

INSPECTION REPORT

ARDEN FOREST INFANT SCHOOL

Bulkington, Bedworth

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique reference number: 130893

Headteacher: Miss K M S Ellis

**Lead inspector: John Williams
Dates of inspection: 8th – 10th March 2004**

**Inspection number: 255363
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996**

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	178
School address:	Weston Lane Bulkington Bedworth Warkwickshire CV12 9RT
Postcode:	
Telephone number:	024 7631 5913
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Bryant
Date of previous inspection:	06.07.98

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Arden forest infant school is located on the outskirts of the large rural village of Bulkington, approximately two miles from Bedworth. Currently there are 178 pupils on roll, which is slightly less than at the time of the last inspection. A large number of pupils (some 30 per cent) come from outside the immediate area of the school. Seven pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Approximately four per cent of the pupils claim free school meals, which is below the national average. Nine pupils (five per cent) are identified as having special educational needs, which is below the national average. These range from severe learning difficulties to speech and communication problems. Two pupils (one per cent) have statements of special educational need, which is below average. There are currently five traveller pupils on the roll. Pupils enter the school with a broad range of prior attainment which varies from year to year but is overall about average. An unusual feature of the school is the significant number of pupils who transfer in and out of the school at times other than normal admission times.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22516	John Williams	Lead inspector	Science, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education, personal, health, social education and citizenship.
9039	Bernard Eyre	Lay inspector	
23196	Sue Chesters	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, English as additional language, mathematics, information and communication technology.
30142	John Morris	Team inspector	Special educational needs, English, geography, history, religious education.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school. It provides a **very effective** education for its pupils and gives **very good** value for money. It has an excellent ethos. It has a truly inclusive philosophy and therefore values all of its pupils whatever their background or ability. Standards are good, pupils achieve well, teaching and learning are good and the school is very well led and managed.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are good in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and music and pupils achieve well.
- The school provides very well for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and as a result pupils have very good attitudes to school and behave very well.
- The school cares for its pupils well and provides them with very good support and guidance.
- The headteacher leads and manages the school very well. She is supported very effectively by the staff. Governors fulfil their role well.
- The school has very good links with parents and the community.
- It has a good curriculum and provides very good opportunities for enrichment. However, the school has recognised the need to link the subjects more closely and provide better overall curriculum leadership.

The school has effectively addressed the issues raised at the last inspection and has continued to improve its provision. Standards have risen, teaching and learning has improved as have teachers' planning for the curriculum. The accommodation and the school's grounds have been developed very well. The systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are well embedded in the daily work of the school and provide very useful information, which is used very successfully to provide targets for all pupils.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	B	B	B	C
writing	C	B	B	C
mathematics	B	B	C	D

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals

Overall pupils' achievement is **good**. The table above shows that the results of national tests and tasks in 2003 are above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. These results are in line with those of similar schools in reading and writing and below in mathematics. Children start school with a wide range of abilities which in most year groups are broadly average. They achieve well in the reception class and the majority are likely to reach the goals set for this age group in all areas of learning. About ten percent are set to exceed these goals. In Year 2 achievement accelerates with the result that pupils are likely to reach above average standards in English, mathematics, information and control technology and music and well above average standards in science, by the time they leave the school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because of the school's very good provision for them and the care it takes in providing work at suitable levels to challenge them. Those pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve very well at all times because of the support that they receive. Many pupils start school at times

other than normal admission times. Because the school has very good systems for assessing their ability, as they enter the school, they quickly settle. The work they are given is planned for their individual needs and enables them to achieve very well.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **very good**. Pupils behave **very well** in lessons and at play. They have very good attitudes to school and show very good respect for other people's feelings and beliefs. Relationships are very good. Attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. **Good teaching** enables pupils to learn successfully. The curriculum is good and very effectively enriched by opportunities for learning outside of the classroom. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good and supports very well pupils' personal development. The school is working towards linking subjects more closely and using skills such as those learned in information and communication technology across the curriculum. The school is outstandingly inclusive and cares passionately about its pupils. All staff are very supportive and compassionate. Their work impacts very successfully on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Partnerships with parents, other schools and the community are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance of the school is good. Leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and key staff are **very good**. The school has a very good headteacher who is totally committed to the school. She is supported very effectively by staff and governors all of whom share her vision for the work of the school. The governing body meets all statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The vast majority of parents are pleased with the school and support it very well. The pupils say that they like their school very much and are very happy to be there.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Strengthen the role of the overall curriculum leader in order to co-ordinate improvement and to develop the links between subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are **good** overall and pupils achieve **well**. At the end of Year 2, standards are above average in English, mathematics, information and communication technology and music and well above average in science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are steadily rising. Pupils achieve well.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well.
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language make very good progress.
- The school provides very well for those pupils who join the school other than at normal admission times and enables them to achieve very well.

Commentary

1. Because of the good quality teaching in the Foundation Stage, children achieve well in the reception classes and most are on course to achieve the goals set in each area of learning by the time they start Year 1. About ten per cent of this year's group will exceed the goals set in all areas of learning.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.8 (16.5)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.5 (15.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.5 (17.1)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 50 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Although achievement is good overall through Years 1 and 2 there is evidence that it slows in Year 1. Achievement accelerates in Year 2 and this year's Year 2 are achieving very well in English, mathematics and science, with correspondingly above average standards. Boys perform as well as girls, which is contrary to the national trend. This is testament to the school's outstanding inclusion policy, which treats all pupils as individuals and thus addresses their particular needs very effectively. Standards seen in information and communication technology and music are also above average. The table above shows that in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2003, results were above national averages in reading and writing and in line with the national average in mathematics.
3. Pupils identified as having special educational needs achieve very well. This is because:
 - they are very well supported by very good quality teaching assistants
 - their individual education plans address their needs very successfully
 - teachers group pupils very effectively in order to enable them to achieve good results in relation to their prior attainment.
4. A number of pupils enter the school with little or no English. These pupils are quickly assessed and work is planned to help them acquire English quickly. They achieve very well because of the very good support that they receive. Staff work hard encouraging pupils with English as an additional language to take part in all activities. They do not assume that pupils will not understand but place them in groups according to their natural ability thus enabling them to

achieve very well and reach good standards in all subjects alongside their peers. As a consequence, pupils have the confidence to 'have a go' and speak out in lessons and ask for help when they need it. This supports their learning very effectively and ensures that they achieve very well.

5. An increasing number of pupils join the school at other than normal admission times. Currently, nearly twenty five per cent of the pupils in Year 2 did not start school in the reception class. The school has very good systems for assessing these pupils as they start school and quickly slot them into school routines. Staff plan work to ensure pupils are working at the right level and receiving adequate challenge. Pupils have appropriate targets in English and mathematics and this means that they are enabled to achieve very well and reach the same standards as their peers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. The promotion of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also **very good**. Attendance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships and care for each other are very good.
- Pupils understand the school's routines very well and know what is expected of them.
- The school provides very well for pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

Commentary

6. This is a happy place where trust and confidence-building pervades the whole school day. The relationships that the pupils have with each other and the kindness they show to their less confident fellows are very good. Everybody keeps a watchful eye out for those who need help or reassurance. This is central to everything the school does to ensure that everyone makes time to offer kindly words and support when emotions or problems with lessons arise. Pupils enjoy coming to school because they feel loved and valued.
7. The pupils' behaviour and interest in their lessons is very good. Occasional awkward moments occur if the content of the lesson does not hold their attention fully but these are infrequent. Pupils know what is expected of them sufficiently well to be able to remind each other about the classroom rules. They know these rules well because they were involved in drawing them up. Pupil's complaints are listened to and addressed promptly and consistently.
8. Class discussions coupled with imaginative and lively assembly themes are used effectively to promote an understanding of right from wrong and how communities work together to respect other peoples' values and cultures. There are many opportunities for the pupils to express opinions. Discussions about moral issues enable the pupils to identify the difference between kindness and thoughtless acts and why it is wrong to be unkind. This is an improvement since the last inspection when provision for moral development was not as strong as other areas. Pupils new to the area or from other countries settle very quickly and they make dramatic steps in their learning. Pupils are encouraged to use their colleagues' native language when greeting them and this helps new pupils to feel special, regardless of their background.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	5.2
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	0.0
National data:	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attendance for the latest full reporting year (to May 2003) is satisfactory. However, in the current academic year attendance has improved and it is now above the average usually seen in schools of this type. The number of holidays taken during term time is low. Punctuality is good.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Any other ethnic group

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
162	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
7	0	0
5	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Teaching and learning are **good**. The curriculum is **good** although there is room for further improvement in links between subjects. There are **very good** opportunities for curriculum enrichment. The school takes **very good** care of its pupils and they feel valued and secure. There are **very good** links with parents and with the community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are **good** overall. The quality of assessment is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are very good and there is very strong teamwork.
- Staff have high expectations that pupils will behave well and work hard.
- Assessment of how well pupils are learning is very good.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 14 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	3	5	3	1	0	0

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

9. Relationships throughout the school are very good. The quality of teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is very good. All staff work very effectively together to ensure that all pupils get the help that they require. A number of teaching assistants have undertaken specific training to gain additional skills that enable them to contribute positively to pupils' progress. This has been particularly beneficial for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The way in which all staff work together means that all pupils are outstandingly well included in all aspects of school life.
10. Staff have very high expectations that pupils will behave very well. They use the school's behaviour policy successfully to manage pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils are very well behaved in lessons and at play, which enables them to concentrate on their learning and achieve well. Staff expect pupils to work hard at all times. They plan work very carefully so that activities are interesting for the pupils yet challenge individuals to a good level. They use a very good range of teaching methods to hold pupils' attention in lessons. This works very well and as a consequence, pupils concentrate for good lengths of time and achieve well. This is particularly evident in Year 2, where pupils are constantly challenged and encouraged with positive praise to do 'just that little bit more'. This results in the accelerated learning in Year 2 and the very good achievement culminating in good standards. Where teaching is less successful, pupils are not adequately challenged because teachers' expectations are not sufficiently high. Consequently, pupils make less progress.
11. Teachers have very good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. They regularly set tasks at the end of topics to see how well pupils have achieved. From the information they gather they set targets for each pupil or group of pupils. They share these with the pupils and constantly refer to them in lessons. Hence, pupils are well aware of how well they have done and what they have to do next to improve. Results from tests and tasks are analysed very efficiently. This gives staff guidance on what needs to be improved and support with what to plan for different subjects, to maintain or improve standards even further.

The curriculum

Educational provision for pupils is **good**. The school provides a relevant and challenging curriculum. Enrichment through extra curricular provision is **very good**. Pupils participate very well in music and arts activities. Accommodation is **very good**. This includes a very good library and ICT area. Resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good extra curricular activities, such as educational visits and using expertise from outside the school, greatly enrich provision.
- The school has identified the need to improve the co-ordination of the curriculum to provide better links between subjects through topics.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The school has very good accommodation which is organised imaginatively.
- The support pupils receive as they prepare to move to their next school.
- Staffing difficulties have reduced the effectiveness of the challenge of work for pupils in the current Year 1.

Commentary

12. Extra curricular activities are an important aspect of the life of the school. A range of after-school activities, include multi-games fitness activities, Top Sports, recorders, violin group, bell ringing and computers. The school is active in village life. For example, it was very involved in the Carnival last year. It has very good links to the elderly persons' complex and all ages worship in the church. The vicar is a valuable contributor to the curriculum, both in assemblies

and when involved in lessons such as demonstrating baptism. This gives learning a relevance to the pupils' lives. Other visitors include the police, fire service, postman and nurse, all linked to the topic 'people who help us'. Visits to extend the pupils' experiences include Warwick museum, the local shop, the baker to see how bread is baked, the transport museum in Coventry and the West Midlands Safari Park.

13. Subjects such as geography and history are organised around themes on a termly or half-termly basis. There are well planned links to literacy in these topics. For example, pupils gain confidence in using writing skills and finding out information from books. However, the overall co-ordination of these cross-curricular links is currently under developed. The school has recognised the need to develop more effective curriculum co-ordination.
14. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Considerable very good support and team work with teachers is provided by a team of teaching assistants to improve pupils' achievement, personal and social skills. There is clear evidence that the additional support given to pupils enables them to gain in confidence to participate successfully with the other pupils and also to meet their personal targets. Interaction is very good both within the classrooms and the playground. It was a pleasure to be present in the awards assembly when the statemented pupil and his friend received the award for teamwork. The special educational needs co-ordinator keeps good records of progress. The school's work on inclusion has been recognised by the DfES Reasonable Adjustment Project.
15. The accommodation is very good. The school environment indicates the pride the pupils and staff take in their school. Outstanding features are the murals in the boys' and girls' toilets designed by the pupils and painted by staff. The very good displays in the foyer and around the building provide a basis for learning and indicate clearly the achievements of pupils at all levels. Features of the accommodation which help promote learning are the siting of the new ICT suite alongside the very good library and the outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage.
16. There are very good links to the nearby Junior School to which the majority of pupils transfer. Joint projects have been funded by the local education authority, including pupils in Years 2 and 3 working together to write a story. There have been teacher exchanges and pupils from the Junior School have written letters to develop a buddy system for pupils in Year 2 as they transfer. Pupils in Year 2 have written their first impressions of the Junior School following a visit. These very good links all help to make transition more successful.
17. Long term absence of two teachers has resulted in the temporary appointment of supply staff. Although there has been continuity in the supply teachers appointed, evidence during the inspection shows that the challenge of work, particularly in Year 1 classes, does not always encourage or stretch the pupils' learning adequately. This is reflected in the standards of work seen and the progress pupils have made.

Care, guidance and support

The care and welfare provision in the school is **good**. The school fully meets its moral and legal responsibilities for the safety and welfare of its pupils. Appropriate training for all staff ensures proper support for medication, safety on outings and child protection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Care arrangements, especially child protection and medication are fully secure and pastoral support works very well because all adults work together closely
- Parents and their children who are new to the school are made welcome; every effort is made to ensure the settling in arrangement work well.
- Pupil's views are canvassed; they are valued and acted upon.

Commentary

18. Very good collaboration and mutual support ensures high standards of care to all pupils. The governors underpin this positive feature by giving due regard to security arrangements. The school gives very good support and advice, trusting relationships exist at every level and confidences are respected. Sensitive personal matters are handled with discretion. The pupils know how they are progressing and the arrangements the school makes to prepare the pupils for transfer to the next stage of their education are very good as are the school's induction arrangements for new pupils.
19. The way pupils' opinions and suggestions are acted upon generates a sense of ownership. For example, pupils are continually watchful to ensure that the recently improved toilets are kept neat and tidy. There is a weekly award by the pupils for the "best kept" unit.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **very good** links with the parents and the local community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents value highly the care taken to ensure that pupils settle and that there is continuing pastoral care of a high order
- Despite a regular flow of newsletters, the provision of consultation evening and good quality annual reports, some parents would like to have better information about their child's progress.
- The school "reaches out" into the community so that the school and its pupils are highly regarded.
- They are supportive of the functions the school organises and they are enthusiastic fundraisers.

Commentary

20. The parents like the school and they are pleased with the standards and values it promotes. Newsletters, the prospectus and information provided by the governors enable the discerning reader to be fully informed. The annual pupils' progress reports reflect the individual and they contain a range of examples of what has been achieved, teachers keep copies in their classrooms to assist in their planning. However, the reports do not define the next targets for learning and some parents say that they would value more information about their childrens' progress.
21. The school is highly regarded in the area, strong links with the church and the older population bridge the generation gap. A recent presentation, (with hospitality included) of music hall songs gave the pupils an excellent opportunity to display their musical prowess. This also enabled them to celebrate the completion of a fundraising project for a local charity. The school's reputation is such that about a third of the pupils come from outside the immediate area. Letters from parents confirm that the reputation of the school is far reaching and that settling in arrangements are rated highly.
22. The school benefits greatly from the readiness of parents to help to raise funds via the 'Friends Association' and the support given to social and fundraising events does much to enhance the learning environment, headphones in the ICT suite is just one recent example. Considerable effort is made by the parents and friends to decorate a float for the summer carnival.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is **very well** led and managed. Governance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The highly committed headteacher provides the school with very good leadership.
- Governors offer the school effective support.
- The school has very effective systems of strategic planning which support its very good management structures.

Commentary

23. The headteacher gives the school dedicated and determined leadership. She is totally committed and has a very clear vision for the future development of the school. This involves very high aspirations for each and every child. She successfully shares these with staff and governors and the result is a very high commitment to success from the whole school community. She is fully involved in teaching and so is able to offer teaching and other staff full support in their quest to improve their skills, and to develop as professionals. The headteacher is very successful in evaluating the school's performance and then developing strategies to bring about improvement. She motivates staff well and they grow in confidence. The whole staff are united in their desire to provide equality of opportunity for all and the headteacher has made sure that inclusion is very high in the school's priorities.
24. The co-ordinator for special educational needs offers very good leadership. She ensures that all pupils who are assessed as having additional educational needs receive very good provision and are included outstandingly well in the life of the school. She ensures that good records of progress are kept
25. Governors make a good contribution to the success of the school by offering strong and knowledgeable support. Many governors are very experienced. They are fully committed to making the school increasingly successful and share the headteacher's ambitions in this. There is a good committee structure. Committees meet regularly and are well trained. Governors are well involved in strategic planning and formulating policies. They meet their statutory duties and responsibilities well. They make the most of the very good quality information the school makes available to them in reaching their decisions. Many visit the school on a regular basis and have curriculum links with teachers. They know well the relative strengths and weaknesses of the school. This helps them to fulfil the role of critical friend effectively.
26. Management is very effective. The headteacher rigorously analyses available performance data and this gives managers a clear insight into pupils' progress. The deputy head and senior staff are actively involved in helping the school fulfil its vision and strategic objectives. They seek constantly to evaluate the school's performance and find ways to improve. The school has established very good systems of performance management. These enable the school to set clear targets for improvement for teaching and non-teaching staff, and this is instrumental in bringing about improvement. Training is clearly linked to this process. New members of staff are provided with good induction arrangements. The management is very keen to support and retain successful staff and pays attention to the workload and effective deployment of staff. Teaching assistants are regarded as being particularly vital in supporting the work of teachers and their deployment is managed very well. Systems of financial and resource management are strong. Regular monitoring of the school's expenditure is carefully carried out and the principles of best value, therefore, are central to the school's management and use of resources. There are no obvious barriers to further improvement.

27. The school has very effective systems of day-to-day management which enable it to run very smoothly. The school secretary is efficient and offers good support to the headteacher and classroom staff.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	329,816	Balance from previous year	15,301
Total expenditure	328,984	Balance carried forward to the next	16,133
Expenditure per pupil	2,238		

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Foundation Stage¹

The provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Children start school in the September of the academic year in which they are five. At entry they have a wide range of ability in all areas of learning which varies from year to year. Overall, attainment is broadly average. Since the last inspection, attainment at entry shows a downward trend. This is particularly noticeable in the children's communication and mathematical skills. Children achieve well in the reception year. It is likely that most of this year's group will reach the goals set in all areas of learning by the time they start Year 1. About one tenth are on course to exceed the goals.

Teaching, in all areas of learning, is consistently good and often very good. Thus children are successful learners and achieve well. This is because:

- relationships are very good and all staff work very successfully together making a very strong team
- planning is meticulous and links all areas of learning together very effectively
- staff make their expectations very clear so that children are in no doubt what they are expected to do and why
- the school day is very well organised and activities lead seamlessly into one another.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The Foundation Stage curriculum has been implemented very well and very good improvements have been made to the outdoor learning area.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children settle quickly into school routines and learn to become independent.
- Staff have high expectations that children will behave well.

Commentary

28. Children settle quickly into school routines. They learn to look after equipment and leave things tidy for the next person to use. For example, children using the taped stories in the listening corner carefully put the headphones back in their place so that they were ready for the next person. Children learn to help each other to become independent. For example, boys and girls helped each other put on and fasten their painting aprons before starting sticking and gluing activities. They do this as a matter of routine, without having to be asked to do so by staff.
29. All staff expect that children will behave well and try hard at the tasks set for them. Because they make this very clear to the children, they respond very well and concentrate for good periods of time. This aids their ability to learn and means that they achieve well. Staff expect children to

¹ There are six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage; personal , social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. There are average goals set in each of these areas which it is expected children will reach by the time they start Year 1.

work and play together sensibly and so they do. Children share resources and work alongside each other well. The more socially adept share their work and ideas with their friends and help each other complete tasks. For example, two children working in the graphics area shared the contents of the 'author's box' very carefully and produced good 'writing' together.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff place great emphasis on developing children's listening skills.
- They make reading and writing activities fun for the children.

Commentary

30. Children develop their listening and speaking skills successfully because staff encourage them to listen carefully to what they, and other children, say. They question children effectively to encourage them to think and give logical answers using correct speech patterns. When reading 'big books' as a group activity, staff encourage the children to look and listen and respond appropriately. This way, children learn to recognise a range of common words and to spell out simple words such as 'pig', 'pot' and 'mum'.
31. Staff make reading and writing activities fun. They are very good role models and demonstrate what they expect while working alongside the children. This encourages the children to 'have a go' because they have seen adults succeed. For example, after reading the story of the 'Three Pigs', the teacher worked in the outside area with groups of children retelling and role-playing the story. The groups, with the teacher, wore suitable masks for the different characters and went from model house to model house re-enacting the story. The children enjoyed this tremendously and, as a consequence, read the story and picked out key words when they returned to work from the books.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff demonstrate that mathematics is fun.
- Mathematical concepts are made relevant to children's experiences.

Commentary

32. Children develop good skills of counting and sorting. They use accurate mathematical language to describe shape and colour. They enjoy their work because staff make the activities fun. For example, when counting to 30, staff count too, and every fifth number all hold out five fingers to emphasise that number. Children enjoy this as a game but the more able soon recognise that they are counting in fives.
33. Staff make sorting and matching activities relevant for the children. For example, when making repeating patterns with a variety of equipment, the teacher showed the children a range of materials such as cloth and wrapping paper, which had strong geometric patterns on them. This encouraged the children to produce their own patterns because they could see the relevance of patterning in everyday designs.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have many good opportunities to investigate materials and develop their designing and making skills.
- Staff encourage children to learn about their own and other peoples' cultures.

Commentary

34. Staff provide a very wide range of opportunities to extend children's understanding of the world around them. These range from activities enabling children to explore the properties of sand and water and experimenting with different malleable materials to making and designing their own models and using computers. Following a good reading and language session, children went off excitedly to make their own models of the 'three pigs houses' using card, balsa-wood, straw and sand. They talked together about their work retelling the story as they made their models. Others searched for buried treasure in a tray of bark chippings using magnets. All were absorbed in the activities and moved their knowledge and understanding forward during the session.
35. Children learn about their own and other peoples' cultures and begin to show respect for customs and traditions. In a delightful session in the hall, the vicar demonstrated some of his work by baptising two baby dolls. The children showed remarkable interest in the session and enjoyed naming the babies and acting as godparents. They learned a considerable amount about Christian traditions through baptising one of the 'babies' Michael Jackson. All were totally involved and joined in enthusiastically, answering questions and making suggestions. One boy's suggestion was to name the child in the 'name of the father and of the son and of the moon'.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have very good opportunities to use a wide range of tools and materials.
- The outside learning area is used very effectively.

Commentary

36. Staff link activities for all areas of learning very well and this enables children to use regularly a wide range of tools and materials to develop their co-ordination skills. They use pencils, crayons, scissors, paint and glue brushes in writing, painting and making activities. They become adept with such tools learning to manipulate them efficiently and with increasing control.
37. Very good use is made of the outside areas. There is a good range of equipment in the main courtyard for children to explore which helps them to develop their physical skills. They climb and explore the large wooden frame apparatus and use wheeled and 'pushable' equipment on the well laid-out track in 'Bob the Builder's' yard. This provision is enhanced by physical development sessions in the main hall when children explore the use of space and improve their co-ordination skills using a range of small and large equipment. For example, children develop good ball skills throwing and kicking a variety of different sized balls..

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff plan a wide range of activities to stimulate children's imagination.

Commentary

38. Staff encourage children to involve themselves in a wide range of activities which help to develop their imagination and creative abilities. For example, there are many opportunities to act out their own imaginary scenes in the Post Office area or in 'Bob the Builder's' yard. Staff join them in these sessions providing props such as hard hats or masks to encourage the role play. Children enjoy musical sessions and learn a good range of songs and rhymes, which support their work in other areas such as mathematics. They explore sound through using percussion instruments. They explore colour and shape by choosing materials for their own designs in collage work, painting and model making.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Stimulating activities in all aspects of English, particularly in Year 2, result in attainment at the end of Year 2 being above average.
- Reading and writing are developed very well.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- A very good library which includes an ICT suite and promotes learning.

Commentary

39. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and overall is good. When teaching is good or better the pupils are stimulated to develop confidence and skills when using a broad range of vocabulary. This was particularly evident in Year 2 classes. In one lesson, the teacher played back a message on her answer phone from Miss Honeydrizzle linked to the pupils' work on "The Enormous Crocodile". The imaginative and exciting teaching encouraged the pupils' interest. In another Year 2 group in guided reading, pupils gained skills and confidence to find information from texts. One pupil working with a partner finding out facts about a rainbow said, "a rainbow is a beautiful arch of colours in the sky", to which her partner added, for the benefit of the inspector, "an arch is half a circle". There is clear evidence of pupils enjoying work and gaining pleasure from achieving well. However, when teaching is less stimulating, the challenge to promote learning is less evident. By the end of Year 2, attainment is good and above national averages. Standards have risen since the last inspection.

40. The development and encouragement of reading is a key area of emphasis and promotion at all levels within the school. Very good records are kept with details of sight vocabulary, phonic knowledge, self correction, intonation, comprehension, inference and interpretation. Pupils are encouraged to take books home to read with parents and carers. In addition the school encourages parents to comment in the home reading record book. In one book the parents wrote, "..... enjoyed this book. She found it very funny that the dragon always won". In addition, parents are encouraged to send in details of books pupils have read at home. This is linked to

achievement awards for reading. Teaching assistants play an important role in improving reading levels; for example, through the Early Literacy Support (ELS) programme for pupils in Year 1. This enables small groups of pupils to catch up on basic skills and thus improve their confidence in other lessons. Pupils are encouraged to become independent readers, and they take pleasure in reading.

41. Opportunities to develop writing skills are very good, including pupils writing book reviews and also reading journals. In one Year 2 class the teacher has encouraged writing by developing a story based on "Rosie Bear". The response is excellent. It has helped with descriptive writing as the pupils contribute to a 'feelings window' about Rosie. They discuss what type of activities will make her happy and who are her family. Parents are also involved as each child has the opportunity to take Rosie Bear home and then write in the class diary. Learning is brought alive. One pupil said, "I took Rosie Bear home, and went with my Dad to the Poundshop and we bought Rosie a doll. I really liked taking her home and writing about it in the class book". This activity actively involves boys and girls in their own learning. They have a say in what they have to do and it helps them to enjoy writing.
42. The co-ordination of English is very good. The school have fully and actively implemented the National Literacy Strategy. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching, planning and samples of work from each age group. Individual targets for personal evaluation are established in Year 2. In Year 1 there are small group targets. The short term targets at the front of books are written by pupils in consultation with teachers. This promotes learning and pupils' awareness of their own progress very effectively. Individual targets are regularly reviewed and this encourages pupils to improve their levels of achievement by celebrating success. Resources for learning are good.
43. The library has recently been refurbished and relocated to a central position within the school. The previous report noted that "some pupils know that the library books are coded in order to find them easily, but they have little idea of the Dewey system". The library is now a well equipped resource. The posters produced by last year's Year 2 have promoted very good understanding of the Dewey system. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. The library, which includes the new ICT suite, is an excellent centre to encourage enjoyment of reading and research skills.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

44. The development of literacy skills within other subject areas and topic themes is very well planned. The co-ordinator meets with other teachers and teaching assistants to develop literacy skills. Workbooks in a range of themes show evidence of good progress in writing, presentation, spelling and punctuation. Use of ICT is encouraged, in particular, finding out information on the Internet. Speaking and listening skills are developed in all lessons. Teachers at all levels encourage discussion and emphasise the important skills for speaking and listening. Very good levels of speaking and listening were observed in a Year 2 lesson in guided reading when pupils spoke with confidence about facts that they had learnt from independent reading.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good and standards are above average by the end of Year 2.
- The use of assessment is very good.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

Commentary

45. Results in the 2003 national tests for seven-year-olds were in line with the national picture. However, they were below the results of similar schools. This was because, although 100 per cent of pupils reached the expected level 2, fewer than average reached the higher level 3. Even so this was good achievement, considering that many had started school with comparatively underdeveloped mathematical skills .
46. Pupils in the current Year 2 achieve well and standards are above average. This is an improvement since the last inspection when they were average overall. Pupils achieve very well when investigating numbers and using and applying the four basic rules of number to solve problems. They do this because teachers:
- group pupils according to their ability so that they are challenged appropriately
 - plan and organise their lessons meticulously to ensure consistently good learning
 - include a wide range of practical activities in lessons to allow pupils to be actively involved in their learning
 - make the activities they provide relevant to everyday life so that pupils learn in a joined-up way.
 - These factors came together in an excellent Year 2 lesson.

An excellent lesson for the lower ability set in Year 2.

Pupils learned rapidly to add three amounts together

After a very good, lively mental warm up session the teacher explained very clearly a range of strategies to help pupils add three numbers together. The pupils then moved to a variety of interesting practical activities involving buying and selling articles worth different amounts. The work was very well differentiated so that all pupils were very successfully challenged. For example, the most able in the group worked with objects worth up 20p and began to record their sums. The least able of the group worked with lower amounts supported most effectively by teaching assistants. All pupils achieved very well during the lesson which was buzzy and purposeful as pupils shared ideas and worked collaboratively. In the excellent plenary it was noticeable how well the pupils' knowledge and understanding of number bonds had moved forward. All had enjoyed the lesson and this was epitomised by one girl who bounced up and down with excitement at the end when the teacher said 'and tomorrow you will be working with even harder numbers'!

47. Teachers mark and assess pupils' work very effectively. The information they gather from assessment tasks is used very successfully to provide individual targets for pupils. These targets are kept in the front of the pupils' mathematics books and teachers and pupils refer to them regularly. In this way pupils can look back at what they have achieved and see what it is they have to do next to improve.
48. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator identifies where improvements can be made in provision by analysing pupils' test results. She has a clear vision for further improvements. This includes monitoring teaching and modelling lessons.

Mathematics across the curriculum

49. Pupils use their numeracy skills satisfactorily in other subjects, such as science and information and communication technology. However, wider use could be made of mathematics to support learning across the curriculum. The school has identified this and is working to make links with other subjects where they can be naturally included.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by Year 2 are very good.
- The curriculum is good, although practical and investigative work could be developed further.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Commentary

50. Pupils attain very good standards by the end of Year 2. This represents very good achievement by many pupils and is a marked improvement since the last inspection. All pupils achieve the national expectation, with a sizeable proportion attaining at a higher level. This is outstandingly good achievement when compared with schools in similar contexts. The school is aware however that attainment could be even higher. The curriculum provided is good and pupils receive their full National Curriculum entitlement. However, opportunities for pupils to design and carry out their own investigations and develop their scientific thinking could be further developed. As a result, teachers begin to plan more practical and investigative opportunities into lessons.

51. It is evident, from a thorough scrutiny of pupils' work and from the small sample of lessons seen, that teaching is very good and results in very good learning. This is because of the very good

- systems of assessment in place which means that teachers know exactly what pupils need to learn
- planning which indicates what different groups of pupils are to learn
- range of teaching strategies which in the best lessons means that pupils are actively involved in experimenting and investigating.

In an excellent Year 2 lesson pupils learned about how animals grow and develop. Excellent differentiation meant that pupils were given work matched precisely to what they needed. Materials and resources were readily available and there was excellent teamwork between the teacher and teaching assistant as they encouraged the pupils to work independently "like scientists who find out for themselves." This approach lead to learning of outstandingly good quality. The pupils were enthused and many of them undertook independent research at home following the lesson.

52. Due to prolonged absence the school does not have a permanent subject leader. However senior staff are aware of the need to improve the school's provision for investigative science. A focus on this aspect is planned in the school development programme for later in the year.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average.
- The ICT area is used very well.
- The subject is led and managed very well and very good use is made of expert and experienced staff.
- ICT is used effectively as a tool in other subjects although the school has identified room for further improvements.

Commentary

53. Pupils reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were average. Pupils use ICT to help them to generate, edit and present their own work. They understand that ICT is used in a variety of everyday circumstances. For example, they are familiar with its use in everyday equipment such as cassette players and compact disc players, which they use regularly. They order instructions to make robotic toys move in given directions. They enjoy talking about and explaining their work and are keen to demonstrate what they have done. There is much evidence in their work books and in displays around school to show the wide variety of activities they have experienced.
54. Good improvement has been made in the provision of software and hardware since the last inspection. There is now a very good ICT area conveniently placed alongside the library. This is extremely well used. Staff encourage pupils to work there at all times of the day and plan opportunities for its use in many lessons.
55. The subject is led and managed very successfully. Since the last inspection the confidence and skills of the staff have grown considerably. The co-ordinator facilitates very effectively opportunities for staff to increase their knowledge and understanding of the subject. A very well-qualified and expert teaching assistant provides in-service training for all staff and works with pupils on a regular basis supporting their learning very productively. As a result, the pupils' skills improve rapidly and they achieve good standards. There is also a first-rate ICT club which pupils say they thoroughly enjoy. The work undertaken during this club time is very high quality.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

56. Although ICT is used well as a tool in other subjects, the school has identified the need to extend this work even further. Good evidence was seen of ICT being used to support mathematics and artwork. However, staff are planning further improvements and building greater links between subjects.

HUMANITIES

In humanities, work was sampled in **history**, **geography** and **religious education**, with only one lesson seen in religious education. Judgements in these subjects are based on an examination of children's work, discussion with pupils and teachers, and examination of documentation.

History

57. History teaching is based upon themes of study. There is a different focus each half term. Pupils in Year 1 compare houses in the neighbourhood of the school with Victorian houses. This is within the overall theme of food and kitchens. Evidence shows that pupils gain experience of handling artefacts. In Year 2, pupils complete work on transport and movement. There are very good links to literacy, science (the use of power) and numeracy. A visit to the transport museum in Coventry very effectively stimulated learning for this topic. Work in books showed how graphs were used to illustrate what pupils considered were their favourite parts of the museum visit. Higher achieving pupils gain additional experience of extended writing and develop their vocabulary well. Overall co-ordination is good. There has been good progress since the last inspection. The co-ordinator is aware that curricular links within themes require more detailed planning to promote better understanding.

Geography

58. Geography teaching is based on themes of study. In Year 1 the aim is to raise pupils' awareness of their environment. In Year 2, work is based on the imaginary Isle of Struay.

Pupils compare the location of Bulkington to their ideal location for Struay. Work is very well presented which stimulates learning and pupils are encouraged to use their imagination. There are very good links to map work, numeracy, literacy and in particular cultural awareness. Several pupils in the school come from Nepal and one class has used the Internet to find out information about Nepal. This really brought their learning alive because it had meaning for them all. The co-ordinator is keen to develop the teaching of geography and strengthen planned links with other subject areas through topics.

Religious education (RE)

Provision in religious education (RE) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is very well linked to other subjects, in particular personal, social and health education and citizenship.
- RE provides a good link to cultural development.
- Pupils achieve well although the quality of teaching is inconsistent.

Commentary

59. In the main, particularly in Year 2, very good links are made with other subjects. Pupils are encouraged to see the relevance of how they live through themes such as helping others, sharing, belonging together, meeting people and growing and changing. Close links are developed with the community in particular the local residential home for the elderly and the local church. In a school assembly the local vicar captured the thoughts of the pupils as he linked the parable of the wise man and the foolish man to tales of 'Bob the Builder' and the need to build on firm foundations.
60. Pupils study a range of topics within themes using stories and beliefs from a wide range of faiths, including Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Sikh and Muslim. A Year 2 class brought their special books to school. One pupil, of Nepalese background who is bi-lingual, proudly showed the class her Nepalese book of stories and beautiful illustrations. Another pupil brought in her copy of the Bible.
61. No judgement can be made about overall quality of teaching as only one lesson was observed during the inspection. This lesson lacked the stimulation and planning to develop pupils' learning and understanding effectively. However, analysis of the work available in books, displays of work and talking to pupils indicates that achievement is overall good

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education (PE)

Little teaching was seen in **art and design, design and technology, music and physical education**. However, inspectors spoke to subject leaders about their work in managing these subjects and scrutinised their planning. They also spoke to pupils about the work they had done and looked closely at completed work in books and on display.

62. It is evident that **art and design** and **design and technology** play an important role in the curriculum of the school. In **art and design**, pupils are increasingly encouraged to choose from a wide range of media for their work. Skills are taught progressively and well. Particularly good examples of close observational work using a variety of media were on display, as were examples of pupils work imitating the work of famous artists such as Monet, William Morris and

Kandinsky. In **design and technology** lessons pupils pursue a series of tasks designed to develop their proficiency in a series of skills. They learn to use tools and to use a range of materials. Thus pupils, with the enthusiastic help of staff design and manufacture puppets and then thoughtfully evaluate them. Stimulating and attractive displays of pupils' artwork, and models, are to be seen around school and considerably enhance the school environment. Pupils speak with genuine pride at seeing their work displayed.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Music is very important in the daily life of the school.
- Pupils achieve good standards.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

Commentary

63. Music is carefully chosen to enhance the daily life of the school. Staff encourage pupils to listen to a wide range of musical styles. They do this in a variety of ways such as by selecting a composer of the month and playing that composer's music at assembly times. During the inspection, pupils were enjoying listening to music by Holst. Pupils listened carefully to 'The Planets' at the end of assemblies and enjoyed hearing about the composer's life. As they come into the hall for assemblies, pupils join in eagerly with the taped music playing. Staff choose songs for this occasion that are relevant to the theme of the assembly and which are fun to sing. Thus, pupils enter the hall happily, settle quickly and sing enthusiastically. This sets a joyous and special atmosphere for collective worship.
64. Pupils achieve good standards. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were average. Pupils sing tunefully both to a piano accompaniment and to taped music. Their diction is clear and they sing a good variety of songs with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Although no lessons were observed, it is clear from displays around school, from pupils work, their performances in assemblies and from teachers' planning that standards in both composing and performing are above average. For example, pupils play the handbells, following a graphic score. They play accurately keeping the rhythm, following a conductor and listening to each other. They listen to music in lessons and respond to what they hear by drawing pictures of how the music makes them feel. Some very good interpretations of Holst's Mars and Venus were seen during the inspection. Pupils had clearly expressed how the two pieces had made them feel. They used pastels and crayons to draw patterns demonstrating the mood of the music. Several pupils had, quite independently, drawn large, strong zig-zag dark coloured crayon patterns for Mars and gentle, fluid pastel curved patterns for Venus. They used a range of words such as angry and frightened for Mars and sleepy and calm for Venus.
65. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator has a clear and exciting vision for developing the subject. She is planning ways to further develop pupils' listening skills through music to support work in other subjects. Resources are good and there is an appropriate focus on world instruments and music from other cultures.

Physical education

66. Teachers plan their **physical education** lessons very carefully, have a range of tasks for the pupils to do and know exactly what they want them to achieve. Pupils have access to their full National Curriculum entitlement. Lessons are planned with good regard to health and safety and pupils understand the benefits to health of regular exercise. Good levels of enthusiasm are evident in pupils' attitudes. They are very keen to attend the sports activities that are provided for them after school. These enhance the physical education curriculum and provide opportunities for those pupils who show promise, to develop their skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**.

67. The school has a very good policy and scheme of work for personal, social and health education and citizenship. These fully meet requirements and enhance pupils' learning considerably. Very good links are also made with subjects such as religious education. These subjects give very good support to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has recently been successful in achieving the "Healthy Schools" Silver Award. It is also justly proud of its regular courses in road safety.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).

