

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **WATTVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Handsworth, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 132201

Headteacher: Mrs J Roach

Reporting inspector: Mr G T Storer  
19830

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> July 2003

Inspection number: 248938

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: Wattville Road  
Handsworth  
Birmingham  
B21 0DP

Postcode:

Telephone number: 0121 554 2768

Fax number: 0121 515 1928

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr M Blake

Date of previous inspection: N/A

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
G T Storer 19830	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? Attainment and achievement School improvement and overall effectiveness
M Roscoe 9884	Lay inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Child protection and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents Staffing, accommodation and resources
M A Palmer 20646	Team inspector	Foundation Stage English	How well are pupils taught
D Pattinson 19120	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Religious education	Curricular and other opportunities Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
M Sinclair 1578	Team inspector	Special educational needs Geography History Music	Monitoring pupils academic performance and personal development Assessment
M Madeley 22657	Team inspector	Inclusion Mathematics Art and design	Leadership and management
J Allcorn 1068	Team inspector	English as an additional language	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Wattville Primary School is situated in a busy suburb of Birmingham. The school was opened in April 2001, as a result of a local education authority reorganisation of schools. It serves an extremely diverse social and ethnic community living in the surrounding area. With 393 pupils on the school roll, this school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils (almost 60 per cent) known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. There is high unemployment in the area and many families experience hardship. Pupils' attainments on entry to the school are well below average and a significant number of pupils face difficulties in their learning. There are 124 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and three pupils who need specific support from specialist teachers and trained assistants. The number of pupils who have special educational needs is above average for a school of this size. Four out of every five pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and many come from families who are refugees or asylum seekers. Almost all of these pupils speak English as an additional language and close to a third of all pupils are at an early stage of learning English. This is extremely high in comparison with schools nationally. During the last school year, 128 (one in every three) pupils entered or left the school at times other than at the beginning of the Foundation Stage or the end of Year 6. The last two years have seen the appointment of a whole new staff, as well as a new headteacher and deputy headteacher. This enormous turn over in pupils and teaching staff has posed genuine barriers to improvement in some aspects of the school's work.

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

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Although there is still much to be done, the school shows clear signs of improvement since its opening just two years ago. Standards in English, mathematics and science are higher than they were a year ago. The school's most recent results in English and mathematics are above the 2002 average for schools that face similar social and educational circumstances and pupils throughout the school are achieving satisfactory standards in most other subjects. Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour have also improved, because arrangements that promote pupils' personal development are more effective than they were at the time of the school's opening. The recently appointed headteacher provides good leadership. With the support of the deputy headteacher, she has successfully identified and addressed some of the weaker aspects of the school's work. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils in the Foundation Stage get a good start to their education.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are rising. Pupils throughout the school are making good progress in English. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory overall, but it is good in Years 1 and 2.
- Relationships between pupils are very good. Most pupils show considerable respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to participate in all that the school has to offer.
- The arrangements for promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development work well.
- The school is very successful in welcoming and integrating pupils who arrive in school during each school year. These pupils settle quickly because there are no bullying or racist incidents.
- The wider community makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning.

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

- By the time that pupils leave the school, standards in mathematics and science are well below the national average and standards in English are below average. Standards in music are low throughout the school and standards in art and design and in design and technology are not high enough in Years 3 to 6.
- The governing body is not taking the necessary action to ensure pupils' safety and well being in school, nor are they holding the school to account for what it achieves.
- The school's arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and evaluating their progress are unsatisfactory. Teachers are not making enough use of assessment information to plan tasks for pupils with different capabilities and for pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Arrangements for monitoring standards and quality in subjects other than English and mathematics are unsatisfactory. Some staff with management responsibilities are not contributing fully to the drive to raise standards.
- Attendance rates are too low. The school could be doing more to promote regular attendance.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This recently reorganised school has not been inspected in its current form

### STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	n/a	E*	E*	E
Mathematics	n/a	E	E*	E
Science	n/a	E*	E*	E

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
lowest 5% nationally	E
	*

When children enter the nursery or reception classes, their attainments are well below average. Children make good progress but few attain the standards normally expected of five-year-olds by the end of the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup>. In comparison with schools nationally, the 2002 National Curriculum test results for seven-year-olds were in the lowest 5 per cent in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. The 2002 results for 11-year olds were in the lowest 5 per cent nationally in all core subjects<sup>2</sup>. These results were also well below the average for similar schools<sup>3</sup>. However, the 2003 (unpublished) results show that standards are rising. There have been year-on-year improvements in standards at the end of both Years 2 and 6. The proportion of seven-year-olds attaining the nationally expected standard<sup>4</sup> has improved considerably in writing and to a lesser extent in mathematics. There have been improvements in the proportions of 11-year-olds attaining or exceeding the nationally expected standard in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 and corresponding improvements in the proportions of pupils achieving the above average Level 5 in these subjects. These improvements are most marked in English, which has been the focus of the school's drive to raise standards during the last year. Whilst overall standards remain below or well below the national average in most core subjects, the school's 2003 results in mathematics at the end of Year 2 and in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 are above the 2002 average for similar schools. Furthermore, of the pupils who have completed two full years in the school, around seven out of ten achieved Level 4 or above in core subjects and in English and mathematics between a fifth and a third achieved Level 5. The work of pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 confirms that standards are rising. In relation to attainment on entry and to the educational and linguistic difficulties that many pupils face, pupils at the end of Year 6 have achieved satisfactory standards. Two years on from the school's opening, the emerging picture of the achievement of pupils aged five and seven is good. By the time that pupils leave the school, the majority of pupils achieve satisfactory standards in most other subjects. However, standards are not high enough in music throughout the school and in art and design and technology in Years 3 to 6. Standards in religious education are in line with those set out in local guidelines. Almost all pupils make sound progress and this includes the significant number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Although a number of pupils with special educational needs do not achieve the expected standard, those in Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in relation to the targets set for them and those in Years 3 to 6 make sound progress.

<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and schools often describe the last year of this stage as the reception year. During this period, the basis of children's learning is on fostering, nurturing and developing their: personal, social and emotional well-being; skills in language and literacy; mathematics development, particularly numeracy; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development.

<sup>2</sup> The core subjects are English, mathematics and science.

<sup>3</sup> Similar school means schools with a broadly similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals. In this case schools with 50 per cent or more eligible.

<sup>4</sup> The nationally expected standard for pupils at the end of Year 2 is National Curriculum Level 2 and for pupils at the end of Year 6 it is National Curriculum Level 4. Pupils who achieve Level 3 at the end of Year 2 or Level 5 at the end of Year 6 are exceeding national expectations.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and make a real effort to improve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils behave well during lessons although some are very boisterous at lunch and break times and do not always respond well to staff who supervise them.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on very well together. Levels of racial harmony and integration are impressive.
Attendance	Poor. Over all attendance rates are well below the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. During the inspection, nine out of ten lessons were satisfactory or better and just under a half of all lessons were good or very good. There was good teaching in all phases, although most frequently in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Five out of 66 lessons were unsatisfactory. The teaching of the basic skills in English is good. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory overall, but good in Years 1 and 2. Teachers have suitably high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour. As a result, most pupils are attentive, join in well and persevere with their work. Teachers' management of their pupils is usually effective. Teachers use methods that ensure that pupils are interested, involved and motivated to succeed. When pupils occasionally become restless or disaffected, most teachers have the necessary skills to ensure that any disruption to the learning of others is kept to a minimum. However, weaknesses in the management of pupils contributed to unsatisfactory teaching in Years 3 to 6. Other contributory factors included weaknesses in the teachers' subject knowledge, low expectations, and a slow pace to lessons. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and of pupils who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory, although staff do not always make enough distinction between these two important groups. There is very good teamwork between teachers and classroom assistants that improves the quality of these pupils' learning in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, where most of the school's support staff are deployed. However, pupils with different capabilities do not always make as much progress as they should because teachers are not making enough use of on-going assessments to match work precisely to the needs of individuals and groups within the class. Teachers use homework satisfactorily to extend pupils' learning, although there are some variations in the frequency of assignments and in the amounts of work set.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school teaches all the subjects that it should and provides a good range of activities outside of lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall, although the arrangements for pupils who need more specialised support are particularly effective.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory overall. Children in Foundation Stage and pupils in infant classes benefit from the work of well-qualified and experienced support staff. Arrangements for pupils in junior classes are less successful because teachers do not do enough to adapt work to the needs of these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school effectively fosters these aspects of pupils' personal development through the curriculum, assemblies, visits and special events. The school is particularly successful in preparing pupils for life in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society.

How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring school. However, procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, for monitoring and improving attendance, for assessing pupils' attainments and for using assessment information as a basis for planning are unsatisfactory.
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The school has quickly gained the respect and support of parents, but the quality of some of its information for parents needs to be improved.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The recently appointed headteacher and deputy headteacher are a strong team and have already begun to take the school forward. However, some other staff with management responsibilities are not contributing effectively to school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory. Governors give the school their full support. However, they are not rigorous in fulfilling statutory requirements, monitoring aspects of the school's performance and holding the school to account for the quality of what it achieves.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are becoming increasingly systematic in their use of performance data and other methods of monitoring. However, subject co-ordinators and governors are insufficiently involved in monitoring standards and quality.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The governing body uses the school's budget and other grants appropriately, according to principles of best value and in the interests of the pupils. As a result, staffing, accommodation and resources are maintained at satisfactory levels.

The school has an adequate number of teachers, although some posts are filled by temporary staff and as a result of the reorganisation, some teachers have responsibilities for which they have little experience. The school's accommodation is good and resources for learning are satisfactory.

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

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Their children make good progress.</li> <li>• Children's behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• Teachers' expectations are high.</li> <li>• School helps children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework that children receive.</li> <li>• The information that parents receive about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The school's partnership with parents.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

There were 149 questionnaires (38 per cent) returned and 36 parents attended the meeting for parents. Whilst the responses of most parents strongly supported the school and the quality of education provided for their children, a number of parents expressed concerns. The inspection largely endorses the positive views but also finds evidence to support some of their concerns. The range and quality of activities that take place outside of lessons are good. Staff offer a range of sporting, cultural and social activities for pupils that effectively complements aspects of pupils' academic and personal development. Teachers use homework satisfactorily to extend pupils' learning, although there are variations in the frequency of assignments and in the amounts of work that teachers set. The school works in effective partnership with many parents but does not do enough to enable all parents to contribute fully to their children's education. There are gaps in the information that the school provides, and much of the available information is inaccessible to those

parents who do not read English. The last progress reports that the school issued were poor, but a much-improved report will go to parents at the end of this school year.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards of attainment are considerably higher than they were at the time of the school's opening two years ago. The school has done well to maintain an upward trend in its results during a period when social and educational circumstances have been very challenging. The start of the new school's drive to raise standards was delayed because the school opened without a permanent headteacher or deputy headteacher. As a result of the reorganisation, there has been a high turnover of staff and this means that some staff have had to take on responsibilities for which they are ill prepared. There has also been a very high turnover of pupils. The school has taken in the children of travellers, refugees and families seeking asylum. These children add to the richness and diversity of the school community, but most come with a history of severely disrupted education and many speak little or no English. Despite these barriers to improvement, the majority of pupils make sound progress during their time in the school and just two years on from the school's opening, the emerging picture of the achievement of pupils aged five and seven is good. The school sets itself challenging targets, but current trends indicate that the school has the capacity to raise standards further.
2. When children first enter the school, most are attaining standards that are well below those normally expected of three- and four-year-olds and for many, standards in communication, language and literacy are very low. Children in the Foundation Stage get a good start to their education. They achieve well and make good progress in most areas of learning. However, by the time that they are five years old, very few achieve the Early Learning Goals<sup>5</sup> for children of this age.
3. The school's results in the 2002 tests and assessments for seven-year-olds were in the lowest 5 per cent nationally in reading and writing and below the national average in mathematics. However, the 2003 (unpublished) results show that standards are rising. There have been year-on-year improvements in standards at the end of Year 2. The proportion of seven-year-olds attaining the nationally expected standard has improved considerably in writing and to a lesser extent in mathematics. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 are close to the national average and the most recent results are above the 2002 average for similar schools. The school's results in reading and writing remain well below the national average overall. Nevertheless, current standards are satisfactory because there have been improvements in the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2B<sup>6</sup> and above in reading, which is now on a par with similar schools, as is the proportion of pupils achieving the above average Level 3 in writing. These results are consistent with inspection evidence. The progress of pupils in Year 2 has varied during this school year. This is because they have suffered from disruptions to staffing arrangements that have had an adverse effect on the quality of their learning. The school has now resolved these difficulties. The work in pupils' books indicates that their progress has improved as the year has gone along and that in English and mathematics their progress is now good.
4. In the 2002 tests for 11-year olds, the schools results in English, mathematics and science were very low in comparison to schools nationally and well below the average for similar schools. However, inspection evidence and the 2003 (unpublished) results indicate that there have been improvements in the proportions of pupils attaining or exceeding the nationally expected standard in all of these subjects and corresponding improvements in

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<sup>5</sup> Early Learning Goals – These are the standards that children are expected to reach by the end of their reception year.

<sup>6</sup> Level 2 is made up of Levels 2A, 2B and 2C and the proportions of pupils achieving each sub-level affect the schools average points score.

the proportions of pupils achieving the above average Level 5. These improvements are most marked in English, which has been the focus of the school's drive to raise standards during the last year. Currently, standards are below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. These standards are, nevertheless, satisfactory because the school's 2003 results in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 are above the 2002 average for similar schools and the school's results in science are improving. Furthermore, of pupils who have completed two full years in the school, around seven out of ten achieved Level 4 or above in all core subjects and in English and mathematics between a fifth and a third achieved Level 5.

5. Pupils are attaining satisfactory standards in most other subjects of the National Curriculum and standards in religious education are similar to those described in locally agreed guidelines. However, standards throughout the school are too low in music as they are in Years 3 to 6 in art and design and in design and technology. The school's approach to teaching these subjects has not been systematic enough. The guidance available to teachers has been inadequate, with the result that teachers' planning has not enabled pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in a coherent and progressive way. Inspection evidence suggests that satisfactory arrangements to support the teaching of music are now in place, but have not begun to impact on standards.
6. The school meets the needs of most of its pupils satisfactorily. In relation to their attainment on entry and to the difficulties that they face, most pupils are making sound progress during their time in school. Younger pupils are currently making more rapid progress because teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 are more successful. Almost all pupils make good progress in developing the skills of literacy and progress in numeracy, though satisfactory overall, is good in Years 1 and 2. Teachers make particularly good use of the national strategy for promoting literacy and provide suitable opportunities for pupils to reinforce these skills through their work in other subjects. When pupils with language, behavioural or learning difficulties receive targeted help from specialist teachers or support assistants, their progress is good. However, teachers are not making enough use of assessment information to plan work that is specifically matched to the needs of pupils with different capabilities. This particularly affects pupils in Years 3 to 6, where there are fewer support assistants. Consequently, pupils with linguistic difficulties or lower levels of educational need often complete the same work as others in the class and so do not make the progress that they should.
7. All pupils make very good progress in their personal and social development. This progress is an important factor, because it allows most pupils to adopt very helpful patterns of behaviour and response and enables teachers to establish conditions in which highly profitable learning can take place.

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

8. Pupils' attitudes to the school are good because the majority want to work and make progress. Pupils of all ages apply themselves well in lessons. They usually behave sensibly and show tolerance and consideration for others. Most pupils are involved in their school day right from morning registration where effective use of time involves pupils in reading tasks. They easily become engrossed in lessons when good teaching holds their interest. They concentrate well and co-operate with each other.
9. Behaviour is satisfactory overall, but at various times ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Most pupils work quietly and quickly obey teachers' instructions. They respond sensibly in most situations, especially where teachers make their expectations clear. Most teachers deal effectively with challenging behaviour. For example they use the 'time out' strategy effectively during physical education lessons to allow over-excited pupils to calm down before returning to the activity. When behaviour is unsatisfactory,

teachers' instructions and explanations fail to engage pupils fully in the lesson. At such times, pupils make little progress because they pursue their own self-interests and distract others.

10. The behaviour management policy is not consistently applied by all staff and not understood by a significant minority of pupils. As a result, some are uncertain how to behave when moving about the school in class groups, when leaving the assembly hall or when teachers prepare them to enter the school from the playground for example. At these times, a boisterous jostling and pushing can occur because staff do not routinely insist on calmness. Parents have not been encouraged to support the school's policy on behaviour through the consultation process. Questionnaire returns revealed that a majority of parents think that behaviour is good, although some do feel that standards fall at dinner times. Inspectors agree with the parent's view. Some pupils with special educational needs who have difficulty in controlling their behaviour receive extra help from support staff. This support works well. These pupils play a full part in the life of the school, and their behavioural difficulties rarely impact on others.
11. Pupils' personal development and the relationships they form with adults and their peers are all very good. Pupils enjoy being in school. Many are lively individuals who support others readily. They are kindly to newcomers and help them make friends easily by including them in games, for example. Pupils explain 'unpleasantness' is no more than a minor irritation. They have no concerns about bullying or racist incidents. Although this is a newly established school, many pupils openly express a sense of belonging and an eagerness to recognise and respect social differences and similarities. Boys and girls and pupils from different social and ethnic backgrounds get on remarkably well and so levels of racial harmony and integration are impressive in this friendly school. This reflects well on the school's good promotion of moral and social matters, and ensures pupils are included rather than excluded.
12. Parents feel strongly that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible, and inspectors agree. The School Council is a good example of pupils enjoying an extra level of responsibility and using their initiative. This group is representative of Years 3 to 6 and enjoys a prominent position in the life and work of the school. Many Year 6 pupils fulfil important jobs too, such as supporting younger pupils or acting as hall monitors. Presently, it is mainly older pupils undertaking whole-school tasks. These are completed very sensibly and help the school to run smoothly. However, younger pupils do not do enough for themselves. They are not expected to be responsible for organising enough aspects of their own learning or to be involved in setting targets for improvement in their class work or attendance.
13. Attendance levels are poor and adversely affect the progress of a significant number of pupils. The school's efforts to improve attendance from last year's low levels have so far not been effective. Attendance is well below that in schools nationally and unauthorised absence is too high. Registration practice is good, and conforms to the latest guidance. Whilst learning mentors liaise with the parents of pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern and punctuality has recently improved, the school does not do all that it could to promote regular and punctual attendance for all.

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

14. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. During the inspection, almost half of lessons observed were good or very good. This contributes strongly to pupils' positive attitudes to learning and to the progress that they make. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 is good. In these phases of the school, two thirds of teaching seen was good or very good and there were no unsatisfactory lessons. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall. Half of the teaching seen was good or very good. However, five

lessons seen in this phase of the school were unsatisfactory. These lessons were located in a small number of classes.

15. Teaching of children in the Foundation Stage gives children a good start in school. The nursery and reception class teachers understand how young children learn. Lesson planning satisfactorily identifies how progress is to be made towards the achievement of the Early Learning Goals. They place strong emphasis on promoting children's self-esteem and social skills by consistent encouragement and by the careful preparation of stimulating learning experiences. Planning also gives priority to the development of children's basic communication, language and literacy skills and to their mathematical development. As a result, children's speaking, listening and counting skills progress particularly well. There are effective procedures for assessing children's attainment on entry to the nursery and reception classes and their progress towards the Early Learning Goals. These enable teachers to plan tasks and experiences that satisfactorily match what individual children need to learn next. The classrooms are well organised. Thoughtfully presented resources and activities very successfully capture children's interest, increase their enjoyment of school and stimulate their involvement in all areas of learning. The roles of the nursery nurses and classroom assistants are very carefully planned. They very effectively support the work of the teachers and contribute significantly to children's learning. They are particularly skilled in sensitively supporting children who enter school at very early stages of learning English, because this is not the language they normally speak at home. They are familiar with the individual support required by children with special educational needs. They give consistent, well-planned encouragement so that these children are able to participate actively and make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans.
16. Teachers have a good knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy and the teaching of basic literacy skills is good. Almost all teachers have a secure knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy and the teaching of basic numeracy skills is satisfactory. In most instances, teachers plan well-structured literacy and numeracy lessons and ensure that pupils understand the purpose of their learning. Occasionally, however, the aims of the lesson are not clear enough, so that the teaching lacks a sharp focus and pupils' progress is limited. Moreover, the teachers' lack of secure subject knowledge contributed to unsatisfactory mathematics lessons in Year 3 and Year 5. Pupils have regular opportunities to read and write. As a result, they read for pleasure and write with increasing confidence and independence. At the beginning of most mathematics lessons, teachers use a brisk question and answer session that successfully engages pupils' interest and satisfactorily promote their recall of number facts and mental calculation. In those classes where the teacher directs appropriately challenging questions to individual pupils, this successfully promotes their numeracy skills. From time to time, teachers plan effective links between different subjects. This gives added coherence to pupils' work and improves learning. For example, Year 5 pupils practise their report writing skills in geography when writing their accounts of India. All classes have lessons in the ICT-Suite and pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their competence. Although teachers occasionally enable pupils to reinforce their information and communication technology skills whilst supporting work in other subjects, such as English and mathematics, there are many lessons in which teachers do not use ICT as a resource to improve pupils' learning.
17. Teachers' planning is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. Planning for classroom support assistants is particularly effective, notably in Year 1 and 2. They know what they are expected to do and how they should do it. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson, the classroom assistant successfully promoted higher-attaining pupils' learning by supporting and encouraging them as they used information books to research minibeasts. Teachers' plans regularly incorporate a whole-class discussion at the end of a lesson. Teachers allow adequate time to effectively sum up and reinforce what pupils have learned. They

also celebrate pupils' achievements, assess their attainments and so lay the foundation for future learning.

18. Positive relationships between teachers and pupils form the basis for much of the good and very good teaching and learning. In Years 1 to 6, the great majority of teachers manage pupils well, so that they are ready and willing to participate in lessons. They make sure that pupils understand what they are to do and they recognise and reward their efforts. In response, most pupils become actively involved and work hard. However, in a small number of junior classes, pupils become restless and inattentive or begin to misbehave when the pace of the lesson begins to slow or they are unsure about what they are to do. When teachers do not deal effectively enough with the developing situation, the quality of pupils' learning suffers. This was a contributory factor in unsatisfactory lessons.
19. Teachers employ a good range of teaching styles. There is a careful balance between direct teaching of the whole class and working with groups and individuals. For example, in a very effective literacy lesson in Year 6, the teacher inspired the pupils' interest in two books written by Michael Morpurgo and then provided opportunities for them to work with partners and in small groups to compare and contrast aspects of the two works. During this phase of the lesson, the teacher worked very effectively with low-attaining groups, supporting and extending their understanding of the task. All pupils became engrossed in the task and made very good progress in the course of the lesson. In all classes, teachers and classroom assistants readily respond with encouragement for pupils' efforts. Teachers show the value they place on pupils' work by carefully mounting and displaying it throughout the school. They mark work regularly, although their comments do not consistently inform pupils how they have done or what they need to do to improve. Homework is satisfactorily used to extend and complement the work pupils do in school. For example, Year 2 pupils take home spellings based on the 'Big Book' text they are reading and the suffixes they are currently focusing on in their literacy lessons. Most notably, from their earliest days in school, teachers encourage pupils to take home a range of books and this contributes significantly to their enjoyment of reading and the progress that they make.
20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Effective teamwork by teachers and classroom assistants results in good progress in Years 1 and 2. Throughout the school, specialist staff withdraw pupils, especially those with a higher level of need, to give structured teaching that is expertly tailored to address the specific difficulties that individual pupils face. They give a similar level of support when they work alongside pupils in class. Support staff are effective, because the special needs assistants and learning mentors have received specific training for the jobs that they do. Furthermore, the school's careful diagnostic testing and recording of progress gives them good understanding of pupils' difficulties and needs. Pupils with the more severe difficulties benefit most, as they spend more time with the specialist staff. However, pupils in Years 3 to 6 with a lower level of need do not see these staff so often. They rely more heavily on the teaching they receive in class, which is generally satisfactory, but not always good. This is because teachers in Years 3 to 6 do not consistently plan tasks that match the needs of the individual pupil. This is also the case for gifted and talented pupils.
21. Teachers effectively use the results of annual assessments in English, mathematics and science and half-termly assessments of pupils' writing to identify the range of attainment within the classes. This gives them a starting point from which to pitch the work they set at the correct level of difficulty. However, teachers do not use the assessments that they make in the course of observing pupils carrying out tasks and examining and marking their work enough in order to plan work that progressively builds on pupils' prior learning or to ensure that teaching meets the needs of all of the pupils. When teaching is not planned carefully to reflect what pupils know, understand and can do in a particular subject, lower-attaining pupils or pupils who speak English as an additional language can be left behind

and higher-attaining pupils can be unchallenged. For example, Year 3 pupils made unsatisfactory progress in a music lesson, focusing on the importance of 'rests', when the teachers' expectations of their ability and involvement were too low. Similarly, pupils with a limited understanding of English were unable to participate fully in the introductory phase of a Year 2 physical education lesson, because the teacher did not modify her language so as to ensure that these pupils knew exactly what to do.

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

- 22. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils in the Foundation Stage of learning is good, and take account of the Early Learning Goals. Pupils take part in a wide range of planned and carefully structured activities and experiences, which give them a good start to their education.**
- 23. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for its pupils in Years 1 to 6, in which all subjects required by the National Curriculum are represented. There are satisfactory schemes of work in all subjects that ensure that pupils gain skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. Teachers use different methods, such as teaching the whole class, small groups and individuals to make sure that they teach all that is required. The curriculum places good emphasis on the development of speaking, listening, reading and especially writing skills, although handwriting requires improvement. Teachers pay satisfactory attention to the development of number and computer skills within mathematics and ICT lessons and in other subjects.**
24. There are, however, weaknesses in the curriculum, which prevent pupils from making the best possible progress. Current planning arrangements do not ensure that pupils are given work, which builds carefully on previous learning in some subjects, such as art and design and design and technology in Years 3 to 6. Moreover, pupils in different classes in the same year do not always follow the same learning, which leads to differences in levels of understanding as they move through the school. In subjects other than English and mathematics, teachers are not doing enough to match the curriculum to the needs of pupils with different capabilities. As a result, tasks are sometimes not challenging enough for more-able pupils or too difficult for less able pupils and those for whom English is an additional language because these pupils are required to complete the same work as all other pupils in the class.
25. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The early identification of learning or behavioural difficulties enables the school to put in place specific planning and to organise specialist teams to support pupils with more complex difficulties. The school makes effective use of external specialists to underpin these good, systematic procedures. As a result, pupils' individual education plans are satisfactory, with some that are good. They refer to short term, specific targets that provide a sound basis for teachers' planning and for the work of support assistants. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 benefit from the effective help they receive from teachers and classroom assistants who have a good understanding of their needs. However, teachers in Year 3 to 6 classes do not consistently plan lessons that reflect pupils' identified targets. This reduces the impact of the good support that these pupils receive in their limited number of sessions with specialist staff. The school adheres to the special educational needs Code of Practice<sup>7</sup> but the nature of the building makes physical access difficult at times.

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<sup>7</sup> Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities, duties and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help and support to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

26. The basic curriculum is enriched and extended by the good range of clubs and activities that is available to pupils outside of lessons. These activities appeal to the interests of pupils, mostly in Years 3 to 6, and consequently, clubs such as hockey, fitness, table tennis, art, dance and Punjabi are well supported and greatly appreciated by pupils. Visits to places, such as the Birmingham Nature Centre, Sandwell Valley Farm, the Crescent Theatre and to a variety of locations of religious and cultural significance give added meaning and purpose to pupils' learning. Visiting historians, musicians and representatives of the many cultures in school, help to make their learning more exciting.
27. Most teachers make every effort in all lessons and activities that support the curriculum to ensure that the contributions of all pupils are valued and celebrated. All pupils are learning to respect one another and support each other's learning. The school provides learning opportunities for all pupils, whatever their age, ability, background or ethnicity, to help them make mostly satisfactory progress as they move through the school. However, at present, not all pupils have an equal chance to succeed. For example, pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition sometimes make less progress than they should because teachers do not plan work to meet their specific language development needs.
28. **Teachers give sound emphasis to pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). However, personal, social and health education is not taught as part of a coherent programme, which is embedded in the school's work, although there are clear plans to raise its profile further. The governing body has agreed that sex education should not be taught, although issues are dealt with sensitively if they arise. Pupils learn about the use and misuse of drugs. The health education programme also teaches pupils about the importance of healthy diet, hygiene and exercise for maintaining a healthy life style. From an early age, pupils learn the importance of listening to the views of others and appreciate how their decisions can affect other people. They discover how their actions can affect others through occasional discussions, such as, about loneliness. They understand the need for rules based on safety, protection and fairness and, as a result, most follow the school's codes of conduct and behave satisfactorily. Because PSHE is sound, most pupils relate well to others and work effectively as part of a group in activities, such as scientific investigations. Older pupils have special duties, which help to increase levels of initiative and responsibility. These positive features help to ensure that levels of racial harmony and integration are impressive.**
29. Links with the community are many and varied, and make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. For example, links with the Titan Educational Business Partnership benefit pupils in different ways, such as through targeted staff training and financial support. Links with the Malachi Trust involve Year 5 pupils in the production of musical plays and performances that have strong, positive messages about life in a multicultural society. The contribution of other groups, such as church groups and the local police, benefits pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are good links with the schools to which pupils transfer at eleven. These links not only facilitate the transfer process but also contribute to pupils' learning in areas such as food technology and sport. Positive links with local nurseries help to market the school to the parents of potential pupils.

### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

30. The school gives good emphasis to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These aspects make positive contributions to the personal development of all of the school's pupils. The school is particularly successful in preparing pupils for life in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society.
31. The spiritual development of pupils is good. Teachers recognise and value diversity, respect pupils' integrity, celebrate effort and achievement and value pupils' contributions.

For example, when pupils perform at assemblies or show work undertaken during a visit to a local secondary school. There are good opportunities for pupils to understand feelings, and explore values and beliefs. These include religious beliefs, and the way in which they impact on pupils' lives. There is reverence and spirituality in assemblies, as pupils are provided with moments to reflect on important issues, which concern them. There are examples of awe that sometimes lead to spontaneous applause, for example, as pupils beat out a drum rhythm at an assembly. Music is used well to enable pupils to experience the joy of celebration and to establish calmness as they enter the hall for assemblies. Some classroom displays have an aesthetic quality, which generates an emotive response, especially for younger pupils.

32. The school promotes pupils' moral development well. All adults in school provide sound moral leadership, and give pupils a clear sense of direction about moral issues. All work hard and mostly successfully to reinforce sound standards of behaviour and to develop in pupils mutual respect and understanding. Although school and class rules are clearly understood, they are not always consistently applied across the school, which leads to some confusion among pupils. However, all adults in school promote a clear moral stance based on right and wrong, good self-discipline and care for each other and their school. Teachers make good use of assemblies and discussion time to establish collective moral and social values. Most classroom displays are well kept by teachers and regarded positively by pupils. The positive approaches to the moral development of pupils result in at least satisfactory behaviour and good attitudes to learning.
33. The school provides a good range of experiences to promote pupils' social development. All who work in school are good models of social behaviour, because they show respect for and relate well to others. Pupils learn to work well together by taking part in special events, such as plays, and visits, such as to the theatre, and through group work in subjects, including science. There is a recently formed but increasingly active school council, which successfully helps to foster care and consideration among pupils and to develop responsibility, and is starting to shape aspects of the direction that the school is taking. Peer mediators are starting to help develop community values. There is good emphasis on developing a sense of corporate identity and a real feel for 'their school'. A good range of visits and after-school activities enable some pupils to expand their personal interests and experiences and contribute to the very good relationships, which exist in school. Social development is clearly fostered through the school's many links with community groups. However, some teachers miss opportunities to develop initiative, independence and personal responsibility in lessons.
34. The cultural development of pupils is good. The school celebrates cultural diversity by valuing pupils' heritage and selecting staff from many of the ethnic groups represented in the school community. Pupils learn about the multicultural nature of the area through the school's very good community involvement, through visits, such as to local museums, to St. James' church, to the Islamic Centre and Hindu temple, and through the many visitors, who enrich its curriculum. They learn about the many cultures represented in school through their developing understanding of different faiths, and through well-chosen stories from around the world, often read to them at assemblies. A satisfactory range of reading material helps to make pupils aware of the richness and diversity of the many different cultures represented in school. Music from around the world, such as steel bands and Irish music, helps to extend pupils' cultural experiences. Religious education and art make a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. For example, pupils learn about and celebrate festivals, such as Easter and Eid, and learn about the works of some famous artists, including Matisse.

### **Provision for pupils whose home language is believed not to be English.**

35. Provision for pupils whose home language is not English is satisfactory overall, although significant aspects of the school's work with these pupils require further development. The school does not analyse its results by pupils' stages of learning English, but ethnic monitoring indicates improving results for these pupils in recent National Curriculum tests. Classroom observation and analysis of pupils' work indicate satisfactory progress overall. The pupils' written work however does not always reflect the understanding and skills shown in oral work. Where pupils make sound or better progress, this is very much due to the good support provided in most classes by classroom assistants. Pupils whose home language is not English achieve best in the Foundation Stage, where progress is good. Progress is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. However, there are times when pupils in Years 3 to 6 do less well, because teachers do not always plan sufficiently or work closely enough with classroom assistants to make sure work is at an appropriate level for both pupils' language and ability needs. Classroom assistant support is also less in these classes.
36. Teaching and learning for pupils who speak English as an additional language are satisfactory overall. They are good in nursery and reception and satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. The best practice uses good visual resources, involves paired pupil discussion, in either English or the first language, and additional material matched to pupils' language needs. Classroom assistants work closely with the classroom teacher and take a positive role in the lesson such as contributing to introductory sessions, and planning and leading work with pupils. A strength of the classroom assistants is the range of languages they speak, which enables them to explain when necessary new ideas in pupils' first/home language.
37. Even where teaching is effective, planning does not always distinguish clearly enough between pupils who find learning difficult and those who are at the early stage of learning English. They are frequently grouped together for work with a classroom assistant. It was clear on occasions, for example in mathematics, that the level of work for pupils at the early stages of learning English was at too low a level. There is not enough paired work with fluent English speakers with the same first language or enough use of visual materials to enable higher-ability beginners to be set work that reflects their previous learning in other languages.
38. The school's assessment of pupils whose first language is not English is not systematic enough to help teachers plan and adapt teaching approaches to meet these pupils' needs. Records of progress and targets for improvement are not detailed. This can inhibit learning in lessons. For example for older pupils in Years 3 to 6, who speak English well in everyday situations, a lack of information does not help the teacher to focus on the understanding of technical terms and cultural differences that may affect the quality of a pupil's written work. The pace of a Year 6 geography lesson was slowed because pupils, not at the early stage of learning English, had difficulty in participating in discussion. They lacked the appropriate language skills and this had not been taken into sufficient account when planning the lesson.
39. Management structures continue to develop in this new school. Currently the management and development of work with pupils who speak English as an additional language are shared by the headteacher and deputy headteacher and are satisfactory overall. Pupils' emotional and social needs and whether they are beginners in the use of English are well assessed on entry to the school. However, the setting of priorities in this area and the monitoring, and evaluation of pupils' progress require a clearer focus to ensure pupils' needs continue to be addressed as they become more fluent speakers of English. A clear action plan and responsible person need to be put in place. Given the high number of pupils for whom English is not their first language, these are essential.

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

40. The school cares well for pupils and has in a short time created a welcoming supportive environment for them. Most parents are confident that their children are safe, happy and enjoying learning, and inspectors agree. However, much of this is achieved through very good relationships, rather than agreed practices connected with monitoring and improving behaviour and attendance.
41. A lack of staff training and awareness of statutory requirements concerning health and safety risk assessments means that the governing body does not meet all its obligations to ensure that the health and safety policy is effective. This aspect of the school's work is unsatisfactory overall, because staff do not always appreciate the health and safety considerations that relate to the activities they lead, or take suitable steps to ensure pupils' safety.
42. Parents value the care taken to create a harmonious community where their children become increasingly mature and responsible for themselves. Pupils feel the benefit of adults' gentle support when they are injured. Trained staff record treatments satisfactorily. Members of staff are familiar with child protection procedures because of the briefings provided by the teacher responsible. The policy, which drives the school's arrangements, does not fully comply with the local education authority's agreed procedures. Welfare facilities are good because cleaning is of a high standard and sufficient toilets serve pupils' privacy needs well. Good efforts have been made to improve security keeping a good balance between safety and welcoming callers and visitors to the school.
43. Procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are satisfactory. There are some strengths in the way good behaviour is promoted, but there is a continuing weakness in the content of the policy and the inconsistency in practice. The school did not consult widely before drawing up the policy, and measures to promote good behaviour are not always firmly applied or insisted upon when indiscipline arises in or out of lessons. Most teachers are helping to lay the foundations for orderly learning behaviour by explaining tasks clearly and then repeating them as necessary so pupils keep on with the task in hand. They use rewards and sanctions well, recording these for pupils' benefit, and ensuring that warnings to individual pupils are carried through. However, there are inconsistencies in this aspect of the school's work, because not all staff operate in the same way. Some parents expressed concerns about some pupils' behaviour towards other children and felt that incidents at lunchtime were not sorted out effectively. There is some evidence to support this concern. Supervisory staff do not always take a strong enough line in managing behaviour, because they do not share teachers' expectations for acceptable behaviour or insist on it on every occasion. Additionally, they do not record instances of indiscipline but instead, make a verbal report to the class teacher. This practice is not effective, because there are times when incidents are not followed up promptly or not reported to parents.
44. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating deliberately hurtful or oppressive behaviour are good because all staff are watchful and take swift action, should this occur. In conversation with many pupils, it was obvious that this type of harassment was outside their experience. Firmly, they said, 'That isn't allowed'. The headteacher or her deputy is a calming prominent presence at lunchtime, and pupils approach them and all staff easily. Provision of bilingual staff is a strong asset to the pastoral care that the school provides for its pupils.
45. Pupils' personal development is well supported by a range of rewards and acknowledgement of achievement. Merit points and verbal praise help pupils to improve their own performance and encourage teamwork. Classroom assistants guide pupils well, helping to build self-esteem as well as supporting their learning effectively. Teachers help pupils to realise their actions have consequences by inviting reflection on classroom behaviour. This happened successfully in a Year 1 music lesson where pupils, after

discussion, were very clear why 'points' had been awarded and how they could improve their 'looking and listening' skills in future. The school has appointed part-time 'Learning Mentors' who work well with pupils identified by teachers as having additional needs that act as a barrier to their learning. Their work is much appreciated by the school and its parents.

46. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are not effective. Levels have dipped from an unsatisfactory 92.8 per cent last year to a poor 91 per cent at the present time. These figures mean that the progress of 164 pupils in nine classes is adversely affected by irregular attendance. Weekly monitoring of attendance gives a full picture of the absence patterns of those pupils whose absence causes concern. Careful follow-up occurs for those in care of the local authority. The school also liaises with agencies that support the traveller community so that instances of absence by these pupils can be followed up. However, despite close links with the education welfare service, action is not taken each day for the majority of absent pupils and there is too long a time gap between absences occurring and school following these up in a rigorous fashion. Clear and persistent reminders about good attendance do not feature in information for parents, although home-link workers promote regular attendance during their visits to pupils' homes and the school has begun to reward those pupils whose attendance is good.
47. Arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are unsatisfactory overall. There are good procedures for assessing what pupils know, understand and can do on an annual basis in English, mathematics and science but there is variation in the systematic approach to monitoring progress during the year. It is good in mathematics but not in science. In English, the assessment of writing is now established, with pupils completing half-termly tasks that are marked against the National Curriculum requirements. However, there is inconsistent practice in other aspects of the subject, including speaking and listening. There has been some progress in the introduction of on-going assessment procedures in the humanities and ICT, but these are not fully developed. Other subjects have not reached this stage and pupils do not gain from a consistent evaluation of their work. The lack of a whole school approach to structured assessment means that teachers sometimes lack a detailed understanding of pupils' progress, thereby affecting their ability to set tasks that precisely reflect their learning needs. Teachers mark work conscientiously and strive to celebrate pupils' success. However, marking is not highly effective, as teachers do not consistently tell pupils what they need to do to improve.
48. The identification and assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are good. They are clear, understood and effective. Pupils benefit as a result of the good use of external specialists to pinpoint the exact difficulty that they are experiencing. Their work is regularly monitored against the targets set for them. Staff regularly review pupils' progress in order to establish new educational plans and goals. The school has recognised that it is important for these pupils to be more involved in the target setting process. The school assesses pupils who speak English as an additional language when they arrive at the school. This assessment establishes their general levels of competence but is not rigorous enough to identify pupils' specific language learning needs. The school uses this information satisfactorily, for example to assign pupils to classes where bilingual support is available or to enlist the local education authority's specialist services. Nevertheless, current arrangements are unsatisfactory, because they do not provide for the regular and specific evaluation of pupils' linguistic needs. Consequently, teachers in classes with no bilingual support do not have the information that they require in order to modify their on-going teaching to meet those needs.
49. Senior staff and some subject co-ordinators are beginning to analyse national test data to discover overall strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning. For example, the analysis of pupils' results in the writing tests was used as a basis for new teaching and learning

strategies, including a focus on more rigorous testing and the establishment of extra booster classes. Similarly, staff analyse the results of ethnic groups to evaluate the extent to which pupils are making the best possible progress and inform the make up of support groups that the school provides. Assessment information is used to set targets for individual pupils in mathematics but this does not happen in other subjects. Despite these useful initiatives, the school's use of assessment information for curricular planning is unsatisfactory overall. This is because:

- teachers seldom plan tasks at different levels and, when they do, it is usually on the basis of broad target levels from the National Curriculum and not on the basis of what individual pupils or groups within the classes know, understand and can do;
- when lessons are pitched at the wrong level pupils do not make as much progress as they should;
- in lessons, other than English and mathematics, tasks are seldom modified to meet the specific needs of specific groups, such as those at an early stage of learning English;
- similarly, higher-attaining pupils often complete the same simple tasks as others in the class before going on to more challenging activities that move them on in their learning. This reduces the progress that these pupils make;
- pupils are not normally involved in setting their own targets and this limits their ability to be active participants in the learning process.

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

50. Of the 195 parents to share their views in oral and written comments to inspectors about the school before and during the inspection, most hold positive views of the newly established school and what it provides for their children. Of these, many are satisfied with the care it provides and the progress their children make. Concerns are expressed about the difficulty in building relationships, for example when numerous support staff are attached to a class or when a class has a rapid turnover of staff. Some parents are concerned about the handling of behaviour incidents, and do not feel informed about the outcomes. The inspection largely endorses the positive views but also finds evidence to support some of their concerns.
51. An important issue for a considerable number of parents is that they do not receive enough information to allay their anxieties. The school is well aware of this and plans to improve methods of communicating with parents in order to maintain levels of confidence, and ensure that parents are able to be fully involved fully in their children's education. When parents visit the school, staff make them very welcome and readily provide the information that they require. Nevertheless, the school's current information is unsatisfactory because:
- most of the school's communications are written in English, when a substantial proportion of parents do not use it as their preferred language and have difficulty understanding complex information written in English;
  - it does not inform parents effectively about the organisation in each classroom or what is taught or when;
  - parents are not routinely consulted about aspects of the school's work that affects them directly, such as the policy on behaviour, and how they would like to be kept informed about their children's personal development;
  - published documents do not give an accurate picture of what the school provides or achieves because the prospectus and annual report of governors leave out many important items. Neither of these meets requirements;

- the most recent progress reports issued by the school do not tell parents enough about what pupils know, understand and can do or about the levels at which they are working<sup>8</sup>.
52. Despite the problems caused by unsuccessful communication systems, the school works in effective partnership with many parents because links with parents are satisfactory overall and some of the school's current arrangements work well. Staff work very hard to maintain consistent openness and a 'come and see us' style. They ensure face-to-face contact is good and mirrors the 'we look forward to working with you' message in the prospectus. Parents delight in this open door policy, and in the friendliness and accessibility of all staff, many of whom are usefully fluent in community languages. These good efforts could be better used to help improve attendance rates and reduce unauthorised absence levels. Induction arrangements work well. Home visits made by link workers, who also speak a number of languages, serve to strengthen links between home and school. Parents with toddlers can attend a playgroup on site and child-care is available before and after school. However, because these opportunities, which have the potential to further strengthen home-school links are felt by some members of the community to be too expensive at present, take up is quite low.
53. Many parents make a sound contribution to their children's learning, not least in the way they praise the school highly to their children for its inclusive ethos, and support most of the school's aims for them. Staff report that most parents attend meetings to hear of progress and parents of pupils with special educational needs contribute to their children's review meetings. Parents are well represented on the governing body. Sometimes, parents help out in class voluntarily along with other family members. However, because parents are not as well informed as they could be, their impact on the work of the school can be no more than satisfactory. Some parents, for example, feel they could support work done at home if it were provided on a more regular and frequent basis. Some parents cannot make an effective contribution to pupils' reading at home, because they do not know about the strategies and methods that the school uses. The fact that the school has neither a reading record nor a home-school communication system inhibits the development of parental support.

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

54. Sound leadership is having a substantial beneficial impact on the management of this school, which has undergone a recent amalgamation and experiences high staff and pupil mobility. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together as a team and provide clear educational direction for the work of the school, because their experience and skills are complementary. They set high expectations for the work of pupils and staff alike. School improvement and the raising of pupils' academic standards in particular are high priorities. The headteacher and most senior staff set a good example to colleagues. In addition, the development of a strong team of teachers and support staff is a key leadership objective and in many ways since the amalgamation this has been achieved. The work of the school appropriately reflects its explicit aims and values. For instance, the school is a pleasant and harmonious place for everyone to work in. Colleagues endeavour to carry out their clearly defined and delegated management tasks. However, a few co-ordinators have not moved quickly enough to get policies and schemes of work established and this adversely affects the arrangements for some subjects.
55. Staff periodically monitor and evaluate the school's performance in a satisfactory way. Being a new school, there are difficulties in gathering data with which to measure pupils' progress. However, systems are being developed to enable the senior managers and the governing body to access, analyse and evaluate this information. For example, after the

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<sup>8</sup> At the end of this month parents will receive much improved reports, which mention progress in each subject. These helpfully point to areas where pupils can improve their work or behaviour.

2002 national tests, senior staff analysed the performance of pupils from different ethnic groups. They reorganised the support for these pupils on the basis of their findings and this has resulted in improvements in pupils' performance and consequently in the results of the 2003 tests.

56. The headteacher and deputy headteacher monitor and evaluate teaching periodically. The English and mathematics co-ordinators supplement these observations but current arrangements do not give them enough time to do this well. The process currently lacks rigour and would benefit from a more formal timetable of dates, when all co-ordinators can undertake classroom observations and other monitoring activities. The school uses its more effective teachers quite well to influence others and improve practice. For example, the mathematics co-ordinator has taught demonstration lessons for colleagues and this has helped improve the quality of teaching and learning.
57. Performance management provides a satisfactory focus for developing individual members of staff and performance targets are used appropriately to improve the skills of individual teachers. The team spirit between teachers and support staff is good. Support staff reflect the community of the school, are mainly well qualified and are effectively used. This is a positive reflection of the school's leadership. The priorities for development are soundly matched to the needs of staff and pupils. The short-term nature of the school improvement plan is unsatisfactory because most success criteria have not been fully met. The new medium term plan for 2003-06 will have to pick up these areas. Clearly, there have been some important successes in that a positive climate for learning has been established throughout the school, standards are rising, pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved and the environment is pleasant. However, teachers' planning, assessment and monitoring of the work of the school have not moved forward far enough.
58. Induction procedures for new staff are effective, with a sound handbook and appropriate policies now in place to guide new colleagues. Newly qualified teachers are well supported by their mentor, who usually works in the same age range. The headteacher carries out official tasks, such as induction, well.
59. The work of the governing body is unsatisfactory. They are very supportive of the school and the new headteacher. However, as a group they have received insufficient training to carry out their role effectively. Their contact with the school is too infrequent to gain an in-depth, first-hand knowledge of the school as a basis for the key decisions that they have to make. Because, they are not completely aware of the school's strengths and aspects for further improvement, other than those relayed to them by the headteacher, governors are not in a position to hold the school to account for the quality of what it achieves. Similarly, they lack the insight necessary to shape the strategic direction of the school and influence the school improvement plan. They do periodically monitor progress towards targets in the school improvement plan, normally via the headteacher's report and the school's national test results, but overall, their monitoring of the school's performance is inadequate. Furthermore, the governing body does not ensure that it fulfils its statutory duties or that the school meets statutory requirements in all aspects of its work. Policies have been written, for example relating to health and safety, but because governors have not monitored rigorously enough, aspects of current practice are inconsistent and at times open to question. In addition, some written material requires updating. The headteacher has a very positive relationship with the governing body and works closely with them to further improve the school. Appropriate procedures are in place to set targets for, and appraise, the headteacher's work, usually guided by the local authority adviser.
60. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has been very well managed for the last two terms, when the newly appointed deputy headteacher took over this role from the out-going co-ordinator. A particular strength of the current arrangements is the impressive use of a wide range of external specialists who help the pupils. Good procedures for the

identification of concern and diagnosis of need have been introduced. Effective structures for support by specialist staff have been quickly established and a good team is now in place. Support staff feel part of the team and play a valuable role in helping the pupils, especially in Years 1 and 2. The co-ordinator has a very positive attitude to continual improvement and training for all. A great deal has been accomplished in a short space of time and the foundations of good provision laid, although there are aspects that are not well developed. For example, approaches by class teachers to setting work that reflects the specific needs of the pupils are inconsistent.

61. **The co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs manages the programme for the education of gifted and talented with zest and commitment. The extra-curricular activities and special lessons are well managed. However, the school has not fine-tuned the links between this programme and what happens in the classroom on a daily basis. Lesson plans do not consistently refer to the needs of these pupils and there are too few tasks to challenge and extend them.**
62. **The headteacher, along with the deputy headteacher, has general oversight of provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language. They have done a satisfactory job in setting up the school's basic provision, organising the recruitment and training of support staff and liaising with the local authority. However, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have had other very pressing priorities to address. Consequently, there is still much to be done in terms of setting up rigorous monitoring and assessment systems and providing training for the whole staff that enables them to provide for linguistic needs of these pupils when additional support staff are not available. To this end, a clear action plan and responsible person need to be put in place.**
63. The numbers of teaching and support staff are adequate and appropriate to the needs of the school. There is a satisfactory mix of experience amongst the recently established staff. Six staff are completely new to the school. Of these, three are recently qualified. One is new to teaching in England, holding qualifications gained elsewhere, but recognised as valid by the authorities. The headteacher effectively oversees the school's arrangements for the induction and assessment of teachers new to the profession.
64. The school deploys its support staff well in order to ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive the support they need, and those who speak English as an additional language get the support that they need. These arrangements work particularly well in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Support staff in Years 3 to 6 do a good job, but the school deploys fewer of them to this phase of the school. Similarly, the quality of the administrative and support staff is good. They make a valuable contribution to the efficiency of the school, and also support the school's drive to forge productive links with parents, particularly through their courtesy and unfailing friendliness. Lunchtime assistants are attentive and kindly towards pupils in their care, yet not all are firm enough when behaviour is too boisterous at midday.
65. The accommodation is good and is more than adequate for the needs of the primary curriculum although its upper floors are not accessible to disabled pupils. Rooms vary in size but are mainly bright and clean. Toilet facilities are good for all pupils, being plentiful and accessible. The range of accommodation is good. Pupils further benefit from the school's spacious site that boasts playing fields, a hall, gymnasium, two computer suites, a music room and a secure, attractive play area for children in the Foundation Stage.
66. **Resources are satisfactory and teachers make good use of the available books and equipment. Resources for physical education and for ICT are good but there are insufficient materials and artefacts for history and geography, where resources have not been updated to meet current curriculum requirements. There is a**

**shortfall in tools and materials for design and technology. Educational visits are used well in support of pupils' learning and personal development. The library is due to be reorganised and refurbished. However, current arrangements do not contribute strongly to pupils' literacy levels because they do not allow pupils free access to find and retrieve books or to practise their research skills.**

67. The management team uses its financial resources for the benefit of all pupils. The improvement plan is quite well 'costed' and prudent spending and improving staff stability have resulted in some savings in the last two years. The school has also benefited from additional funds from the local education authority during the amalgamation and thus currently has a large, unplanned surplus. The governing body is aware of this. Now that the school is more settled after the move into one site, it intends to consider ways of using these funds to enlarge the school's accommodation to cater for the increased number of pupils forecast in the local education authority review.
68. The finance committee is mainly effective in planning the budget in a way that supports the plan for school improvement. It regularly monitors the school's spending patterns and works closely with the local education authority financial services division in this respect. The efficiency and effectiveness of the financial administration systems are good. The office staff are very efficient and well organised. The school and governing body have reacted positively to the most recent auditor's report and the vast majority of its many recommendations have been implemented. The management is well informed of the school finances because office staff can provide up-to-date information from the computer systems quickly. The school's use of new technology is satisfactory. Computerised finance, records and attendance are in place but the school does not make best use of these systems, for instance to monitor and evaluate patterns of attendance or the progress of different ethnic groups. The school ensures that specific grants are used for their designated purpose. The school adds additional funds to these grants, for instance for resources or extra time for support staff.
69. The school applies principles of best value satisfactorily to further the opportunities open to the pupils. The school is aware of the need to compare its costs with those of other schools and does so through the local education authority financial services. The school engages the services of the local education authority for major projects, which in turn engages in competitive tendering and in seeking quotes. Major expenditure decisions are subjected to reasonably wide consultation. Whilst the school seeks the views of staff, governors and occasionally pupils, it does not consult sufficiently well with parents, for example on the behaviour policy.
70. The school's running costs and the amount that it spends on each pupil are high. However, pupils start school with very low levels of attainment, many speak English as an additional language and a very high percentage is eligible for free school meals. Despite these factors, children get a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage. This is built on well by teachers in Year 1 and 2 and national test scores at the end of Year 6 are improving. Thus, the school is heading in the right direction under the committed leadership of the headteacher and, as such, gives sound value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

71. In order to extend the school's current achievements and to further raise standards of attainment, the governors, headteacher and staff should jointly:
- (1) raise standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science by using assessment information and pupils' individual targets to adapt the curriculum for pupils with different capabilities, particularly those who speak English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs in Years 3 to 6;  
(paragraphs: 20-21, 25, 48-49, 62)
  - (2) raise standards in art and design, design and technology and music by:
    - improving the structure of the curriculum so as to ensure that pupils' learning builds more systematically on their prior attainments and experience;
    - ensuring that teachers follow recently introduced policies and schemes of work conscientiously;
    - providing additional training for those staff who have limited experience or expertise;(paragraphs: 24, 44, 103, 109)
  - (3) improve teachers' planning and the effectiveness of teaching in all subjects by:
    - identifying the criteria that are to be used in assessing pupils' attainment and progress in all subjects;
    - ensuring that the assessment of pupils' competence in the use of English is more systematic and rigorous;
    - providing staff with the necessary training to use these criteria consistently;
    - devising a manageable way of recording assessment information so that it is readily available to teachers when topics or skills are revisited;
    - ensuring that teachers use assessment information more systematically to identify what pupils of different levels of attainment need to learn next and how they need to adapt teaching to meet the needs of all pupils;(paragraphs: 24, 47-49, 88, 94, 97, 103, 109, 115, 120, 126, 131, 139)
  - (4) improve the governing body's role in overseeing the work of the school by:
    - ensuring that governors are more rigorous in monitoring the standards that pupils achieve and the quality of education that the school provides;
    - developing governors' role as *critical* friends of the school, so that they are more active in holding the school to account for what it achieves and in ensuring that statutory responsibilities are met in full, particularly in the area of health, safety and pupils' welfare;(paragraphs: 41, 59)
  - (5) improve the school's strategic planning by:
    - identifying a senior member of staff to have delegated responsibility for developing the schools provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language;
    - ensuring that all subject managers and other staff with management responsibilities have regular opportunities to gather information about standards in their subjects by observing teaching and learning and carrying out other agreed monitoring tasks;
    - including members of the governing body in a planned programme for the monitoring of standards and quality;
    - using monitoring information more systematically to identify areas for improvement;(paragraphs: 56, 62, 97, 106, 109, 120, 132, 139)

- (6) improve the overall attendance rate and the measures that the school takes to monitor and raise attendance by:
- giving parents clearer information about the importance of regular attendance and about the school's expectations and their rights and responsibilities as parents in this regard;
  - monitoring attendance more rigorously and taking a stronger position on all incidents of regular or unexplained absence;
  - using monitoring information to target specific causes of poor attendance;
  - continuing to raise the profile of attendance in the minds of the pupils so that they take pride in coming to school every day.

(paragraphs: 13, 46)

### **OTHER ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

improve the quality of the school's information to parents by:

- ensuring that written information to parents is presented in a style and in languages that most will understand;
- providing parents with more information about the content and organisation of the curriculum;
- ensuring that the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents contain all of the information that they should;
- Improving the consistency of arrangements for reporting to parents about incidents that occur during the school day.

(paragraph 51)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

66

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

40

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	4	28	29	5	0	0
Percentage	0	6	42	44	8	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)	52	341
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	224

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	124

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	285

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	41
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	87

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.2
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	23	16	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	8	19
	Girls	10	11	14
	Total	21	19	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	54 (86)	49 (74)	85 (93)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	16	14
	Girls	12	13	13
	Total	22	29	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	56 (63)	74 (72)	69 (70)
	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	27	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	14	12
	Girls	9	10	12
	Total	20	24	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	40 (49)	48 (46)	48 (65)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	13	11
	Girls	14	8	10
	Total	28	21	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (43)	42 (41)	42 (41)
	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**

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	11	1	0
White – Irish	3	0	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	9	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	2	0
Mixed – White and Asian	7	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	9	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	91	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	41	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	61	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	4	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	59	0	0
Black or Black British – African	27	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	14	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.05
Average class size	23

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

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	356

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	1,201,746
Total expenditure	1,131,440
Expenditure per pupil	2,894
Balance brought forward from previous year	7,6080
Balance carried forward to next year	146,386

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	16.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	16.6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.6
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 38%

Number of questionnaires sent out	393
Number of questionnaires returned	149

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	36	0	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	53	42	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	38	1	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	30	21	9	5
The teaching is good.	54	38	4	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	34	16	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	37	3	2	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	32	3	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	44	41	6	6	3
The school is well led and managed.	52	35	5	2	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	39	3	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	34	8	3	6

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**

72. The arrangement that the school makes for the children in the Foundation Stage are good. Children join the school full-time in the September before their fourth birthday. Parents and children visit the nursery, receive a 'Welcome Pack' and meet their teacher, headteacher and deputy headteacher before starting school. Similar arrangements are in place for those children joining one of the two reception classes, in the September before their fifth birthday. These arrangements successfully promote a smooth transition between home and school and enable links with home to begin to be established. Children attending the adjacent playgroup become familiar with the nursery and staff because they share some facilities, including the outdoor play area.
73. A high proportion of children enter school with knowledge, skills and understanding that are well below average for children of their age. Significantly, many children join the nursery with poor communication, language and literacy skills. They are at the very early stages of learning English, as this is not the language that they normally use at home. The teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants work very hard to ensure that the nursery and reception classes are calm and welcoming. This ensures that all boys and girls settle securely into school life and are very well motivated to learn. Children make good progress. However, because of their very low starting point, most children do not attain the Early Learning Goals for children of their age by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children's learning is particularly successful in personal, social and emotional development and aspects of communication, language and literacy, mathematical, physical and creative development. A small number of children achieve average standards in these areas of learning.
74. The quality of teaching overall is good. The class teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants work very well together. Support staff make a very valuable contribution to children's learning. This is a significant strength of the Foundation Stage. They work very purposefully with groups and individuals, sometimes speaking to children in their mother tongue to enable them to participate more fully in activities. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of how young children learn and their planning satisfactorily incorporates the required areas of learning. They assess children's skills formally at the start of nursery and reception. They note children's achievements and create a range of records. Teachers use the results of their assessments consistently throughout the Foundation Stage to identify development and learning priorities for each child. The school is keen to identify children with special educational needs as early as possible. Teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants are aware of their individual needs and ensure that they receive the support that they need. As a result, they make good progress towards the targets identified in their individual education plans. There are enough good quality resources to enable teachers to organise the classrooms to stimulate children's curiosity and encourage them to become independent learners. Nursery children have direct access to a secure outdoor area and the reception classes use this area at specific times. This well thought-out area provides valuable opportunities for children to learn by working on a more active scale than is possible indoors.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

75. Children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and many attain average standards by the end of the Foundation Stage. This is because all staff in the nursery and reception classes give very high priority to this area of learning. Teachers plan a good range of stimulating experiences that very successfully promote children's interest and excitement in learning. The children are happy and well used to the classroom systems. The teachers have high expectations of children's involvement and

they respond very eagerly. The majority of children are confident in the familiar settings of the nursery and reception classrooms. By five, they show a very good degree of independence in their approach to activities and daily routines. They respond readily to instructions and clear away equipment efficiently. Most children independently take off and put on their shoes for physical educational sessions. They put on their aprons for art and craft activities with a minimum of adult help. Children are highly motivated to learn. They settle quickly to work and concentrate hard. When moving around school, as when they go to the hall to join the infants for assembly, they behave very sensibly and co-operatively. Almost all children are patient and take their turn. Teaching in this area of learning is consistently very good. Plans include topics such as *Ourselves* that successfully promote children's awareness of their individuality and sense of self-worth. Teachers and support staff seize every opportunity to make individual children feel 'special'. For birthdays, for example, each child receives a card and a lollipop at Foundation Stage assembly. All staff value each child's efforts and give lots of individual praise and encouragement. They ensure that children have opportunities to carry out particular jobs, such as taking the register to the office. Such arrangements very successfully build children's self-esteem and promote their confidence in learning and in their relationships with others.

#### Communication, language and literacy

76. **Children make good gains in their communication, language and literacy skills although the standards that they attain overall are below average for their age. For almost two thirds of children in the nursery, English is an additional language and many are at an early stage of learning English when they enter school. Teachers and nursery nurses support children sensitively so that they gain confidence and make good progress in learning. Throughout the Foundation Stage, teachers plan regular opportunities for children to talk and listen to adults and each other. First thing in the morning, for example, nursery children discuss and complete the *Weather Board*. In all classes, children and adults regularly sit in a circle to talk about their tasks and activities. Teachers ask well-directed questions and give children time to answer. This successfully engages children's interest and promotes their confidence. They frequently respond in simple words and phrases. In most instances, teachers encourage them to elaborate on or explain their ideas and so extend their communication skills. However, this is not consistently the case. Teachers are lively and often add a touch of humour to what they say so that children are attentive and make good progress in developing their listening skills. Children enjoy sharing stories and rhymes and joining in with repeated phrases. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers prepare activities and games that successfully stimulate children's interest in letter sounds, reading and writing and encourage them to see learning as fun. From their earliest days in school, children regularly select a range of books to share at home. By the end of the Foundation Stage, with support, the majority are beginning to recognise familiar words and associate letters and sounds. A small number attain average standards. They approach simple books with confidence and read a range of common words and simple sentences mainly accurately. From a very low starting point, children make good progress in developing early writing skills. However, very few attain average standards and a small proportion have poor writing skills. They work hard and regularly practise writing patterns, using a range of markers. Most children understand that writing conveys meaning. Almost all write their own names using recognisable letters and a small number are beginning to write simple words and phrases independently.**

#### Mathematical development

77. **Children make good progress overall in developing mathematical understanding although very few attain average standards in all aspects of this area of learning. Children make very good progress in counting. Most children count reliably to ten.**

A small number confidently identify and order numbers to nine and beyond. The quality of teaching is good overall with lots of planned activities to promote children's mathematical development. Through regular counting routines and activities, they build up a secure sense of number, order and sequence. For example, children in the nursery successfully reinforce their early counting skills as they sort farm animals into small groups. With their teacher's support, they count the animals as they put them into separate 'fields'. Children in the reception class enthusiastically count, within ten, the number of squares on a board that a programmable toy must travel in order to knock down a skittle. However, almost all are unable to say the number that is 'one more' than a given number and have to count from one again in order to determine the answer. Very few children use the vocabulary involved in adding and subtracting or relate addition to combining two groups of objects or subtraction to 'taking away'. Most children make good progress in ordering objects by height or length. However, their learning is more limited when the aims of the session are too broad, activities lack a clear focus and key vocabulary is not consistently reinforced. Most children know the names of primary colours and, with support, the majority recognise some common two-dimensional shapes. Staff regularly seize opportunities to reinforce children's mathematical skills and check their understanding through well-directed questions. In the course of the day, they regularly introduce number songs and rhymes that successfully support children's learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

78. Many children enter school with very limited knowledge and understanding of the world. Throughout the year, teachers plan a programme of stimulating topics, such as *Weather* and *Transport*. These successfully engage children's curiosity and promote effective learning, although most children do not attain average standards for their age. They learn about the properties of materials, such as sand, water and clay by handling and working with them. They find out about living things through practical activities throughout the year. For example, they plant seeds and bulbs and hunt for minibeasts in the school grounds. They regularly enjoy their morning drink outside so that they can observe the fish in the pond and note changes in the surrounding plants, which they water. They gain further knowledge and understanding of the living world through visiting the Nature Centre and the Sandwell Valley Farm. The teaching of this area of learning is good. The teachers plan activities in which children can be actively involved. For example, as part of their work on *People Who Help Us*, the children met a series of visitors, including a policeman, a doctor, the caretaker and firemen with their engine. Children satisfactorily reinforce and extend their information, communication and technology skills. For example, they learn to operate the tape recorder independently and have regular opportunities, in the computer suite and in their classrooms, to use a range of simple computer programs, which soundly support their learning.

### Physical development

79. Children's skills are average in several aspects of this area of learning. However, many demonstrate limited skill and control when they handle small equipment and mark-making implements. Almost all are self-assured and all move safely in and around the nursery and reception classrooms. Children enjoy regular opportunities to be active in physical education lessons and in the outdoor area, where they run and walk without bumping into each other. They jump and land with confidence and travel over, under and through balancing and climbing equipment, demonstrating a satisfactory awareness of space, themselves and others. The quality of teaching is good. The class teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants are calm and supportive. They consistently encourage all children to participate fully. Teachers' planning ensures that children have regular opportunities to extend their physical development in lessons in the school gym, where they use both large apparatus and small equipment, such as balls and beanbags. All

children also have sessions during the day for vigorous free play in the recently developed outdoor area. They have space to run energetically and demonstrate satisfactory co-ordination on the large wooden apparatus and wheeled vehicles. In the nursery and reception classrooms, teachers carefully arrange activities that promote children's physical development alongside other areas of learning. For example, children fit together number jigsaws and frequently use construction materials, glue and paintbrushes independently. The teachers and support staff ensure that children have lots of opportunities to improve their manipulative skills by activities, such as threading and handling simple tools, such as scissors.

### **Creative development**

80. Children make very good progress in developing their creative skills and attain average standards in most aspects of this area of learning. They join in readily with number rhymes and particularly enjoy action songs in the gym. They sing a good range of songs from memory. However, many children demonstrate limited rhythm when they clap and tap to a steady beat. The quality of teaching is good. The role-play areas are thoughtfully set up, for example as a garden centre, to encourage children's collaboration and use of imaginative language. However, the younger children often play alongside rather than with each other and initiate few ideas of their own. Staff ensure that stimulating materials and tools are accessible to the children. They have frequent opportunities to draw and paint using a good range of tools to create different effects. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan art and craft activities which link with other areas of learning. This adds interest and successfully promotes children's involvement and learning. For example, children in the nursery enjoy making animal masks, following their farm visit, and reception children reinforce their mathematical development when they count the number of overlapping circles they use to make caterpillars.

### **ENGLISH**

81. **Standards in English are well below average at the end of Year 2 and below average at the end of Year 6. However, standards are rising. Although in the national tests in 2002, pupils' attainments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were very low compared with all schools nationally, the unpublished results of this year's tests indicate clear improvement. The most marked rise is in the number of eleven-year-olds achieving or exceeding the average standard in English. Whilst still below the national average, these results are above those of similar schools in 2002. Observation of lessons and analysis of pupils' completed work confirm these findings.**
82. Factors that contribute to this improvement in pupils' achievements include:
- each half term teachers formally assess every pupil's independent writing to enable them to build up a picture of individual strengths and weaknesses and to begin to monitor progress;
  - the school allocates additional time beyond the daily literacy hour for pupils to reinforce their reading and writing skills;
  - the school identifies those pupils who need additional help with reading and writing and arranges effective small-group support in the course of the year;
  - **teachers plan work in other subjects that effectively extends pupils' reading and writing skills;**
  - classroom assistants work closely with class teachers to provide very valuable additional support to those pupils who need it most, particularly those with special educational needs or those at an early stage of learning English. This is most effective in Years 1 and 2, where most classroom assistants are involved;
  - teachers are sensitive to the needs of individual pupils and, in most instances, successfully ensure that all are included in classroom activities. There are no consistent variations in the progress of pupils of different gender, background or ethnicity;

- the school is extending its resources, including reading books.
83. Teachers give satisfactory emphasis to boosting pupils' speaking and listening skills. In most lessons, teachers plan opportunities to extend pupils' vocabulary and promote their interest in new words. Pupils listen well and as a result they make good progress. In a lesson focusing on *Peace at Last*, Year 2 pupils enjoyed discussing the familiar text and considering the meaning of words, such as 'leaky' and 'pretending'. Teachers frequently start lessons with brief question and answer sessions to recall previous lessons. In most instances, teachers direct questions to individuals and accept and develop their responses thoughtfully. This successfully boosts pupils' confidence and readiness to contribute and enables the teacher to assess the pupil's understanding. Occasionally, however, such discussions are not managed well enough. For example, in a Year 3 lesson focusing on letter writing, reticent pupils, including those with less well-developed language skills, had few opportunities to contribute and made little progress in developing their spoken language skills. Pupils make good progress when teachers plan opportunities for them to speak in more formal situations. For example, in a Year 6 class, pupils took turns to assume the role of a character in the class text and answer questions put to them by other pupils. They also have opportunities to make short presentations to the class, on a range of topics. These arrangements very effectively promote the speaking and listening skills of those pupils involved.
84. Pupils of all ages enjoy hearing stories read by adults and are encouraged to take books home regularly. In all age groups, there are pupils of wide ranging abilities and teachers ensure that in almost all cases they read books at the correct level of challenge. By Year 2, although pupils' overall standards are well below average, pupils enjoy reading. They recognise familiar words and most read simple texts aloud with understanding. Higher-attaining pupils read accurately and with good expression. Teachers and classroom assistants successfully promote pupils' knowledge of letter sounds. With increasing independence, pupils use this knowledge to help them to tackle unknown words. Most older pupils eagerly talk about their favourite authors and the characters and key events of their current reading books. More-able readers readily compare their books with others they have read. From a very low starting point, pupils make good progress in developing and reinforcing their reading skills in a range of guided reading activities and quiet reading sessions in the course of each week. Despite this, by Year 6, pupils' standards overall are below the national average. Pupils have ready access to a satisfactory selection of books in the library and in classrooms. Throughout the school, pupils are familiar with both fiction and non-fiction books. They use factual texts as a source of information and use contents and index pages with increasing competence as they move through the school. However, because non-fiction books are kept in classrooms and around the school, with the library housing mainly colour-coded fiction books, older pupils have limited opportunities to extend their independent research and library skills.
85. Throughout the school, pupils display a wide range of writing skills. Teachers plan a good variety of writing activities and consistently praise pupils' efforts. In consequence, pupils gain confidence and show a lively interest in writing. In Year 1, they make good progress in sequencing their ideas through practical activities. For example, pupils stand up and hold pictures representing different parts of a familiar story and others move them around until the pictures are in the correct order. Most pupils are beginning to write legibly and they communicate their ideas effectively through simple words and phrases, often with adult support. By Year 2, pupils' writing includes very simple book reviews and poetry. Following role-play activities that very successfully motivate their enthusiasm, pupils are keen to write a story about making spells, based on *The Worst Witch*. A small number is eager to write at length. Most are beginning to use their knowledge of sounds to help them to spell short, commonly used words. Pupils know that capital letters and full stops are needed in sentences, but very few use them consistently. In Years 3 and 4, most pupils write increasingly structured pieces of work, including simple letters. As they move

through the school, teachers successfully encourage pupils to express their ideas persuasively in discussions, for example about dropping litter, as an introduction to writing. However, most pupils lack the skills to express their arguments in a well thought-out way in their written work. In Years 5 and 6, pupils successfully plan their writing as a means of organising and developing their ideas and opinions. Their writing includes narrative and non-narrative accounts, such as adventure stories and newspaper reports, and poetry in a range of styles, including that of Ogden Nash. By Year 6, pupils enjoy using words for effect, as when they devise an information leaflet for parents new to the school. High-attaining pupils readily express their ideas. They select words carefully and increasingly use complex sentences. However, although their writing is appropriately structured, the standards of most pupils' punctuation and spelling are below average.

86. Pupils take pride in presenting work carefully for display. However, there is no consistent approach to handwriting throughout the school and teachers' expectations of standards of presentation are varied. Consequently, although pupils practise their handwriting regularly, they do not all develop a fluent, joined handwriting style. The co-ordinator recognises this and plans to introduce a common handwriting scheme in all classes. Teachers encourage pupils to use their writing skills to support learning in other subjects. For example, in science pupils write up investigations fully, in their own words. They write accounts of Greek gods, myths and legends in work linked to their history topic and write an account of their visit to a Hindu temple in religious education.
87. The teaching of English is effective and pupils achieve well because:
- the co-ordinator and most teachers have undertaken additional literacy training and teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are secure;
  - teachers successfully establish positive patterns of behaviour and response. Most pupils show interest in their work, behave well and make a reasonable effort to improve;
  - teachers use well-targeted questions to stimulate pupils' thinking, check their understanding and reinforce their learning;
  - there are satisfactory links between English and other subjects that allow pupils to reinforce literacy skills;
  - there is good teamwork between teachers and classroom assistants, who provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs, and for pupils with a limited command of the English language;
  - teachers mark pupils' work regularly. In most classes, teachers indicate what pupils can do to improve as well as encouraging pupils' efforts;
  - teachers regularly set homework, particularly reading and spelling. These activities effectively reinforce pupils' learning;
  - teaching in Years 1 and 2 is now consistently good. Following a period of disruption, due to staff absence and mobility, pupils in the Year 2 classes have had the same teachers for almost two terms. As a result, they have made good progress in their learning.
88. The quality of teaching is good overall and promotes pupils' good progress in Years 3 to 6. However, there are inconsistencies and pupils make less progress in some lessons because:
- in some classes, teachers' planning focuses on the activities pupils will undertake in a lesson, rather than on what they are to learn. In these lessons, teaching is less sharply focused and pupils' learning is less purposeful and effective;
  - planning is not always based on a thorough assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do so that work is not pitched at the right level for all pupils and they do not make enough progress in the course of the lesson. This particularly affects pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English in lessons in which no additional support is available;

- although teachers manage their pupils very calmly and effectively in almost all classes, where this is not the case, pupils do not always work in a thoughtful and productive way and so make less progress than they could.
89. Pupils show good attitudes to learning in English. Teachers are very receptive to pupils' contributions and successfully boost their self-esteem. This promotes pupils' positive attitudes to work and eager involvement in lessons. They are keen to contribute ideas orally and apply themselves well to reading and writing tasks. Pupils follow their teachers' instructions and they behave co-operatively and well. Activities, such as pupils' annual outing to the theatre, production of books with Year 10 pupils from the local secondary school, library visits and poetry reading, increase pupils' interest and involvement in their learning.
90. The co-ordinator is committed to improving standards and is planning to extend the good assessment practices in writing to reading and speaking and listening. She manages the subject efficiently and is instrumental in building up resources to support teaching throughout the school.

## MATHEMATICS

91. Standards in mathematics are broadly average by the end of Year 2 but are well below average at the end of Year 6. In the 2002 national tests, pupils' attainments at the end of Year 2 were below average and the school's results for pupils Year 6 were very low compared with schools nationally and with similar schools. However, the unpublished test results for 2003 indicate clear improvement. Standards in mathematics are higher than they were a year ago. This is because:
- whilst the overall proportion of pupils attaining or exceeding the nationally expected standard at the end Year 2 has only risen slightly, there have been good gains in the proportions attaining at the upper end of the average range (Levels 2B and 2A);
  - the overall proportion of pupils attaining or exceeding the nationally expected standard at the end Year 6 has also risen and there has been a substantial improvement in the proportion of pupils attaining the above average Level 5.
- Observation of lessons and analysis of pupils' completed work confirm these findings. Pupils are achieving satisfactory standards in mathematics because:
- current standards in Year 2 are in line with those in schools nationally and well above the 2002 average for school that face similar social and educational circumstances;
  - overall standards in Year 6 are in line with the 2002 average for similar schools and the proportion gaining Level 4 and above is above that in similar schools;
  - of those pupils who have completed two full years in the school, around seven out of ten achieved Level 4 or above in mathematics and almost a quarter achieved Level 5.
92. **Pupils make good progress through Years 1 and 2 because teaching is strong in those classes. Teachers are very aware of how pupils learn and use a good range of practical methods to maintain their interest and improve the quality of their learning. Clear explanations and strong support from bilingual and other support staff help pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs learn at a similar rate to their peers. Pupils' progress has been inhibited, to some extent, by the fact that both Year 2 classes have had changes of teacher this year. However, the more recent work in pupils' books shows clearly that most are making rapid gains and are developing a sound understanding of number. They add and subtract numbers within 100 successfully, though lower-attaining pupils work more comfortably within 10. Extensive work on money, including coin recognition and change, has given a good practical application to this work. During the inspection, pupils in Year 1 learned number facts quickly because the teacher used an exciting range of games to hold their interest and challenged them to work mentally. Pupils want to learn because tasks are**

**interesting and explained well. For example, clear explanations and the effective use of resources helped all pupils understand the task in a Year 2 lesson on interpreting data from a table. An over reliance on worksheets in both age groups does not allow pupils to learn to record for themselves and makes tracking progress difficult as they are often undated.**

93. Pupils in Year 6 have made satisfactory progress. However, the quality of teaching, though satisfactory overall, is variable in classes in Years 3 to 6 and occasionally unsatisfactory. Higher-attaining pupils do well, because teachers regularly ask them to explain their reasoning and this improves the quality of their mathematical thinking and deepens their understanding. In addition, special classes aimed at boosting pupils' performance have worked well. However, pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language do not receive the same good support as they do in Years 1 and 2. The quality of assessment and its use in adapting teaching to the needs of these pupils is unsatisfactory. Class teachers do not make sufficient reference to these groups of pupils in their planning. Whilst tasks are often set at three levels, teachers' planning does not include specific reference to how pupils with learning difficulties, and those whose first language is not English will be supported and this slows the progress of these groups of pupils. Nevertheless, teachers have worked the pupils hard and have covered a suitable range of topics but some, such as probability and area, lack the depth needed for pupils to achieve the higher levels. There are some opportunities for pupils to reinforce their numeracy skills through work in other subjects, but this is not a consistent feature of many lessons. They learn how to work with number in all its forms and their understanding builds steadily from year to year. For instance in Year 4 pupils first learn about negative numbers and this understanding is extended in Year 6 when they use these numbers to plot co-ordinates in all four quadrants. Similarly, from the early stages of data handling in Year 3, pupils learn to collect data and record it on simple block graphs and progress to plotting more complex data on to line graphs in Year 6. During the inspection, stronger teaching provided pupils with interesting, challenging and well-planned mental activities. In Year 4 these quickly gained the pupils' interest and led to good behaviour throughout the lesson. Support, when available, was accurately targeted at those who needed it most, as in the Year 3/4 class where teacher and support assistants worked very well together. Where teaching was weak, there was poor pupil management, which led to a noisy classroom and little learning in Year 3, and weak explanations of tasks, which left pupils confused and unable to do an angle measuring exercise correctly in Year 5.
94. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator monitors teaching and learning and has helped colleagues to improve their practice by giving demonstration lessons and organising training. However, the National Numeracy Strategy is not firmly embedded. Teachers' planning for the daily mathematics lesson lacks detail and teachers' subject knowledge in some classes is not good enough. Teachers' planning has been monitored quite closely but too few teachers complete the assessment and evaluation boxes and this has not been followed up with sufficient rigour. Assessment systems are strong, with pupils' work assessed regularly and their responses to tests analysed and evaluated thoroughly. This work influences what is taught and helps inform the selection of pupils for additional support. The school monitors pupils' progress well but has not put in place a system of target setting to enable pupils to understand what they have to do to improve further.

## **SCIENCE**

95. Standards in science are well below the national average by the end of Years 2 and 6. However, standards are rising. Results in the most recent (unpublished) national tests at the end of Year 6 have improved this year when compared to last, with more pupils achieving the expected standard and more pupils also reaching the higher level. The school's overall results are adversely affected by the high turnover of pupils in any given

year, because many pupils enter the school with very low levels of attainment and a history of disrupted education. The school's current standards are satisfactory because, of the pupils who completed Years 5 and 6 in the school, 70 per cent achieved the nationally expected standard and one in eight exceeded national expectations in science.

96. Progress for all pupils is satisfactory as they move through the school. This is largely because teachers give a satisfactory emphasis to the development of investigative approaches and 'first-hand' experiences to strengthen pupils' learning. Following a period of instability when leadership issues hampered the subject's development, science is now soundly led and there are clear plans for its future growth. Science is secure in all years, with all aspects of the subject represented. There is a framework to ensure that pupils gradually develop knowledge, skills and understanding as they move through the school. Staff are starting to analyse test data in order to identify weaknesses to inform the drive to raise standards further. Links with English, mathematics and information and communication technology are satisfactory as they allow pupils to record investigations for themselves.
97. Despite these developing strengths, weaknesses exist, which prevent pupils from making the best possible progress. Teachers' current practice is inconsistent because there are no regular arrangements for monitoring standards and the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils in some classes rarely plan, implement, record and evaluate investigations for themselves. Where pupils do engage in scientific investigation, it is sometimes too teacher directed for pupils to derive the most benefit. Only the most-able pupils appreciate the importance of a fair test and understand that scientific ideas are based on evidence. Pupils are rarely encouraged to record in different ways, such as through the use of information and communication technology. There are no consistent approaches to assessing pupils' progress. As a result, teachers rarely set work at different levels of difficulty or group pupils by ability. In many lessons, pupils carry out identical tasks, which are too hard for some but not hard enough for others.
98. By the end of Year 2, pupils gather, consider and present evidence gained through investigation. For example, they investigate how far a toy car travels down a ramp at different heights, recording their results pictorially and in written form. However, many are not able to predict and evaluate outcomes without support. They understand that animals and plants can be found in different habitats, although many cannot explain why. By the end of Year 6, pupils classify soils using different criteria, such as appearance and texture. They know about the properties of different materials and so understand that some materials will let light through while others will not. Most understand physical processes, such as how light travels from a source. However, they are not able to plan, implement and evaluate investigations for themselves without help.
99. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. However, there were examples of good teaching in both infant and junior classes during the inspection. Features of good teaching include:
- good relationships with pupils that create an effective climate for learning;
  - the effective use of resources to reinforce learning;
  - purposeful and regular questioning, underpinned by secure subject knowledge, which helps pupils to move forward in their understanding.
  - a good emphasis on developing the skills of scientific enquiry.
- These strengths helped to ensure that, in these lessons, pupils responded well and made mostly good progress.
100. Where teaching is less successful, lesson objectives are not precise enough or are not shared with pupils. As a result, there are times when some pupils do not know what they are expected to do, or why. Sometimes, teachers do not organise investigations in a way that allows pupils to learn for themselves and so the development of pupils' independent

learning is inhibited. Some teachers give pupils tasks, such as copying and colouring, which do not help develop knowledge and understanding. These negative features slow the rate at which pupils learn and adversely affect pupils' attitudes to learning.

## ART AND DESIGN

101. There is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about the standards that pupils attain in art and design by the end of Year 2 or about the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2. Timetable arrangements for the week of the inspection made it impossible to observe art and design lessons in these year groups and little pupils' work, other than that on display, was available to view. In discussion, pupils spoke with good understanding of how to make colours darker and lighter and had a sound understanding of 'hot' and 'cold' colours and how to use them for effect. They had enjoyed using a computer program to draw and then 'fill' in blocks of colour but could not recall working with clay or similar materials.
102. Standards in Year 6 are below national expectations and pupils have made unsatisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6. Pupils have kept their sketchbooks from Year 3 but these have not been used effectively to help pupils practise techniques or observe and record detail before creating their final piece. In Year 6, pupils make 'papier-mâché' models of animals, which are quite accurate. However, they do not have simple techniques of model making, such as inverting the box to make it easier to paint, and this reduces the quality of their finished work. When painting they are careful but do not mix paints well enough to get the tones to bring their models to life.
103. The following factors contribute to pupils' unsatisfactory progress:
  - topics have not been organised so as to ensure that pupils build on the skills that they have previously learned;
  - assessment systems are inadequate. They do not give an accurate picture of pupils' acquisition of skills and knowledge because any assessments that take place are made at the end of the year, mainly from teachers' memory or informal notes;
  - until recently, there has been little guidance to support teachers' planning. The improved policy and scheme of work have not been in place for long enough to impact on standards or the progress that pupils make;
  - teachers have not made enough use of the work of great artists as starting points for projects in art and design.
104. During the inspection, the quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 was satisfactory, which suggests that the school's revised planning and guidance for teachers is beginning to take effect. Lessons were well organised and teachers managed their pupils effectively, so that lively learning could take place. As a result, pupils were keen to take part, showed interest and took care with the work that they were doing. However, teachers' planning did not take enough account of pupils with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language.
105. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about the styles of famous Western artists, including William Morris and Henri Matisse but spend little time appreciating great works from other cultures. Whilst there are plans to broaden pupils' experience by bringing artists into school and by visiting galleries, this has not happened in the recent past. In lessons, pupils occasionally work together as when the Year 3/4 class made collages of shrubs, but this type of co-operative work is not common.
106. The management of art and design is satisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator has written a suitable policy and a scheme of work, including outline lesson plans, which will be very useful to colleagues. They provide sound guidance on how to teach the

subject effectively, address some of the current weaknesses and so have the potential to improve teaching and learning. The art club that she provides gives pupils good opportunities to extend their skills and knowledge. Work produced by the art club, such as the animals and jungle scenes in the library, brightens the school and adds to the quality of the learning environment. However, the co-ordinator has not yet taken advantage of time given to monitor teaching and learning in order to bring about improvement. Consequently, there is no written action plan and thus the subject has limited direction.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107. Standards in design and technology are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 but are below national expectations by the end of Year 6. Progress is mostly satisfactory as pupils move through Years 1 and 2, but is largely unsatisfactory as they move through Years 3 to 6.
108. During Years 1 and 2, pupils follow a satisfactory curriculum and the teaching and learning of design and technology are sound. Pupils work with a suitable range of tools, equipment, materials and components to make products of sound quality and, in doing so, make satisfactory progress all areas of the subject. For example, Year 1 pupils record their plans and intentions by producing design drawings before they make a simple, but colourful bag. As a result, their finished work contains original features and is finished to a satisfactory standard. By the end of Year 2, pupils improve their skills of designing, making and evaluating the things that they make. They learn specific techniques that enable them to make a picture that contains a moving part. They also design and make a moving vehicle, and consider how it might be improved 'by stopping the wheels from going in when it rolls'.
109. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6 because:
- the present co-ordinator requires training to be effective both as a teacher and as a leader of the subject. The co-ordinator does not systematically monitor teachers' planning or the outcomes of teaching. This reduces her capacity to plan for improvements in the subject;
  - teachers are not following the school's curriculum plan conscientiously enough and as a result pupils are not gaining knowledge, understanding and skills progressively. Pupils in Year 6 confirmed that no design and technology projects had been undertaken during the current school year;
  - teachers' levels of confidence and competence are unacceptably varied. Weaknesses in the teacher's knowledge and understanding contributed to unsatisfactory teaching in a lesson in Year 5;
  - when design and technology is undertaken, for example in the Year 5 musical instruments project, the process is weak. Pupils are not required to complete a design brief before they make their product and are not given enough scope to show individuality in their choice of materials and techniques;
  - teachers rarely match work to pupils' needs and, as a result, all follow the same task;
  - links with ICT require substantial development;
  - the school does not have a wide enough range of resources to meet the requirements of the curriculum, and storage that ensures ease of access remains a problem.
- As a result of these important weaknesses, pupils make unsatisfactory gains in learning as they move from Year 3 to Year 6.
110. Despite these important weaknesses, pupils' attitudes are satisfactory and most try hard to complete work to the best of their ability.

## GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

111. Standards in geography and history meet national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This represents good progress for all pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, as many enter the school with below average knowledge and understanding of the world. Progress is good in Years 1 and 2 because there is a sustained focus on the development of knowledge, skills and language, often through practical activities. The pace and quality of learning are not maintained as pupils move through the school. By the end of Year 6, achievement is satisfactory, not good. This is because teachers do not adapt their teaching to address language problems encountered by some pupils, who are not supported by specialist classroom assistants, and their planning does not always focus on the higher attainment levels. For example in history, work is not frequently planned to facilitate high level investigative work by Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. There is little evidence of tasks that require them to demonstrate that events can be variously interpreted and to suggest likely reasons. Furthermore, the organisation of the curriculum is not conducive to a steady progression in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills, as there are large gaps between the teaching of the geography and history units.
112. In geography, Year 1 pupils develop their mapping skills through following 'Barnaby Bear' on his journey around the United Kingdom. They extend these skills, and those of geographical enquiry, as they study the area around the school and learn about its physical and human features. By the end of Year 2, pupils know about localities beyond their own. For example, they compare Handsworth with Middleton, identifying similarities and differences. They have improved their knowledge and understanding of places through reading the storybook *Katy Morag and the two grandmothers*, and know about transport and work on the island of Struay. Pupils have a good knowledge of geographical vocabulary and the role of maps and plans. Geography makes a positive contribution to pupils' literacy and numeracy development. Mapping skills continue to develop well in Years 3 to 6. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 increase their expertise during field trips that focus on orienteering. Such activities interest and excite pupils and, as a result most respond positively to their work in geography. By the end of Year 6, pupils are competent in using grid references and Ordnance Survey maps. They have acquired more knowledge of location and places, such as Indian villages. Year 5 pupils have a good understanding of the decline in rainforests and related environmental concerns. A group of Year 5 pupils are very interested in conservation and sustainable growth. They talk knowledgeably, and with feeling, about such matters. These lessons make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development.
113. In history, at the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of people and events from the past. They compare features of toys from a past era with those of modern ones. Pupils know about the life and work of a Caribbean nurse in Victorian England. They identify similarities and differences in hospitals and nursing between then and now. Pupils look at the changing nature of the seaside. They learn where and why the Great Fire of London began and study accounts of the event. By the end of Year 6, pupils compare the lives of rich and poor Victorian children and learn about schools. They discover the culture and history of the Ancient Greeks and Romans. Pupils' understanding of the passage of time is reinforced by the use of timelines, as in their work on Henry VIII. Teachers give due emphasis to historical enquiry. For example, they require pupils to research the Tudors and use books and the Internet to find information. Pupils learn to use the appropriate vocabulary and this promotes some development of literacy skills. Year 2 pupils wrote a booklet about the life of Mary Seacole, the black Victorian nurse. However, there is a limited range of writing in Years 3 to 6. History promotes pupils' personal development but spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is not always highlighted in planning.

114. The teaching and learning in history and geography are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, as they are in geography in Years 3 to 6. There is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about the teaching and learning of history in Years 3 to 6 because no history lessons took place in these classes during the inspection. Sound planning ensures that geography and history lessons follow a structure that enables pupils to benefit from activities that relate well to the teachers' key objectives, with short sessions at the end used to test understanding. Work in pupils' books is consistently marked but teachers do not always pinpoint what is required to reach a higher standard. In geography, teachers give a good emphasis to mapping skills but at times there is insufficient stress on physical features, as indicated by the pupils' work on an Indian village. Some high quality teaching was seen during the inspection. Learning in a Year 4 lesson was very good because an expertly planned lesson completely engaged the pupils' interest. They were active participants, using holiday brochures that they had collected as a basis for presentations on worldwide weather patterns. Skilful teaching, such as the ability to extend the understanding of all by sharing the difficulties or inspiration of a few, resulted in very good learning. The very good relationships that were evident in the class added further to the quality of pupils' learning. There were sighs of regret when the lesson ended. Good features of history lessons in Years 1 and 2 include careful questioning to clarify pupils' learning and discussions that are well led and cater for all pupils, including those with a limited command of English. Good teamwork in a Year 1 class made a positive contribution to pupils' learning through the effective management of group work. It also contributed to pupils' social development. As a result of these features, most pupils behave well in class and have positive attitudes.
115. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The use of national guidelines supports teaching and learning. The curriculum has been reviewed and updated. However, the assessment of pupils' achievement is at an early stage of development. Assessment procedures do not produce sufficient information to ensure that planned tasks match pupils' ability. For this reason, higher-attaining pupils, those who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs do not always do as well as they could. Resources for history are satisfactory, although there are insufficient resources to support the new teaching and learning units in geography. Teachers use information and communication technology satisfactorily as a tool to aid learning but there is scope for more subject specific computer programs for both geography and history.

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

116. Standards in information and communication technology are improving. Pupils currently in the school have come from a wide range of settings and some who are recently arrived from overseas have little experience of computers or other devices. For this reason, the overall picture of attainment is very variable. Nevertheless, inspection evidence indicates that most pupils are working on tasks that are pitched at the expected standard for their age and that pupils' confidence, competence and skills are improving.
117. Standards meet national expectations in Years 1 and 2 and the majority of pupils are making satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have sound basic skills. They use the computer or other devices independently. They switch on, select and enter programs, follow on-screen instructions and retrieve, amend and save their work. They use word processing effectively to reinforce literacy skills when they present words and pictures or draft and improve their simple stories. They enter data and produce block graphs, for example of their traffic survey, and in doing so, reinforce their numeracy skills. There are further links to numeracy when pupils in Year 1 program the floor robot to move forwards and backwards and to perform turns. Pupils in Year 2 know that they can use the computer as a source of information, as when they research the flags of different countries.

118. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make satisfactory gains in knowledge understanding and skills. They extend their use of word processing to include the use of borders, different fonts and colours, text art and clip art directories in order to present 'prophesy' poems in Year 4 or 'summer' poems in Year 5. By the end of Year 6, pupils combine these skills to produce effective *PowerPoint* presentations that include animations and sound effects. Their understanding of information handling improves when they investigate databases in Year 3 and complete spreadsheets in Year 5. By the end of Year 6, pupils write simple programs that command things to happen, such as making the lighthouse light flash on and off during hours of darkness. They also confidently use ICT to locate information on the Internet or on CD-ROMs to help their work in subjects such as history, geography and art.
119. The teaching of ICT is satisfactory. However, recent initiatives are beginning to have a positive impact on teaching and improving the quality of pupils' learning. Teaching and learning are improving because:
- staff have undertaken extensive training and the ICT co-ordinator provides a good level of in-house support to reinforce teachers' understanding and confidence. As a result, most teaching is authoritative and accurate and teachers have the competence to 'trouble-shoot' effectively when the need arises;
  - teachers base their planning on national guidelines that ensure a systematic coverage of the different strands of the National Curriculum for ICT;
  - in the best lessons, such as that on control technology in Year 6, teachers are raising their expectations of their pupils. They have successfully established very good patterns of behaviour and response and, as a result, pupils are very attentive, co-operate very well and use the computers and other equipment safely, sensibly and independently;
  - teachers use strategies, such as peer support, to ensure that pupils who speak English as an additional language can take a full part in lessons and make sound progress alongside others in the class;
  - there is good teamwork between teachers and classroom assistants that benefits pupils with special educational needs;
  - the school has the resources and facilities necessary to cover the curriculum thoroughly;
  - there are sound cross-curricular links. These links ensure that pupils use ICT as an aid to learning other subjects and, in doing so, reinforce their competence in the use of ICT. However, there is a shortage of subject specific programs for subjects such as geography, history and music.
120. The co-ordinator has successfully led the drive to improve the curriculum and to raise standards, as described above. However, she does not have the opportunity to see colleagues at work and so her monitoring of standards and quality is largely informal. She must, therefore, rely on others to highlight strengths and weaknesses and this reduces her ability to 'fine tune' the system now that it is in place. The school has recently introduced a system for assessing pupils' attainments in ICT. However, the current system does not focus sharply enough on pupils' skills, nor has it been in place for long enough to provide much data for teachers to use as a basis for planning. Consequently, planning rarely takes account of the different needs and capabilities of the pupils. In most lessons, all pupils undertake the same task and, even though teachers and classroom assistants work hard to support pupils with learning or linguistic difficulties and to challenge the higher attainers, these pupils do not always make the progress that they should. This lack of specific planning is unsatisfactory.

## MUSIC

121. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards in music are below national expectations. Most pupils have not made sufficient progress during their time in school. Too little teaching time has been allocated to allow pupils to develop their instrumental and compositional skills and to enable them to listen and evaluate an appropriately wide range of music. Until recently, the absence of a well-structured scheme of work adversely affected attainment, as teachers could not provide for the steady increase of pupils' musical knowledge, understanding and skills.
122. However, a published music scheme has very recently been introduced to help class teachers to plan and deliver their lessons. It promotes a systematic approach to music teaching and enables pupils to build on earlier learning. They can develop a suitable variety of skills. Teachers are using it well. Consequently, learning in nearly all classes is satisfactory or better, and at least good in half of them.
123. Throughout the school, teachers and classroom assistants are committed to ensuring that pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language are fully involved in musical activities. They make as much progress as other pupils do. A Year 1 class made very good progress in their knowledge of pitch, engaged by the teacher's good demonstration of the use of her voice to control sound. They responded well to the 'Lion Carnival' and to the teacher's insistence that they use their voices and a wide range of instruments to compose. A Year 2 teacher gave a very good demonstration of how clapping can illustrate pulse and rhythm. The pupils listened carefully and could repeat what they had learnt. They reinforced this understanding through the responsible and effective use of untuned percussion instruments. The short lesson did not enable pupils to evaluate their work and improve performance. Lack of time also limited the ability of a Year 6 class to reach higher standards as they used instruments to harmonise with a song. There was good development of their aural memory but there was not a well-integrated combination of composing, performing and appraising.
124. There is no school choir. Pupils' singing in assemblies is satisfactory although few used the correct posture and other simple techniques to improve performance. Pupils are not taught the recorder, but Years 3 to 6 have opportunities for tuition in a range of instruments, including those that relate to their cultural background, such as the tabla. There are also two steel bands. These activities promote the learning of the significant number of pupils involved. Pupils take part in performances within the school and the community and gain experience of performing for a range of audiences. There are opportunities for their music to be heard and their achievements celebrated. Music makes a positive contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
125. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers use the published scheme to ensure a steady increase in pupils' understanding. Each lesson has a number of tasks that require pupil participation and engages them well. Most teachers stress vocabulary, thereby extending pupils' literacy skills. Teachers and support staff use praise to promote pupil confidence. Overall, pupils behave well although this did not occur in lessons where the teacher's classroom management skills were unsatisfactory.
126. The co-ordination of the subject is now satisfactory. After a period of relative stagnation, there is a thrust to improve provision for music. A new published scheme is having a positive effect on teaching and learning. The need for training has been recognised and money earmarked. The school has good resources for the teaching of music although more computer software is needed. Extra-curricular opportunities are good. These factors are a good basis for continued improvement, although this will be difficult if the allocation of teaching time remains so low and assessment of pupils' progress remains inadequate.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

127. Pupils throughout the school reach the expected standards in most aspects of the physical education curriculum that were seen during the inspection. However, standards in swimming are considerably lower than those normally found in schools for pupils of this age. Only 10 per cent of the pupils taking part in a lesson could swim 25 metres unaided. Inspection evidence and teachers' planning for physical education indicate that all elements of the National Curriculum receive appropriate attention. The school extends the basic curriculum by providing a good range of after-school sporting activities, coaching and competitive events. Most pupils of all levels of attainment throughout the school make satisfactory progress in the areas covered.
128. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 know how exercise affects the body and so understand the importance of warm-up activities. They perform basic gymnastic movements involving travelling and balancing with satisfactory co-ordination and control. They devise and repeat simple sequences and use climbing and balancing apparatus safely. Pupils respond to the stimuli of words and music to produce 'shadow' dances, which they remember and perform with reasonable precision. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are developing satisfactory games skills. Younger pupils know several ways of throwing an object and use their understanding to play simple games. By the end of Year 6, many pupils throw and catch a small ball with commendable accuracy. They participate vigorously in striking and fielding games and higher attaining pupils are beginning to understand and use tactics to improve their performance. Standards in swimming are much lower. In a Year 5 group, there are more pupils at an early stage of swimming and water safety skills than would be expected for a group of this age.
129. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour during physical education lessons are mainly satisfactory. In response to effective teaching, most pupils enjoy their work and join in energetically. They are animated, follow instructions carefully and yet give their attention promptly, when required to do so. This was seen to good effect in a Year 1 gymnastics lesson and allowed the teacher to make good use of the available time. However, some pupils respond in an undisciplined manner when they are beyond the confines of the classroom. Their work lacks precision and control and the quality of their work deteriorates.
130. The teaching of physical education is satisfactory. Strengths in teaching include:
- lively warm-up sessions that prepare pupils well for subsequent activities, as for example in a dance lesson in Year 2;
  - good subject knowledge that allows the teacher to explain technical vocabulary, such as 'points' and 'patches' used in a Year 1 gymnastics lesson, in a way that enables all pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, to play a full part in the lesson;
  - planning that provides pupils with a sufficient range of activities to sustain good levels of interest and involvement, as was also evident in Year 1;
  - effective organisation and management, that keeps pupils working hard throughout or, as in the Year 3/4 games lesson, curbs the excess energy of pupils who begin to behave badly;
  - effective methods of improving pupils' performance, such as modelling by the class teacher in Year 1, establishing the develop - practise - improve - perform cycle of working in Year 2 or the direct 'coaching' of throwing techniques in Year 3/4.
131. There were, however, weaknesses in some lessons. Teachers do not always plan carefully enough to ensure that teaching meets the needs of pupils with different capabilities. The otherwise successful Year 2 dance lesson got off to a shaky start, because the teacher did not explain 'skip' carefully enough. Pupils with a limited understanding of English did not know what to do or how to do it and this limited the

progress that they made during the introductory phase of the lesson. Similarly, there was little to challenge higher-attaining pupils during the skills development phase of the Year 6 games lesson and consequently these pupils made few gains during this part of the lesson. These weaknesses stem from the fact that systems for assessing pupils' attainments in physical education and in other aspects of their learning are unsatisfactory and, as a result teachers do not always have the information that they need to plan more precisely.

132. The subject co-ordinator is doing a good job. She has worked hard, despite prolonged absence, to provide detailed guidance as a basis for teachers' planning, to organise on-going training and support for staff and to secure additional funding, with which to extend the school's resources. However, her effectiveness is reduced because the subject is currently a low priority in school improvement planning. This means that the co-ordinator does not get the time to observe lessons in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

133. Pupils' standards in Years 2 and 6 meet the requirements of the locally agreed guidelines. Pupils make sound progress in their learning about religions and from religions. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, do equally well in this respect.
134. By Year 2, pupils have developed some understanding about matters that are important in people's lives, such as caring for others both in the family and wider community. They know that, 'We are all different but special' and identify similarities and differences among people in the school community. They know about the features of a church and appreciate why it is a special place.
135. As pupils move through the school, they begin to recognise the artefacts and understand the symbols used in the celebrations of different religions, such as the Shabbat (or Jewish holy day). Pupils experience a wide range of religious and secular stories, which deepen their understanding. As a result, pupils are beginning to appreciate some of the values and themes common to the main cultures and religions of the world.
136. By Year 6, pupils have studied many of the world's major faiths and know some of the customs and beliefs associated with them. For example, pupils in Year 3 find out about the Five Pillars of Islam and Year 5 pupils describe a visit to a Hindu temple. By the end of Year 6, pupils know about Buddhist pilgrimages, and list essential items for a religious journey. They understand the significance of Hajj to Muslims. In a good link with literacy, they write a diary from the viewpoint of a pilgrim on their first day in Mecca, when they visit the Kaabah.
137. Teaching and learning are sound overall. However, good teaching was seen during the inspection in Years 5 and 6. In a Year 6 lesson, led by the co-ordinator, strong relationships underpinned learning, high levels of confidence and secure subject knowledge were evident and a brisk pace and good questions ensured pupils make good gains in learning. These features also ensured that pupils were interested and involved and tried hard with their work.
138. Assemblies and class discussions play an important part in developing and modifying pupils' own beliefs and values and make a good contribution to their religious education. For example, they encourage pupils to consider issues of caring, which are part of life's experiences, discuss emotions, such as loneliness, and how their actions impact on others. By these means, religious education makes an important contribution to pupils' personal development.

139. The subject is securely represented and soundly led and there are clear plans for its further development. Visits, such as to a local church, Islamic centre and Sikh temple, enrich pupils' learning. Resources, such as religious objects, are used well to bring the subject to life for pupils. However, there are no consistent approaches to assessing pupils' progress as they move through the school. Work is rarely matched to pupils' needs with all pupils often being given the same work. The co-ordinator has not yet taken advantage of time given to monitor teaching and learning, pupils' work or planning to help her identify strengths and weaknesses. Pupils in different classes in the same year do not always receive the same experiences, which leads to differences in their levels of knowledge and understanding as they move through the school.