vision. The governors' commitment to the school is demonstrated well in the time they give to the school. For example, many governors join the staff on training days to review the school improvement plan and agree school targets for the following year.
53. The chair of governors has established an effective working relationship with the head. He has an understanding of the governors' strategic role in continuing to take the school forward over the next few years. The chairs of committees are establishing their role as 'critical friends' effectively. They seek professional guidance from the school but are clear about their responsibilities as chairs and as governors in the decision-making process.
54. The school is very good at analysing its strengths and areas for development. Very good plans are made to address the latter. The school evaluates its own performance systematically, using all the data available. There are impressive systems for assessing the academic performance of different groups of pupils in English, mathematics and science. This information is used to direct the school's energy and finances towards the most pressing needs. Children identified as under-performing are given targeted support. Identified needs are linked to priorities in the school improvement plan. This is an impressive and substantial document. It is an excellent tool used by management, governors and staff to check progress with their priorities. The school improvement plan gives the school a clear sense of direction and is regularly referred to by staff and governors. They have clearly identified priorities that are linked to continuing to raise standards within the plan.
55. There is a rigorous system in place for monitoring teaching and learning. The practices and systems established by the headteacher are meticulous and informative. A programme of monitoring, linked to the school improvement plan priorities, is in place. Monitoring systems also draw on outside expertise, such as local authority advisory staff. There has been a strong focus on developing a consistent teaching and learning

policy and on the delivery of literacy and numeracy. Strengths and aspects for development identified either from observations or from looking at pupils' work, in subjects such as science, are shared with staff and acted on. Other subject co-ordinators undertake aspects of monitoring as outlined in the school improvement plan.

56. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is very effective as targets are linked to whole-school needs. The head and deputy are team leaders and further training is planned to increase the number of team leaders. The school is committed to the high quality support and training of staff. Support training needs are considered and training matched to school priorities or individual teaching. There is a very well thought out induction programme for all new staff as well as for newly qualified teachers. All the new staff spoken to commented on how well they were supported and how quickly they were made to feel valued members of the team. There is a very good team spirit amongst staff and a shared commitment to succeed.
57. The learning support staff and nursery nurses are knowledgeable and experienced. They provide effective support for different groups of pupils, including younger children, pupils with SEN and pupils who have behavioural difficulties. A number of support staff are trained in 'barriers to learning' and provide support if pupils have emotional difficulties. Teachers and their support staff form effective teams. They make a positive contribution to the learning, attainment and social development of the pupils. They provide positive role models for behaviour, and across the school relationships between adults and children are very good. Pupils know that the adults care about them and want them to be successful. Despite the difficulties of the buildings being on several levels, good plans have been put into place to enable the disabled to have access to the school. There is a good race equality policy.
58. The accommodation is very good. Despite occupying three separate buildings, accommodation has been well planned to make the best use of the available space. Classrooms are mostly of a good size and the teachers ensure that they are bright stimulating places of work. The school benefits from having two halls, though neither is quite big enough to enable the whole school to meet together regularly. The third building, which contains no class bases, houses a large, well-equipped library, about which older pupils were most enthusiastic. They are able to borrow from a good range of music CDs as well as books. This building also houses a large computer suite, to which the school plans to add 16 further computers in the near future, a small pottery studio and a base for the environmental work. The pupils also benefit from swimming in every year that they are in the school as the school has its own pool. There is an exceptionally good range of space outside, with two good-sized fields, three playgrounds, and an area for the Foundation Stage as well as gardens and trees. The site manager is efficient, flexible and accommodating. He makes a very positive contribution to the atmosphere of the school and is a co-opted member of the premises committee. He ensures that the school remains safe and clean. Learning resources for most subjects are good and they make a positive contribution to the pupils' learning.
59. All finances available to the school are used very well, spending being monitored very efficiently, both within school and by the finance committee of the governing body. An example of this is that a significant deficit accrued last year as a result of staff illness. Although further illness has affected the situation again this year, by careful budgeting and monitoring, the deficit has been reduced this year. The chair of the finance

committee has an excellent understanding of the principles of best value<sup>6</sup>, relating it, quite rightly, to pupils' learning. The school gives very good value for money.

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

60. In order to continue to raise standards, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) ensure that all subjects of the curriculum receive a fair allocation of time and that all time in the school day is used effectively; (paragraphs 23, 28, 118, 123, 128)
- (2) ensure that all pupils, particularly the most able and those less able pupils who have not been identified with SEN, always receive appropriate work. (paragraphs 7, 24, 41, 42, 95, 101, 104, 125, 128, 136)

In addition to the issues above, the governors should consider the following for inclusion in their action plan.

- (1) Putting in place systems for assessment in subjects which presently have none, and using assessment well, particularly to enable teachers to give appropriate work to pupils of all ability levels. (paragraphs 7, 41, 42, 104, 128, 136, 141, 149, 153)
- (2) Appointing a member of staff to lead the Foundation Stage. (paragraphs 51, 65)
- (3) Appointing a member of staff to take responsibility for ensuring that suitable provision is made for the pupils whose mother tongue is not English and creating a policy for this aspect. (paragraph 9)

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<sup>6</sup> Best value requires the organisation to challenge the need for spending, to get competitive prices for goods and services, to compare its performance against similar organisations and to consult its users.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	83
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	74

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	29	43	10	0	0	0
Percentage	1.2	34.9	51.8	12.0	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 one percentage point.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	22	414
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	23

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	33

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	27	33	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	24	26
	Girls	32	33	33
	Total	56	57	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (96)	95 (91)	98 (95)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	25	23
	Girls	33	33	33
	Total	57	58	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (86)	97 (95)	93 (95)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	23	37	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	19	22
	Girls	36	33	37
	Total	56	52	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (86)	87 (79)	98 (95)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	20	21
	Girls	37	34	35
	Total	58	54	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	97 (84)	90 (79)	95 (95)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	242	1	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	71	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	10	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5
Average class size	29.6

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

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	277

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	44
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25
Number of pupils per FTE adult	22

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7

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	2002/2003
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	£
Total income	896,801
Total expenditure	894,132
Expenditure per pupil	1,952
Balance brought forward from previous year	-11,606
Balance carried forward to next year	-8,937

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	458
Number of questionnaires returned	148

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	34	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	44	4	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	60	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	55	12	1	1
The teaching is good.	49	49	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	53	16	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	34	5	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	46	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	35	59	6	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	53	46	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	52	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	52	6	3	6

*Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding*

### Other issues raised by parents

Some parents expressed concerns about the supervision of pupils during the lunch breaks.

## **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**

61. Provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is one of the strengths of the school. Nursery and reception children get off to a flying start. This is because they are very well taught in a stimulating learning environment.

The main strengths are:

- a highly stimulating curriculum, which motivates the children to learn;
- the teaching is very good;
- staff are very knowledgeable about early years and work very well as a team;
- the nursery nurse and learning support assistants are a real asset;
- staff take great care to ensure children feel valued and are included in all activities;
- induction and transition arrangements are very good. Children are helped to settle easily into nursery and reception. They are also prepared well for joining Year 1;
- assessment systems are good;
- the Foundation Stage is well managed.

Areas for development are:

- there is no named co-ordinator to lead the Foundation Stage;
- the outside area for reception children needs further development.

62. During the inspection all the teaching observed was at least good, often very good and at times excellent. All staff provide a calm, purposeful, yet stimulating learning environment. They have a very good understanding of the needs of young children. The nursery nurse and learning support staff are used very well to support children's learning, particularly in the family group<sup>7</sup> sessions. As a result of this very good teaching, most children make at least good progress and often very good progress in some areas of their learning. Children who have English as an additional language and children with SEN also make good progress.
63. The admission arrangements are effective and ensure children settle easily. Nursery staff visit the children's pre-school settings so that they have a clear picture of the children's early experiences. Reception staff follow up any children who have not attended the nursery and give them more support to settle in. The staff work very closely with parents. Information is regularly sought through questionnaires. Parents are very appreciative of the quality of workshops and the information they receive. Parents are made to feel very welcome and staff regularly talk with them about their children's day. Parents make a very positive contribution to their children's learning by helping them at home and by helping in school.
64. The school's assessments indicate that this year, because many children have summer birthdays, nursery and reception children start at the expected level, with some above in their speaking and listening skills. Staff use information provided by parents and their own detailed assessments to good effect. Children have special targets which are displayed in classes and shared with parents. These help children to understand what they are learning. However, insufficient use is made of the expertise of the nursery nurse and support staff to assess and record children's learning within

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<sup>7</sup> The nursery and reception classes are divided into smaller groups, known as family groups with an adult responsible for each.

lessons. Any children with SEN are identified early and follow detailed action plans to help with learning and behavioural needs. Assessments show that by the time children leave reception, most have made at least good progress and are above the level expected.

65. The management of the Foundation Stage is good, with the headteacher and the Key Stage 1 manager having an overview. They ensure that the needs of the nursery and reception classes are fully considered in all whole-school decisions. Nursery and reception staff work very well together as a team. Together, they have produced a well thought out two-year curriculum which is delivered in a seamless way. However, there is no one with responsibility for leading the Foundation Stage on a daily basis. This is a missed opportunity for staff with early years expertise to have a leadership role and take responsibility for organisational decisions.
66. Resources are good within classes. Although reception children have a secure outside area, there is no seating, shelter or large fixed equipment. Staff try to compensate for this by using the very good nursery outdoor resources at the beginning of the year. They also regularly supply a range of outdoor equipment. Staff make good use of the spacious grounds, library and swimming pool.

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

67. Most children enter nursery with their social development as expected for their age, with some above. Staff help nursery and reception children settle in quickly. The children enjoy their family groups and the teachers make sure they know what they will be doing at the beginning of each session. The layout of the nursery and well-established routines, such as registration and juice times, help build the confidence of younger children. Children are given opportunities to be independent, such as finding their names and sorting out their own books and juice. There are times when children choose their own activities but there could be more to enable children to plan their time. The established nursery routines are built on in reception. The classrooms and corridor area are laid out in a way that enables children to select items independently. Children are responsible for putting away any equipment they use. There are some limited opportunities for nursery and reception children to mix.
68. The children work well in small groups and alongside each other. There is a fully inclusive atmosphere in lessons. Care is taken to include all children and to make sure that no new children are isolated or upset. Good support is in place for children who have special learning or behavioural needs. The school helps children develop positive attitudes to disability, through the use of puppets with a range of impairments. There are very good relationships between the staff and children. The staff make sure the children know what behaviour is expected and use lots of praise. Children respond very well to this. They enjoy learning, behave well and work hard. Because this area is well taught, children make good progress in nursery and reception. Most reception children are on course to exceed expected standards by the end of the year.

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

69. Most children enter nursery with skills in speaking and listening, writing and reading at the expected levels for their age, with some above. By the time they are in reception they have made very good progress. Nursery children are actively taught to listen and given daily opportunities to talk about what they are doing. The use of family groups in reception means children have plenty of opportunities to express their ideas and share their opinions. Care is taken to systematically introduce subject vocabulary. Role-play

areas are very well used to extend children's language and imagination. Children who use English as a second language also make very good progress because staff check continually that the children understand and use their vocabulary. Bilingual support is not generally needed because most children who speak English as an additional language are confident users of English.

70. The use of exciting and imaginative topics in nursery, such as 'sea life', stimulates the children's speaking and listening skills. Sounds are taught in an informal way and most recognise the names and sounds of letters. Staff teach children that books are full of interesting information and children enjoy sharing big books. Children are taught how to handle books with care. Some children know that authors write the book and illustrators draw the pictures and that "the blurb on the back tells you what's inside". However, the reading corner is quite small, with limited room for children to sit and look at books quietly. As a result, few children use it. Reception reading areas are really inviting places. They have good quality books and items of interest and excitement, such as a huge hovering space monster! They appeal to boys and girls who use them regularly. In reception, reading skills are also very well promoted. Children are provided with a wide range of texts, including poetry and information books. There are many regular opportunities to read individually and in small groups. Children really benefit from the extra help they get with their reading, sight vocabulary and simple spellings at home. Children in nursery and reception enjoy using the school library.
71. In nursery and reception, staff actively encourage children to use informal writing areas. Handwriting skills are very well taught. Nursery children have many opportunities to trace, make patterns and form marks on paper. They are taught to join their letters together. Reception children have daily targeted writing sessions and most are developing good handwriting skills. Some children have difficulty forming their letters fluently and need the extra help provided. Children who are ready for more independent writing activities are identified early. By the end of reception many can write their own simple sentences. Children are actively taught to use capital letters and full stops. Staff provide children with a wide range of reasons for writing. As a result children are generally positive and eager to record their ideas. In a letter to Elmer the elephant, one child wrote, "Dear Elmer I dont want you to be sad. I think that you look okay the way you are". Half termly writing assessments are used well as the basis for further targets. Very few children are identified as having specific learning needs. However, a few lower attainers need more support with some of their writing skills to help them get ready for Year 1.
72. Because this area is very well taught in nursery and reception, children make very good progress. By the end of reception the majority of children are on course to exceed expected standards. A significant number of children are well above expectation in their reading and writing skills.

### **Mathematical development**

73. Most children enter nursery with skills in numeracy at the expected levels for their age, with some above. By the time they are in reception they have made very good progress. Nursery children develop their early number skills and enjoy regular use of counting rhymes. They have daily use of water and sand activities together with a wide range of number puzzles and games. In reception numeracy skills are taught in family groups. This means that children have lots of opportunities to talk about what they are doing and to use mathematical language. A strong feature of the teaching is the development of the children's mental strategies through games. For example, in a very good lesson children worked in pairs, asking each other number questions. Friendly

competition between the family groups encouraged quick mental recall. Staff provide an appropriate balance between number-based activities, and activities that promote the children's understanding of mathematical ideas and language. Most children can record their work and are well prepared for work in Year 1. A few have difficulty recording their work and are given more practice in number formation. Good use is made of computer programs to reinforce number skills.

74. Because this area is very well taught in nursery and reception, children make very good progress. By the end of reception the majority of children are on course to exceed expected standards. A significant number of children are well above expectation in their number awareness.

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

75. Most nursery children start with knowledge and understanding at expected levels for their age. By the time they are in reception they have made good progress with their knowledge and skills. Topics such as 'families', 'freezing and melting' and 'yesterday and today' help nursery children to build up their picture of the world. In nursery, children have first hand experiences of planting and of observing the life cycle of frogs. In reception, topics such as 'our bodies', 'light and colour' and 'living and non-living things' continue to build up children's environmental, geographical and scientific knowledge. At this early age children are encouraged to think scientifically. For example, in a well-taught lesson the teacher skilfully explored the children's understanding of air. By the end of the session, many understood that although they cannot see air, they can feel the wind and see if things are moving. Work from the science focus week shows that children are getting a good grounding in simple investigations. These prepare children well for the work in Year 1. Some opportunities are missed for children to explore informally, on a daily basis. There are no investigation areas where children can handle and explore interesting items such as magnifying glasses and kaleidoscopes.
76. The staff successfully extend the children's knowledge of different cultures through books, music and resources. Children learn about different festivals. They experience a wide range of music, which includes classical, Indian, Chinese and African. Reception children have 'taster' French sessions. Computer skills are well taught. Computers are constantly in use, with a good selection of programs to reinforce basic skills. Boys and girls have positive attitudes and display equally good skills.
77. Because this area is well taught in nursery and reception, children make good progress. By the end of reception the majority of children are on course to exceed expected standards.

### **Physical development**

78. Most nursery children start with their physical skills at expected levels for their age. By the time they are in reception they have made good progress with their physical skills. This is because nursery staff make learning fun by using make-believe characters such as Fiona Five to motivate the children and reinforce their counting skills. The nursery children also have daily access to a large outside area and a good range of wheeled vehicles and climbing equipment. Outdoor resources for reception children are limited. The area is small and there is no large fixed equipment. Reception staff make good use of the school's extensive grounds. In a well-taught outdoor lesson the teacher made clear links between exercise and health. She had high expectations of children, providing good opportunities for them to work in pairs and show each other

what they could do. By the end of the lesson children made good progress in their ability to hop, jump, balance, throw and receive beanbags. Very good use is made of the swimming pool and reception children are already confident in the water.

79. Within classes, staff provide regular opportunities for girls and boys to play with large and small construction equipment. Because this area is well taught in nursery and reception, children make good progress. By the end of reception the majority of children are on course to exceed expected standards.

### **Creative development**

80. Most children enter nursery with skills at the expected levels for their age, with some above. By the time they are in reception they have made very good progress. Nursery and reception staff develop children's skills and creativity through interesting topics and regular imaginative role-play experiences. For example, in an excellent lesson, the children's imaginative use of language spilled out. Children, dressed in snorkels, flippers and mermaid costumes, confidently explored and sorted an exciting range of materials in a sea chest. Reception staff continue to provide a wide range of creative experiences. These include different painting techniques and collage work. The children learn to handle equipment such as paintbrushes and scissors safely. Children's art work is clearly valued, with children's individual paintings displayed in classes and around the school. Large group pictures in the style of Pollock, Miro and Matisse are also displayed around the school.
81. Staff develop the children's musical talents well. From nursery onwards children can receive specialist tuition. Music is taught in a way that promotes the children's confidence. In classes, music is often playing in the background. Children regularly handle and explore instruments, sing familiar songs and are taught simple pictorial notation. Enrichment activities such as an African drumming session also bring music to life.
82. The imaginative play areas are used really well to extend children's creativity and language skills. The nursery nurse and teaching assistants in particular, skilfully interact with children. They enter into the activities as children become injured pets or veterinary surgeons operating on injured animals! As a result, children are totally engrossed and thoroughly enjoy their learning.
83. Because this area is very well taught in nursery and reception, children make very good progress. By the end of reception the majority of children are on course to exceed expected standards in relation to their music making and artistic skills. A significant number of children are well above expectation in their ability to respond creatively and imaginatively in role-play situations.

## ENGLISH

84. Standards of attainment in English are well above average at the end of Year 2 and pupils make good progress. Standards of attainment are above average at the end of Year 6 but are not as high as last year. Although the percentage of pupils achieving at the expected level is well above the national average, the school has fewer higher attaining pupils in this particular year group and this depresses the overall standard. Teaching and learning are good, however, and evidence from the work scrutiny is that the pupils are making good progress. There has been a considerable recent improvement in standards of writing throughout the school as a result of this having been identified as a priority area for development.

Strengths in this subject are:

- well above average standards for the pupils in Year 2 and above average standards for the pupils in Year 6;
- the use of assessment;
- the quality of teaching;
- the progress that pupils make;
- good subject leadership.

Areas for development are:

- to make greater use of ICT to support the English curriculum;
- to increase opportunities for independent research.

85. Standards in speaking and listening are well above national expectations at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. All adults, including teachers and assistants, non-teaching staff and parents, make a positive contribution to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils are encouraged to talk to and listen to adults in virtually every lesson. This very positive approach not only ensures good progress in speaking and listening, but also underpins the very good relationships, which develop as pupils grow older. For example, one art and design lesson in Year 1 began with an opportunity for the pupils to discuss the various mathematical shapes that they could see when closely examining photographs of local buildings, and developed further as pupils described the ways that hospitals and churches are recognised and used. Similarly, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils were encouraged to develop a series of questions from statements, which they could then share with their partner. By the end of Year 2, the vast majority of pupils are confident to ask questions of their own and answer in complete, clear sentences. Most pupils have a very good range of vocabulary, are very articulate and reflect standards well above average for their age. Very few pupils hesitate to join in discussions at this stage.
86. Opportunities for the development of speaking and listening continue throughout Years 3 to 6 both in English and other lessons across the curriculum. A particularly effective strategy is the use made of partner work within lessons, such as in a Year 5 lesson, when pupils discussed the differences between written text and spoken English. They were challenged to work with a partner to find as many alternatives as they could for the word 'bloke' and then to report back to the class. They responded with confidence and came up with some very interesting and amusing suggestions. Pupils listen discerningly to what others are saying and ask questions or suggest improvements and very few pupils are hesitant or limit contributions to short phrases or single-word answers. Pupils throughout the school enjoy opportunities to share their ideas and, almost without exception, co-operate well and behave responsibly. They also appreciate the good range of visits and visitors that enrich the English curriculum. During the week of the inspection, for example, a visiting theatre group performed a

version of *The Tempest*, whilst pupils in Year 6 had attended a Birmingham theatre to enjoy a performance of a children's version of *Macbeth*.

87. Standards in reading are well above average by the end of Year 2. In Year 1, pupils receive very useful adult support and quickly become confident at deciphering unfamiliar words using letter sounds and picture cues. By the end of Year 2, most are familiar with the terms 'author' and 'illustrator' and know the difference between 'fiction' and 'non-fiction'. Many higher attaining pupils read aloud with expression, reflecting standards well above average for their age, and even the weaker readers need little support as they get older. Pupils in Year 2 could name authors such as Roald Dahl and J.K. Rowling and could say what type of books they liked and why they liked them. They are confident readers and enjoy their regular visits to the school library.
88. From Year 3 onwards, pupils continue to enjoy books and take pleasure in reading, because they are encouraged to talk and write about what they read and have a good range of interesting material to choose from. By the end of Year 6, the least able pupils read independently, although often from less challenging books, whilst many more confident classmates develop mature attitudes to literature and discuss the differences in writing styles, for example between J. K. Rowling, Michael Morpurgo and Jacqueline Wilson, with some authority. One pupil in Year 4, who was reading *The Magician's Nephew* by C. S. Lewis, remarked that he liked these sort of adventure books "because you don't know what is going to happen and they give you a fizz inside". Pupils have regular opportunities to use the school library and Year 6 pupils appreciated the improvements in library facilities that have occurred since the amalgamation of the two schools.
89. Standards in writing have improved considerably over the past three years, as this has been a focus area for school development. Standards are well above average in Years 1 and 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. In Years 1 and 2, the teachers develop writing skills in a carefully structured way. The pupils in Year 1 quickly gain confidence in spacing words and keeping their writing at a uniform size. By the end of Year 2, the vast majority write clear, consecutive sentences using capital letters and full stops, and many are able to use more adventurous words such as 'next' and 'finally' to link sentences together. Writing is used for a wide range of purposes and in many subjects other than English. In Year 1, for example, pupils had written acceptances to attend their teacher's recent wedding and as part of their work in DT they had completed instructional writing to describe how to make a mask. The pupils in Year 2 had written stories about the Good Samaritan as part of their studies in RE and designed posters in science to warn of the dangers of electricity. By the end of Year 2, most pupils write neatly and are beginning to employ an attractive cursive style.

90. Writing continues to be a priority in Years 3 to 6 and pupils successfully develop skills in writing for an increasingly wide range of purposes and audiences. By the end of Year 6, the majority structures their work using paragraphs and clear punctuation. They write creatively, for example, when completing letters from Macbeth to his wife and imaginatively through stories and poems, where more able pupils introduce tension and atmosphere into their work. Throughout Years 3 to 6, there is a consistency in the quality of written work. Progress is good and written work is usually presented well and displayed attractively, as in a Year 5 classroom where the teacher had used fluorescent backing paper to display a range of her pupils' poetry. Many pupils in Year 6 had produced independent research projects, which were of a very high standard and illustrated their awareness of conventions such as a contents page, glossary and bibliography. Pupils use pens for writing and take care and pride in their finished pieces of work, which are well presented and easy to read.
91. The quality of teaching throughout the school is consistently good and there were no unsatisfactory lessons. The best feature of teaching is the teachers' accurate planning of work for pupils of different abilities within their class. They set clear writing targets and make good use of the marking code to identify what pupils need to do to improve. They then use this information to plan work at a suitable level for individuals and groups. They provide appropriate support where it is needed, and this ensures that all pupils make good progress. Learning objectives are made clear at the beginning of each lesson and are usually revisited at the end of the lesson to enable pupils to identify the progress that they have made. Pupils with SEN make good progress because of the good support that they receive from the effective learning support staff. The pupils with English as an additional language do not receive specialist support but they make the same progress as their classmates, largely because they generally join the school with a good command of English. A significant strength of teaching is the teachers' good overall interpretation and use of the National Literacy Strategy, which is the main reason for pupils' good overall progress. Some teachers make appropriate use of computers to enable pupils to publish their work, but the word processor is not used as much or as effectively as it could be to produce and then edit drafts of their writing. The school makes good use of assessment procedures, including data analysis, to develop suitable targets for pupils, to monitor their progress and to predict their likely performance in national tests.
92. The acting co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and gives good leadership. She has a clear view of standards within her subject and works closely with other members of the literacy faculty to ensure continued improvement. One recent innovation has been the effective use of a transition unit of study that links the work done in Year 6 with that which pupils will undertake in Year 7 at one of the schools which many pupils will go on to. The co-ordinator is developing an action plan for future development, which includes the monitoring of teaching throughout the school.

## **MATHEMATICS**

93. The pupils in Year 2 are attaining standards that are well above average. In Year 6 the pupils are attaining standards that are above the national average. These standards are slightly lower than those recorded in the national tests in 2002. Although the number of pupils achieving at the expected level has increased, there are fewer pupils achieving at the higher level. As a result overall standards are lower. Pupils throughout the school achieve well as a result of the good teaching they receive.

Strengths in the subject are:

- well above average standards attained in Year 2 and above average standards in Year 6;
- the good quality of teaching and learning;
- the pupils' good attitudes to their learning;
- the good subject leadership with the positive effect of the National Numeracy Strategy.

Areas for development are:

- the provision of work for less able pupils who do not have SEN;
- the teachers' marking of pupils' work.

94. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. At the beginning of each lesson teachers explain clearly the learning objectives so that all pupils understand what they are expected to achieve. In the best lessons the work is well planned and organised so pupils of all abilities are able to learn well. These lessons begin with a rigorous mental session or game to engage the pupils in their learning. In a very good lesson in a Year 6 class, for example, the teacher began with a well-paced mental session that engaged the pupils in their learning and promoted their mental skills. During this session, the pupils quickly recalled multiplication facts and displayed a good understanding of the value of decimal fractions and whole numbers over one million. The teacher effectively questioned the pupils, challenging them to explain how they had calculated their answers. She checked the progress the pupils were making during the lesson and supported their learning very well. During the lesson the teacher set time targets to encourage the pupils to work hard. In response, the pupils concentrated well and worked at a good pace, displaying very positive attitudes to their work. As a result of clear explanations and very good support, the pupils made very good progress in their learning.
95. The teachers plan lessons effectively and thoroughly, seeking to provide appropriately challenging work for all attainment groups. On occasions, however, the work provided for lower attaining pupils is too difficult, and as a result these pupils do not make the progress that they should. In lessons, teachers manage the pupils very well, achieving high standards of behaviour and positive attitudes. These positive attitudes are reflected in the great pride that most pupils take in the presentation and accuracy of their work. The teachers' questioning of pupils at the beginning and end of lessons is good at times. In the best lessons, teachers use a range of questions that are carefully chosen to check the understanding of individuals and groups of pupils. In a minority of lessons it is not used sufficiently well to assess what pupils understand or have learned. The quality of teachers' marking is satisfactory, but requires improvement. In the best examples, teachers make good reference to pupils' progress towards their targets and give guidance on how they can improve their work. On occasions, teachers ask pupils to correct errors in their work but do not always ensure that these are completed.
96. Many teachers have a very supportive and encouraging approach to the pupils and their learning. They value the contributions pupils make in class and this helps to develop the pupils' self-esteem and enables them to become confident learners. Teachers throughout the school provide good opportunities in many lessons for pupils to develop socially through group and paired activities. On these occasions pupils work effectively together, co-operating well, sharing their ideas and opinions, clearly displaying the very good relationships they share with one another. Learning support staff are effective in their work in helping pupils to make good progress in their learning.

97. The curriculum is good. The school uses the National Numeracy Strategy effectively to plan the curriculum. The success of a recent focus on the mental/oral session at the beginning of lessons can be clearly seen in the high quality of teaching in many lessons. The teachers often provide good opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects, for example science, art, geography and history. There are particularly good examples of pupils measuring and recording the results of science experiments on charts and graphs. In Year 6, for example, pupils recorded on a line graph the decline in water temperature as they investigated the effectiveness of different insulators. The school makes satisfactory use of computer programs to support the pupils' learning in this subject. The school provides a focused mathematics week, which provides a good platform for parents to become more informed about the work that their children are doing.
98. Procedures for assessing the pupils' levels of achievement and checking their progress are good. Pupils throughout the school have targets for improvement and their progress towards these is monitored rigorously. Teachers record the pupils' progress against 'key objective' statements for the elements of mathematics covered. The school analyses pupils' performance in national tests and uses these and the results from the annual non-statutory tests in Years 1, 3, 4 and 5 to set targets and to check pupils' progress. Additional mental tests at the beginning and end of each term are also being used very effectively to check pupils' understanding and monitor the progress that they are making. All this information is used well to target pupils who require additional support.
99. The subject is well led and managed. The faculty manager is effective in her work. She has provided demonstration lessons of the National Numeracy Strategy to help colleagues improve their teaching. She monitors teachers' planning, and has undertaken classroom observations to check on the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. As a result of this work and a careful analysis of work in pupils' books, she has developed a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and where improvements need to be made. She is kept well informed on a day-to-day basis through her work with other members of the faculty and the headteacher. The school has a good number of resources that are used well.

## SCIENCE

100. Standards in science are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, particularly in pupils' factual knowledge. The quality of teaching is good and the pupils make good progress.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the pupils' extensive factual knowledge and ability to apply it as the result of effective teaching;
- the support provided for pupils with SEN to enable them to tackle the same content as their peers;
- the use of the foundations in science given in nursery and reception;
- the enhancement of scientific experiences through such arrangements as 'focus week' and the use of the school environment.

Areas for development are:

- the more rigorous development of investigative skills;
- the use of assessment to ensure pupils make best progress as they mature;
- specific planning for higher attaining pupils in lessons;
- the regular use of ICT to support the subject.

101. Nearly all pupils have the knowledge required by the National Curriculum programmes of study, and many know more than the basic information. This breadth of knowledge enables pupils to apply their learning confidently, and results in good understanding of scientific principles. In a Year 5 geography lesson, for instance, pupils were able to work out the likely habitat of creatures such as the hummingbird by applying knowledge of likely diet having observed its long beak. They also predicted that as a member of the cat family, the ocelot would be carnivorous. Many pupils use the relevant vocabulary readily and accurately to discuss their conjectures. By Year 6, pupils conduct investigations competently, and write reliably about their discoveries. Despite pupils' extensive background knowledge and understanding, the achievement of some pupils of the highest attainment is not as high as it could be. The pupils' skills in investigative science are not as well developed as their knowledge acquisition. Pupils seldom have the opportunity to design their own investigations, select the ways in which they record results or take responsibility for discovering more information during lessons. Much recording of investigative work is pictorial rather than diagrammatic. Although progress is good in acquiring factual knowledge and understanding from Year 1 to Year 5, it slows in Year 6 when much of the work is revision, and assessment information does not identify precisely which investigative skills need development. Moreover, assessment is not regularly used to identify the needs of higher attainers throughout the school, who are rarely set different work to their peers. The pupils with SEN make good progress because of the support they receive. This is provided either by well-briefed adults or by peers within the class, and enables pupils steadily and consistently to acquire the basic facts and make useful contributions when there is a need to apply them.
102. The pupils in Year 6 are aware that drugs are in common daily use, that some are useful and others harmful. They know some of the effects of alcohol on the human body, and apply knowledge of the functions of internal organs in understanding why some of these occur. In Year 5, the pupils have good knowledge of the life cycle of a flowering plant and many use terms such as germination and pollination confidently when talking about the process. Within the discussion pupils apply previous knowledge of photosynthesis and functions of parts of the plant to explain the processes. Year 4 pupils know the functions of the skeleton and name the important parts such as skull, pelvis and rib cage. Having observed the human skeleton in detail, they were able to apply their knowledge to other skeletons and reason which animals they belonged to. By Year 3 pupils already know that animals eat different food and that their bodies are adapted to diet. They also know the main parts of the plant and their functions. They are able to apply knowledge of these plant parts to identify which parts of the plant humans use to eat. Pupils, for instance, know that fruit contain seeds and that leaves are usually green.
103. By the end of Year 2 pupils know that some materials decay and others do not. They are aware of some of the changes, such as growth of mould and loss of turgidity, which take place during the decaying process. They make pertinent observations about the specimens that they are to observe as they decay. They know that it is necessary for decay to occur so that there is room in the world for new life. Year 1 pupils know that seedlings need soil and water to grow, and that the roots grow below the ground and leaves above. They know some of the uses of plants such as shelter for animals and that trees provide wood. The levels of knowledge and understanding, and amount of work covered in Year 1 are the consequence of effective prior learning in nursery and reception classes.

104. Science is well taught throughout the school in terms of teaching the facts and applying them. Teachers generally have less confidence in developing pupils' investigative skills. This has been identified by the co-ordinator as an area for development, and steps are currently being taken to provide training and support for staff. Some very good lessons were observed during the inspection where a variety of methods and high expectations led to pupils thoroughly understanding complex scientific processes. All teachers are good at recapitulating previous work, explaining new work and what pupils are expected to learn, and planning appropriate activities. They are particularly good at selecting resources which promote discussion and make pupils apply their knowledge, and their questioning effectively draws out the relevant facts. The teachers in Years 1 and 2 are sometimes less effective in dealing with follow-up questions and increasing the pupils' vocabulary to enable them to express their thoughts clearly. In Years 3 to 6, there is systematic development of the writing of scientific investigations so that by Year 6 pupils record these thoroughly. However, teachers very rarely plan work specifically to suit the needs of the higher attainers and the content of the work in pupils' books throughout the school is frequently identical for all pupils in the class. Little account is taken of their ability to go beyond the work planned for the majority of the class even where teachers are aware that pupils are able to complete work without much intellectual effort. Although some activities involving the use of ICT were seen in lessons, it is not used as regularly or effectively as it could be, especially in data handling.
105. Use of the school grounds for growing plants and observing animals enhances the curriculum, inspires the pupils and ensures they understand the relevance of the work they are doing. The member of staff responsible makes a significant contribution to provision in the subject. The school's 'focus week' added breadth and interest to pupils' learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

106. Attainment in art and design is above average throughout the school. Pupils make very good progress in lessons. This progress is largely due to the very good quality of teaching. Throughout the school pupils with SEN also make very good progress.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the contribution of Art Week and school performances to enrich the curriculum;
- the very good quality of learning due to the very good quality of teaching;
- the pupils' very good attitudes to their learning and their behaviour;
- good leadership and vision for the subject.

Areas for development are:

- to develop the use of sketchbooks and the School Art Gallery to show progression of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding;
- to establish assessment procedures to support this;
- to find further examples of artefacts from different times and cultures, including multicultural art, to broaden pupils' experiences.

107. The school already has a large display of pupils' achievements in art and design. During Art Week pupils collaborated very well to produce many large examples of work 'in the style of' a variety of artists from different times. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 created good examples of paintings such as the *Water Lilies* by Monet and *Senecio* by Paul Klee. Older pupils made a striking tapestry by sewing different coloured felt butterflies. The pupils in Years 3 to 6 have also worked very well together in styles

such as abstract and impressionist. For example, the pupils in Year 4 have studied *The Dreamer* by Marc Chagall and also produced batik work inspired by Aboriginal art.

108. In all classrooms there are examples of work in both two and three dimensions. All pupils have the opportunity to work with a wide variety of art materials and tools. They draw, paint, use pastels and create collages. Year 1 pupils used textiles to make felt creature puppets and in ceramics Year 4 pupils worked with clay to make house number plaques. Pupils in Year 5 explored sculpture when making people in plaster of Paris.
109. The school environment is very well used to support pupils' artwork. Pupils in Year 1 record from first hand observations when making their own wax crayon rubbings of the buildings.
110. The teachers prepare and organise lessons very well. They have very good subject knowledge and use resources very well as they demonstrate various techniques to pupils. For example, a Year 4 class learned how to paint in the 'flat' style of the Ancient Egyptians using a particular colour pallet. In a previous lesson pupils had drawn the outlines of Ancient Egyptian images and in this lesson they made very good progress in painting their pictures. The teachers manage pupils very well and the pace of lessons is very good, as in a Year 5 lesson where pupils used rollers to apply paint to a previously made string-printing block. In the lesson they made very good progress by moving the printing block of an outline of a person along the page, to produce a finished picture showing movement.
111. All pupils have very good attitudes towards their artwork. In lessons they are always very well behaved and there are very good relationships. All pupils retain interest and listen attentively to teachers as they demonstrate skills and techniques. When working together in pairs, they collaborate well and show good levels of concentration. All pupils show independence in selecting brushes, tools and colours for their artwork. Some good use is made of ICT to develop pupils' artistic skills.
112. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the subject and the development of the School Art Gallery. There is a subject policy and a scheme of work based on the national scheme, tailored to the school's needs. The scheme covers all elements of art and design and lists the skill development in each unit of work. The pupils' use of sketchbooks to try out ideas and develop techniques is underdeveloped. Resources for art and design are good. The development of the arts faculty enables closer working between the art and design, music and PE subject managers. The effectiveness of the arts faculty can be seen in the standard of artwork produced by pupils during Art Week.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (DT)**

113. Only two lessons of DT were seen during the inspection, both in Year 3. Other evidence has been collected from the scrutiny of work and discussions with staff and pupils. Throughout the school attainment is average. The pupils make good progress in lessons and sometimes they make very good progress. This progress is largely due to the good and sometimes very good quality of teaching. Pupils with SEN also make good progress.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the teachers' good subject knowledge of the design and make process;
- the pupils' good attitudes to their learning and their behaviour;

- good leadership and vision for the subject.

Areas for development are:

- to ensure the subject has sufficient timetabled time to embed into the schools' curriculum;
- to define the standards for the subject throughout the school;
- to establish assessment procedures to enable all pupils to work at their own level.

114. In Years 1 and 2 all pupils make good progress, using a range of materials such as paper, card, food, textiles and reclaimed materials to make their designs. Year 1 pupils design and make animal masks using glue to join paper, paper plates and straws together. In Year 2, pupils make good progress selecting and using reclaimed materials, paint, wheels and rods to make moving vehicles. All pupils use sheets to plan their work and all look for improvements in their finished products.
115. In Year 3 pupils make very good progress evaluating various breads such as white, wholemeal, bagels and pitta. They also evaluate sandwich spreads such as margarine, mayonnaise, cottage cheese and cheese spread. They taste the ingredients and make very good progress in recording what these are and which they prefer. Later in the lesson they also make very good progress discussing their preferences with the teacher. They do this not only on the basis of which ingredients they like but also taking into account how healthy these are. This effective evaluation prepares pupils for making their own healthy sandwich. Teachers use resources well. They have good subject knowledge and plan lessons well.
116. The pupils have good and sometimes very good attitudes to learning. They retain interest in tasting the ingredients and concentrate well on recording their findings. Teachers organise lessons and manage pupils very well and this leads to high standards of behaviour and very good relationships. Questioning is good and pupils watch, listen and respond well. Support staff are used effectively to support pupils with their evaluations and their research about healthy foods on the Internet.
117. Year 4 pupils continue to make good progress as they design and make box frames using shells, card, paint and cellophane. Year 5 pupils design and make musical instruments using reclaimed materials and make good progress in recording the improvements they have made whilst making. Pupils in Year 6 pay particular attention to fitness for purpose when designing and making a hat for a book character. They work very well together in pairs. They select a character, list the materials they will need and note all the improvements they make.
118. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has a clear vision for its development. She has spent considerable time working with teachers to develop the new scheme of work based on the national scheme. It is in its first year of use in line with the school's three-year plan. Next year the subject becomes a priority for monitoring. This is an opportunity to evaluate the breadth of the subject, to ensure that all aspects of DT are included. For example, units of work covering electrical and control topics are currently underdeveloped. Also the amount of time pupils spend in lessons is less than for other subjects. Resources for the subject are in the process of being built up in line with development planning.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

119. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average. The subject is taught satisfactorily and the pupils make sound progress.

The strengths in the subject are:

- the use of fieldwork, trips and visitors;
- the support provided for pupils with SEN to enable them to tackle the same content as their peers.

Areas for development are:

- the allocation of time to the subject and the depth and breadth of curriculum coverage;
- the use of assessment to ensure pupils make progress from Year 1 to Year 6;
- specific planning for higher attaining pupils in lessons;
- the variety in the recording of outcomes.

120. Pupils have the expected basic knowledge of the topics they have studied and can discuss this work satisfactorily and apply what they have learnt in other subjects confidently. However, their work lacks the breadth and depth which pupils with their literacy, numeracy and scientific skills would be expected to use, and specific geographical skills such as map work are underdeveloped. Although factual knowledge is cumulative, on too many occasions work on basic skills such as identifying the countries and capital cities of the British Isles is unnecessarily repeated – the school has no systems for knowing what pupils already know and can do. The pupils with SEN make the same progress as peers because of the support given by teachers during lessons or by their peers within the class.
121. Year 6 pupils are able to mark places on maps and know how to use a key, while in Year 5 they know relevant facts about the Caribbean island of St Lucia and how the locality differs from their own. They know some of the crops which are exported from St Lucia and the type of natural vegetation which occurs there as the result of the equatorial climate. Pupils in Year 4 know the water cycle and about the stages of a river. They have recorded relevant data about rivers and are aware of some of the uses made by industry and for leisure. Year 3 pupils identify features of the immediate neighbourhood of the school on an aerial photograph and large scale map. In Year 2 pupils know about some of the differences between country, seaside and Sutton Coldfield and recognise different types of buildings in the locality, while Year 1 pupils have recorded their walk to school and identified what they like and dislike about the immediate environment.
122. In the three lessons observed during the inspection, all in Years 3 to 6, geography was soundly taught. The pupils were introduced to the relevant facts and had appropriate opportunities to consolidate their knowledge through pertinent questioning. Care was taken to include man's effects on the environment, and discussion about this aspect was actively encouraged. Expectations of what pupils could achieve, however, are not high. Over the long term this is even more apparent as pupils usually only record their work on worksheets which require limited response and fail to stimulate pupils' interest or intellectual effort, especially for higher attaining pupils. Associated resources are seldom available. In a lesson in Year 5, for example, the pupils were expected to cut out pictures of animals and place them on an outline picture of the rain forest. However, they were not provided with reference material or access to ICT so that they could find out about animals such as the capybara which they did not know. ICT is underused in this respect. Although field trips and visitors are used well, and pupils are enthusiastic about such work, it is rarely followed up by individual recording of what has been discovered.

123. The subject has only recently become a priority area for the school, so there has been little active development. Some useful initiatives are planned, but much of the future development is aimed at resources and refining the existing provision rather than raising standards so they are commensurate with pupils' skills in other subjects. Limited time is allocated to the subject whereas sessions practising basic reading or handwriting, which are not necessary for older pupils, are held regularly. Geography is not used as a medium for improving research skills. There is also unnecessary repetition which limits the breadth of work done.

## **HISTORY**

124. As it was only possible to observe four lessons during the course of the inspection, judgements are based predominantly on discussions with pupils, studying their work, looking at displays and an interview with the history co-ordinator. The attainment of pupils is average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and their progress is judged to be satisfactory. Those pupils with SEN make similar progress.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the wide range of visits and visitors that enriches the curriculum;
- the good standard of independent research projects seen in Year 6;
- the good attitudes that pupils have towards their learning.

Areas for development are:

- the balance of the curriculum in Years 3 to 6;
- the assessment of the pupils' attainment;
- curricular provision for pupils of differing abilities;
- opportunities for independent research in years other than Year 6.

125. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 begin to develop a sense of history by studying how modern homes are different from those of the past. In Year 1, for example, pupils have studied homes in Sutton Coldfield and good use has been made of the digital camera to enable pupils to study photographs in order to identify the differences between bungalows, semi-detached and detached houses. They have also examined old household furniture and artefacts to enable them to appreciate change over time. In Year 2, pupils recount the main events surrounding the Great Fire of London and appreciate that the construction of the buildings contributed to the rapid spread of the fire. Good use of historical artefacts, particularly photographs, is a strong feature of the history curriculum and contributes to the pupils' language development. The curriculum affords opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills, as when pupils in Year 2 wrote about life as an evacuee, but these opportunities are underdeveloped. All pupils often undertake the same task, which is frequently based on a common worksheet. This means that lower attaining pupils find the work too difficult, whilst high attaining pupils are neither challenged nor enthused. History is often linked to other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 2 had made homes in their DT lessons to support their history topic and most lessons begin with an opportunity for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills through discussion. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use computers to further their studies.
126. The historical knowledge and understanding of most pupils are typical for their age, although some older pupils find it difficult to link different periods of history and to place them in chronological order. The pupils in Year 6 can talk about the various historical topics that they have studied and spoke with enthusiasm about how life in Britain has changed since the Second World War. They are very proud of their independent project work and are aware that aspects of the past can be studied through the use of evidence, such as pictures, written accounts and photographs. They can distinguish between primary and secondary evidence and in most classes the provision of time-lines helps pupils to develop a sense of chronology. The pupils in Years 3 to 6 study a range of historical topics and further develop their awareness of the passage of time, and most topics are enriched by a programme of visits and visitors. Pupils in Year 4, for example, completed a detailed study of Roman times, which included a visit to the Lunt Roman Fort at Coventry, whilst pupils in Year 3 dressed in Greek costume to celebrate their Greek Day. History is often linked to other areas of the curriculum. For instance, pupils in Year 6 developed their literacy skills by either writing letters from Macbeth to his wife or completing imaginary newspaper reviews of the play at its earliest performance. Their individual project work illustrates a potential for many pupils to achieve very high standards in history and indicates good use of ICT to support learning. However, pupils are rarely provided with such good opportunities for learning and this restricts the progress that they make.

127. The teachers have secure knowledge of the subject and are assisted by a comprehensive policy and scheme of work that covers all the required units of study and this makes a positive contribution to the pupils' historical awareness. In all lessons seen, teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory. There was one very good lesson in Year 6, which resulted from good planning and the provision of a range of appropriate resources. In this lesson, the pupils were challenged to use their research skills to find out about the life of the Beatles. There was very good discussion about how to write open-ended questions and to whom those questions should be directed. The pupils responded enthusiastically and made very good progress towards their learning objective and this helped them to develop their skills of enquiry and to understand and appreciate the passage of time. In all lessons, the pupils' attitudes to history are good and Year 6 pupils talk enthusiastically about the opportunities that they have experienced.
128. The management of the subject is satisfactory. History has not yet been a focus area for school development and consequently has yet to receive a high profile. As a result, there is still much to do in order to provide effective and consistent learning opportunities for all pupils. There is insufficient balance within the curriculum for history in Years 3 to 6 as there are periods, particularly in Year 4, when pupils have no history lessons for a full term. The relatively low time allocation set aside for the subject is insufficient to enable pupils to develop skills consistently and to achieve the high standards of attainment that they are capable of. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop assessment procedures, to review curricular balance in Years 3 to 6 and to ensure that teachers provide all pupils with work that is matched to their ability.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

129. At the end of Years 2 and 6, attainment in ICT is average. Pupils make good progress. This progress is largely due to the good and often very good quality of teaching. Pupils with SEN also make good progress. In lessons taken by the subject co-ordinator, pupils make very good progress.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the very good quality of teaching of the subject co-ordinator;
- the pupils' very good attitudes to their learning and their behaviour;
- very good subject leadership and vision.

Areas for development are:

- to provide more opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to develop their ICT skills;
- to develop the classroom use of the wireless network in lessons;
- to integrate assessment procedures into lesson planning.

130. No ICT lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 and there are none currently planned in the computer suite. Teachers do, however, identify ICT activities to support literacy, numeracy and science lessons. For example, in one literacy lesson the pupils in Year 1 selected a word to complete a sentence. In numeracy, Year 2 pupils used a program to draw squares and rectangles and flood-fill them with a variety of colours. All pupils make satisfactory progress developing mouse and keyboard skills.
131. In Years 3 to 6 the subject co-ordinator is currently teaching a fortnightly ICT lesson in the computer suite. The class teacher supports and then teaches the following lesson. This strategy is very effective in raising the standard of work. The subject co-ordinator has prepared blocks of lessons to support the school's scheme of work for ICT and this also has a positive impact on standards. The effective school scheme is based on

a national scheme and has been adapted in collaboration with ICT co-ordinators from neighbouring schools.

132. Due to the very good subject knowledge and organisational skills of the subject co-ordinator, pupils in Year 4 made very good progress identifying a rogue monster in a branching database. The pupils work out how to frame carefully and write a question to identify the monster. In another lesson, Year 5 pupils made very good progress using the 'wait' command for the first time to write a simple control program. They controlled events in a predetermined way to switch on coloured lights on screen. Following on from this, pupils in Year 6 also made very good progress when learning how to write a procedure to control a sensor that detects heat and then lights up a light bulb. This intellectually challenging activity enabled pupils to work through a problem with help from the computer program.
133. The pupils listen well to their teachers and support staff. They retain interest and concentration as they collaborate very well together to answer questions. They develop the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to carry out their work independently and their very good behaviour ensures that lessons run at a very good pace and tasks are completed. All pupils respect each other's contributions and there are very good relationships in all lessons.
134. Classroom computers are used to support work in other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 4 used an Internet activity to input the letters of their name, which were then changed into hieroglyphics. This effectively supported work in history on the Ancient Egyptians. Year 5 pupils turned non-Standard English into Standard English when writing a letter using a word processor in a literacy lesson.
135. The subject is very well led. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of the subject and is very aware of what is needed to extend the availability of ICT resources and opportunities for all pupils. A good Internet and email use agreement is shared with parents. The after-school computer club is currently for pupils in Years 3 and 4 and parents are encouraged to come along. The school is currently in the process of adding to the 16 laptop computers with 15 desktop computers in the suite. This will enable the laptops to be used in all classrooms and provide pupils with more opportunities to use ICT in their work.
136. As part of the links with local schools, the school has an IT technician on site once a week, which has a positive impact on the delivery of the ICT curriculum. Teachers have completed ICT training and in lessons support staff are effective. The school library is computerised and runs very well. The subject is well resourced with a computer suite and two computers in each classroom; all of these are networked. Existing peripherals include printers, scanners, digital cameras and microscope, though there are no external sensors. Assessment is underused and is not integrated into planned activities to support staff and pupils as they develop their use of ICT.

## **MUSIC**

137. By Years 2 and 6, the pupils attain average standards. They attain higher than expected standards in singing. They make satisfactory progress overall and good progress with their singing. The school is very inclusive and ensures that pupils are fully included in lessons. As a result pupils with SEN make the same progress. There is very good provision for pupils who are gifted and talented. As a result they make very good progress. Only three music lessons were observed during the inspection,

therefore no judgements are made about the overall quality of teaching and learning. Of the lessons seen, two were good and one very good.

Strengths in the subject are:

- a good range of enrichment activities including productions, visitors and focus weeks;
- very good provision for pupils who are gifted and talented;
- good links between music and other subjects such as PE, drama and art;
- very good contribution to pupils' cultural development and appreciation of music from around the world;
- the subject is well led and managed.

Areas for improvement are:

- some pupils do not have regular opportunities to compose;
- not all pupils are confident in using musical vocabulary;
- there are no regular opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning in classes;
- there is no formal assessment of music.

138. The pupils have positive attitudes to their music-making activities. The school values music and provides a range of stimulating musical experiences. For example, music is used in different subjects and around the school to set a mood, or to mark the beginning and end of sessions. This contributes well to the school's calm working atmosphere.
139. By the end of Year 2, pupils understand that symbols represent sounds and can follow a simple pattern of notes. Most can name a range of instruments. Some understand terms such as 'tempo' and 'pitch'. In a well-taught lesson in Year 2, pupils clearly enjoyed their music-making activities. This was because the lesson was delivered in an interesting manner, with amusing music as a background to their work on notation.
140. Across the school pupils attain higher than expected standards in singing. This is because they have regular opportunities to join choirs in Years 2, 3 and 6. Years 1 and 2 sing well-known songs such as *Looby Loo*, with enthusiasm and gusto. The pupils in Years 3 to 6 have plenty of opportunities to further their singing skills as members of the choirs and during school productions. The recent 'Wild West' school production combined the pupils' artistic and musical skills well. They really enjoy their weekly music assembly. Most join in enthusiastically and the singing is tuneful, pacey and melodic.
141. Pupils have regular opportunities to review a wide range of music and are encouraged to respond creatively. For example, after listening to *Hoe-down* by Aaron Copeland a Year 2 pupil wrote "When I listened to the music it made me think of two ladies dancing and fireworks flying across the sky". From observation of a Year 6 lesson and discussion with Year 6 pupils the majority of pupils have a satisfactory factual knowledge of the music curriculum. They can name a number of composers from the past and have an awareness of contemporary music. Pupils can produce chords and follow notation. Good use is made of the co-ordinator's subject expertise because she takes most of the music lessons in Year 6. The skills of instrumentalists are also used well in composing activities. There are gaps in some pupils' learning. For example, not all pupils have had enough opportunities to compose or to use instruments, and some have difficulty using musical terms. Because the school does not have an assessment system these gaps have not been clearly enough identified.

142. The pupils particularly enjoy the enrichment activities available, for example the events and visitors during music focus week. The range of opportunities for the choirs and musicians together with links with other schools all make a very good contribution to the pupils' social development. Care is taken to widen pupils' knowledge and appreciation of different musical traditions across the world. For example, in a very well taught lesson, pupils in Year 5 applied their learning on traditional African beat to a dance sequence. The school's scheme includes a wide range of music, from different times and cultures. Pupils can also borrow a broad selection of music CDs from the library that have been paid for by the Parents' Association.
143. There is very good provision for pupils who are gifted and talented. A large number of girls and boys (including children as young as nursery age) have regular tuition from the visiting teacher service. These pupils have many opportunities to perform. For example, violinists play with other schools at Sutton Town Hall, or perform at the National Exhibition Centre. The members of the Little Folk string players, many of whom belong to the school, have received many awards. The teaching that the pupils receive from the visiting teacher service is of a very high calibre and as a result pupils achieve very high standards. Because of timetabling arrangements, however, some pupils miss parts of other lessons when they attend tuition sessions.
144. The leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has created an appropriate action plan. She has recently introduced a published scheme and is in the process of resourcing it. As member of the school's arts faculty she is able to support the development of links between subjects and pupils' creative development. At present the co-ordinator has no opportunity to monitor teaching and learning within lessons or to support colleagues in lessons. However, she has an understanding of pupils' skills from observations of their productions and class assemblies. Resources are generally good. ICT is not used sufficiently to support learning.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)**

145. Standards in PE are average by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils are making satisfactory progress over time, although progress in lessons is now good as the quality of teaching is good. The pupils with SEN are fully included in all lessons and are well supported, enabling them to make the same progress as their peers.

Strengths in the subject are:

- standards in swimming;
- extra-curricular opportunities, including the annual production;
- initiatives taken to be involved in coaching projects;
- resources and the space available;
- the leadership of the subject.

An area for development is:

- the improvement of games and athletics skills.

146. The school is fortunate to have its own swimming pool, most of the running costs of which are funded by hiring it out to other organisations when the school does not wish to use it. This is used very well, with all pupils from the reception class upwards having the opportunity to learn to swim. This results in very good standards of swimming. During the inspection a group from one of the reception classes was observed and these young children were already confident in the water and obviously enjoying the experience, even though it was only their fourth lesson. Standards in dance and

gymnastics are also above average as the school has had specific input and training for teaching these aspects of the subject. Evidence of standards in dance and gymnastics is in the performances in the annual production where older pupils combined gymnastic and dance movements very well. They danced effectively in a range of styles from folk to modern.

147. Standards in games and athletics are not yet so good, in many classes being barely average. The school has put in place plans to address this. For example, during the inspection the pupils in Years 1 and 2 were benefiting from specialist training in just these skills. The school makes very good use of this buying in of specialist help. As well as specialist help for dance and gymnastics and the lessons taken in Years 1 and 2 by Arc Sports, the school is planning to use another scheme with the older pupils to raise standards in games.
148. There is a wide range of other opportunities for pupils. Particularly notable is the benefit gained by the gifted and talented pupils. They are able to take part in a good range of local competitions and are involved in coaching schemes with professional coaches. Other pupils are not left out, and there are opportunities for many pupils to take part in activities such as circus skills, mini-tennis and cross-country running. There is a popular dance activity specifically for boys, to raise the profile of this activity with boys.
149. Many of the initiatives are recent and this has raised the quality of teaching of the subject, so that it is now good. However, the initiatives have not been in place for long enough for progress over time to be better than satisfactory, though progress in many lessons is now good. Much of the progress made in the subject is due to the enthusiasm and good leadership of the co-ordinator, who took over leadership of the subject only a year ago. She recognises all the areas for development and has good plans in place to address them. She also recognises the need for a system of assessment to measure the progress that pupils make. As well as benefiting from a swimming pool, the school is very fortunate in the space available to teach the subject. There are two good sized halls, each well equipped for the relevant age of the pupils using them. Outside, there are two fields and two hard play areas as well as the availability of the adjacent grammar school playing field. There are good resources for teaching the subject. All these are used well to aid the pupils' learning and progress.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

150. By the end of Years 2 and 6, the pupils achieve above average standards. Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching they receive.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the above average standards;
- the good quality teaching and learning;
- the pupils' good attitudes to their learning;
- the contribution the subject makes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- the good subject leadership.

Areas for development are:

- to devise systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress;
- the provision of visits and visitors.

151. Standards attained are above average. This is largely due to the very good discussions that are encouraged in lessons. The pupils are given a real depth of understanding by these well-guided discussions. Their levels of knowledge of the aspects of the local agreed syllabus are good as the work is well planned and organised so pupils of all abilities are able to learn well. In all lessons, the teachers' clear explanations enable pupils to understand important ideas and events and make good progress in their learning. Lessons are particularly effective when teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work in pairs or groups to re-enact, discuss and reflect on stories from the Bible. In lessons in Year 5, for example, the pupils listened attentively to the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and demonstrated good insights into faith, belief and purity, and how people who witnessed the three friends going into the furnace might have been influenced by the event. When asked about why the Biblical characters had not bowed down to the golden statue, one pupil explained, "God is a lot more than a statue". Another pupil concluded that the three friends had not been burned because they had not eaten "unclean food". Throughout these lessons the teachers set high expectations of pupils' behaviour and effort and in response the pupils were attentive and keen to contribute their ideas and work hard. Similarly in a very good lesson in Year 1 class, the pupils showed considerable levels of maturity as they worked in the garden and school field, recording examples of beautiful colours in 'God's World'. Throughout the school, pupils display positive attitudes to this subject, with many pupils taking particular pride in the way they present their work.
152. The curriculum is well organised and provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to study and compare other peoples' religious beliefs and practices. This approach enables pupils to make clear connections in their learning and provides a platform for them to understand and empathise with people from different times, religions and cultures. However, the provision of visits and visitors to support and enrich pupils' learning is underdeveloped. Speaking and listening skills are well promoted in lessons, and pupils record their work in a range of ways that contribute well to the development of their literacy skills. The work that the pupils undertake in this subject contributes significantly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, close examination of pupils' previous work indicates that teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to respond to narratives and historical events, for example the story of the Ten Commandments and the plight of the Jews during the Holocaust. Through this work pupils develop insights into the importance of rules in their lives and the need for basic human rights. Issues that are raised in lessons are often reinforced in assemblies, and during the times that are set aside for pupils to discuss issues that are important to them.
153. The subject co-ordinator, who is the headteacher, is very well informed. He has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and where improvements need to be made. He recognises that there need to be developments in assessment and record keeping and in the provision for closer links with the community.