

INSPECTION REPORT

BLAKESLEY HALL PRIMARY

Stechford, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103300

Headteacher: Lynn Thompson

Lead inspector: Peter Sudworth

Dates of inspection: November 24th- 27th, 2003

Inspection number: 255538

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	621
School address:	Yardley Green Road, Stechford Birmingham
Postcode:	B33 8TH
Telephone number:	0121 7832148
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Janet Rowley
Date of previous inspection:	27th April, 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This larger than average primary school with 21 classes is situated in Stechford in south-east Birmingham and has 621 boys and girls on roll aged 4 to 11 years. Whilst most pupils are of white British heritage, approaching half the pupils are from other ethnic groups, the largest minority group being Asian Pakistani of which there are 109 pupils. Almost one half of the homes that serve the area are rented properties and the proportion of homes without any earned income at 48 per cent is higher than that for Birmingham as a whole. Thirty-three per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, well above the national average. A large number of the pupils speak English as an additional language, the most frequently spoken languages are Urdu and Punjabi, and a small number are at an early stage in learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average. One hundred and twenty-two pupils have special educational needs and include pupils with learning, social, emotional and behavioural problems, speech and communication difficulties and autism. They include nine pupils who have statements because they have more profound learning problems. The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school at times other than the start of the academic year is about average. Overall, the attainment of the pupils on entry is well below average. During the inspection two of the year leaders were absent sick and another teacher was on maternity leave. Alternative arrangements had to be made for their classes.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2700	Peter Sudworth	Lead inspector	Science; Design and technology; Physical education; Music; English as an additional language.
12536	Sylvia Bullerwell	Lay inspector	
30205	Therese Kenna	Team inspector	English; Art and design; Geography; Special educational needs.
14991	Alan Hardwicke	Team inspector	Mathematics; Information and communication technology (ICT); Religious education.
29263	Florence Clarke	Team inspector	Foundation stage; History; Personal, social and health education.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a good quality of education. It is very well led by the headteacher and it is successful in providing a safe and secure place of learning. The school has many good features, including the overall good quality of teaching and the very detailed and well planned monitoring of teaching and learning. Pupils build soundly on their well below average attainment on entry. The children make a good start to their education in the foundation stage. Pupils make particularly good progress in Year 6. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's very good leadership, the very good support of the senior deputy, the work of the senior management team and the chair of governor's devotion to the work of the school;
- The overall good quality of teaching and the particular strength of teaching in the foundation stage and Year 6, though the quality is weaker in Year 5;
- The attainment of boys in Years 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics has been much less good than the girls but boys make up much of the lost ground in the juniors;
- Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum;
- The very good arrangements to monitor teaching and learning and strategic planning;
- The very good assessment arrangements and the monitoring of pupils' progress;
- The good care taken of the pupils and the concern for their welfare;
- Some inadequacies in the provision for pupils' spiritual development, both across the curriculum and in opportunities for worship;
- Insufficient books to enthuse the pupils further as readers and the lack of a library to develop pupils' reference skills.
- Some unsatisfactory attendance and punctuality because some parents do not ensure that their children attend school regularly enough and their children's progress is adversely affected.

The school has made **satisfactory progress since the last inspection.** There are better opportunities for physical activity in the foundation stage. The book provision for the literacy hour is much improved and well organised but the amount of books for general reading has not increased enough. Teachers' assessments are more accurate. Attainment at the end of the reception year is lower than that reported previously and reflects the change in the ability of the cohort.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			Similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	D	C	C
Mathematics	C	D	D	D
Science	C	D	C	D

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2. The grades in the above tables, except for similar schools at Year 2 have been put into the next bracket because of the demographic effects, the rate of mobility, the large number of pupils with English as an additional language and the above average percentage of pupils with special educational needs.*

***Pupils achieve soundly overall** and make satisfactory progress in most subjects and **achieve well** in English. They do not, however, progress at a consistent rate. They make good progress in the foundation stage and in Year 6 because of the substantial amounts of good and very good teaching in those parts of the school. Their progress is slower in Year 5 because of the poorer attitudes to learning in these classes and the less stimulating teaching. Pupils reach the expectations for their age in the local agreed syllabus for religious education by ages seven and 11 and make sound progress in this subject. There was not enough evidence to judge the pupils' achievements in most of the practical subjects or in history and geography because of the school's time-tabling arrangements and the inspection focus, but from physical education lessons observed in Years 3 to 6, pupils' attainment is in line with expectations.*

Pupils' personal qualities, including their moral, social and cultural development are nurtured well, though the provision for pupils' spiritual development is less good. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to their work are **good** in the main. A minority of pupils do not always apply themselves as well as they should and they can affect the progress of others. Whilst most pupils are punctual, significant numbers are late. Pupils' attendance is **poor** and well below the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning observed were **good** overall. Three-fifths of all lessons were good or better. However, evidence indicates that there is much pupil and staff change and recruitment of new staff is difficult. These factors, combined with unsatisfactory attendance rates and unsatisfactory accommodation, affect the continuity in pupils' learning, the rate of their overall progress and their achievements. The very best teachers work hard to overcome these difficulties and obtain much success in progressing the children's learning. The teachers' very good assessments of pupils' progress help them to plan appropriate work for their different needs. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. A well organised curriculum and a wide range of extra-curricular activities support pupils' interest in school. The staff care for the pupils well. The school has good links with the parents and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of both leadership and management is very good. The headteacher leads the school **very effectively** and there are some **outstanding** procedures for strategic planning and monitoring pupils' progress, which keep the teachers alert to the pupils' levels of attainment. She is very well supported through the very good work of the senior deputy headteacher. The work of subject leaders is **good** in the main. The governing body is well led by the chair of governors, who works extremely hard on a daily basis as a volunteer in the school. She encourages and supports new governors and helps them to understand their roles, carefully guiding and supporting them. The work of the governing body is **satisfactory** and fulfils most of its statutory responsibilities but needs to ensure that better provision is made for collective worship.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views about the school. They state that their children like school and that they are kept well informed about their children's progress. They appreciate the work of the headteacher and her staff and value the way their children are made to work hard and helped to mature as individuals. The children like their teachers and find them friendly, fair and funny.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- Take steps to help boys attain more highly in Years 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics;
- Promote better use of ICT across the curriculum;
- Improve the provision for pupils' spiritual development;

- Increase the book provision in the juniors to enthuse the pupils in good reading habits and develop a library to help pupils develop their reference skills.
- Seek out successful practice to improve the rate of attendance and to promote better punctuality.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- The governing body must ensure that there is a daily collective act of worship, which is broadly of a Christian character over the course of each term.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The children achieve **well** in the foundation stage and in Year 6. In the rest of the school, pupils' achievement is **sound** with some variation. Pupils achieve **well** from a low base on entry in English. They achieve **well** in investigational science in Years 3 to 6 and **soundly** in mathematics and ICT, although their current attainment in these subjects is **below average**. Pupils with special educational needs, English as an additional language and more able pupils achieve in line with their capabilities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The progress pupils make in the foundation stage;
- Boys achieve well in Years 3 to 6 but do not attain as highly as the girls in Years 1 and 2;
- Pupils achieve well in English and investigational science.

1 When pupils enter the reception class, their attainment is well below that expected, particularly in their communication, language and literacy skills, in their mathematical ability and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. The children achieve well in the foundation stage but, despite making good progress in their learning as a result of the well planned activities, many pupils will not reach the expectations for the start of Year 1. Most will reach them in their creative, physical and personal and social development. However, they will not be able to make up the gap sufficiently in their communication, language and literacy work, in mathematics and in their knowledge and understanding of the world to reach the expectations for the end of the reception year. This attainment is lower than that reported previously but reflects the change in the ability of the cohort, which contains more pupils with special educational needs.

2 Over the last three years at age seven in national tests, both boys and girls have done less well in reading, writing and mathematics when compared with boys and girls nationally. The girls have been doing better than the boys in all these aspects. The gap in reading between the boys and girls is about the national difference but it is slightly wider in writing and mathematics in favour of the girls. Boys have attained much less well than the girls in Years 1 and 2. However, the boys make up much of the difference in between Years 3 and 6. Their average results over the last three years indicate that they are just ahead of the girls in mathematics and science by age 11. The overall average attainment of the Year 6 girls has been better than the boys in English, though the gap by age 11 is much narrower than that nationally. Pupils' levels of attainment are similar to the results obtained in the national tests immediately after the last inspection.

3 In the most recent national tests, the school met its targets. The percentage of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected level or above went up significantly from the previous year in English from 58 per cent to 75 percent but more slightly in mathematics and science. Year 6 pupils attained very well by comparison with similar schools in English, well in science and satisfactorily in mathematics. The number of pupils reaching the higher level increased significantly in all three subjects. There is no significant difference in performance between different minority ethnic groups. However, in the main, white boys do not achieve as well as other groups and they are more numerous proportionately in the special educational needs groups. Several of them have emotional difficulties, which affect their rate of learning. Higher attaining pupils are challenged well due to the setting arrangements, the good structure to the series of lessons and the detailed lesson planning and generally make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good gains towards targets in their individual education plans, and this is the result of good teaching by both teachers and learning support assistants.

4 In the main, pupils achieve well in their English work in Years 1 to 6 from a low base when they begin the National Curriculum at the start of Year 1. However, the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language mean that their attainment levels are overall below average by the end of Years 2 and 6. A significant proportion of the pupils in Year 6 were not at the school in Year 1, indicating some disruption to their education. Pupils achieve well in their reading. By age seven, the more able readers are beginning to put expression into their reading but the proportion of pupils who read fluently, accurately and expressively is below that normally found for their age. By Year 6, a greater proportion of pupils read fluently, show interest in different authors and can talk about books they have read but there are significant numbers of pupils who still struggle with both their reading and writing. Handwriting is satisfactory. Many Year 6 pupils spell words accurately, especially those that are easily sounded out or follow common spelling patterns but they have more problems with words, which do not follow a regular pattern. Their speaking and listening skills are generally sound for their age by the end of Years 2 and 6, though some pupils find listening more difficult, particularly those with emotional and behavioural problems.

5 Pupils achieve satisfactorily in mathematics throughout the school, though their overall attainment is below average at ages seven and 11. The attainment has fallen since the last inspection as result of variation between year groups, past flaws in teacher assessment, more aspiring families moving out of the area and staff changes. In science, pupils make good progress in understanding the investigational process in many classes, though it is less good in Year 5. They achieve well in the practical work and soundly in their acquisition of scientific knowledge. They achieve soundly overall. Most pupils in Year 2 are expected to reach the expected level, although few the higher level. Pupils make particularly good progress in science in Year 6. If the present rate of progress is maintained in Year 6, most pupils will reach the expectations for the end of the academic year. In ICT, pupils across the school achieve satisfactorily but attainment is below average because facilities have not been sufficient for the large school population until recently and not all staff have felt confident in teaching the subject. Staff training is helping to produce an improved quality of provision and better progress is being made, though pupils do not use the computers enough across the curriculum.

6 A combination of the school's timetabling arrangements and the inspection focus did not permit confident judgements to be made about the pupils' attainment in geography, history, design and technology, art and design and music throughout the school or physical education by the end of Year 2. Attainment in physical education by the end of Year 6 reaches the expected standard and pupils achieve soundly. They reach local expectations in religious education throughout the school and achieve soundly.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.1 (13.6)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.7 (12.9)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	13.9 (14.6)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 89 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.4 (24.5)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	25.3 (24.8)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	27.5 (27.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 88 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are **good**. Their level of attendance is **well below average** and there were seven fixed-term exclusions in the last year. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is **good** and their spiritual development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good relationships and pupils' acceptance of other cultures.
- Most, pupils show good attitudes to learning and behave well during lessons.
- Very good quality systems for improving behaviour but some staff are not consistent in their application.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is good, overall, although pupils miss out by not having collective worship each day.
- Pupils' level of attendance is well below average and not all pupils arrive at school on time.

6 Given the large number of pupils and the wide range of cultures in school, the promotion of good relationships among all pupils is a priority of staff. Pupils form constructive relationships and work together well during lessons. The school council is used well to promote relationships as when pupils from Year 6 liaise with all year groups and represent their views when discussing school matters. Class assemblies are used well to share and promote pupils' different cultures and pupils' response is good. For example, a discussion about Eid and Ramadan showed other pupils knew why Muslim children were fasting, understood how difficult it must be and how they admired them for it.

7 Most pupils enjoy the time they spend in school, behave well, and show interest and involvement in lessons and in the extra-curricular activities the school provides, such as sporting clubs. This is similar to the judgement made at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour are a direct response to teachers' expectations and interesting lessons. However, in some classes in both the infants and juniors, pupils' attitudes and behaviour decline when their needs are not met due to inconsistent expectations from teaching staff. Most pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to their work and develop their self-confidence well, though some with emotional problems find concentration difficult and they can affect the concentration of others and the flow of lessons.

8 Pupils behaviour and attitudes are good on the whole, similar to that at the time of the last inspection. The whole school behaviour policy based on the reward of 'buddy stamps' and the 'sad side' detentions during break enable staff to monitor which pupils need support to improve their attitudes, behaviour and effort during lessons. Pupils and parents expressed concern about the behaviour of other children in school. Most pupils were found to behave well. Records show the number of incidents, and the severity of them, have greatly diminished since the last inspection. However, not all lunch-time supervisors have received regular behaviour management or playground games training and do not implement the school policies to the same degree of consistency as teaching staff. Pupils do not show the same level of respect for their authority, so most unacceptable behaviour happens during the lunch-break. The introduction of a colour-coded system of reports help staff, pupils and parents to know when pupils are at risk from exclusion. Fixed-term exclusions are used appropriately for unacceptable behaviour of violence or intimidation of staff or other pupils. Displays are used well around school to support pupils' understanding of acceptable behaviour, such as 'the helping hands' project about anti-bullying. Work done in school through the 'Kidscape' initiative has raised parents' and pupils' awareness of issues surrounding behaviour in school and the community.

9 Personal, social and health education lessons, registration times and assemblies are used well to improve pupils' social, moral and cultural awareness, which is good. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. In discussions with staff and through the use of stories, pupils gain a good understanding of right and wrong, learn how to listen to others and respect their views and beliefs. Pupils attend a daily assembly, either in class or in the hall, but they do not have the

opportunity for collective worship of a broadly Christian nature each day to build on their understanding of spirituality.

10 Attendance is well below the national average and unauthorised absence is well above the national average. Punctuality remains a concern of the school. A significant number of pupils, of all ages, do not arrive by 9 o'clock. School analysis shows the rate of pupils' attendance is affecting pupils' progress and the standards they achieve. Fifteen pupils in Year 6 last year had attendance levels from 37% to 80%, which is poor. Procedures to improve attendance are very good. Learning mentors telephone parents of missing pupils each day. Displays on attendance including 'school is too good to miss', 'best class weekly attendance' and certificates to reward pupils are used to encourage them to attend regularly. The school does not receive the full support of sufficient parents in ensuring punctuality and attendance, which results in these two aspects being unsatisfactory.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.3	School data :	1.9
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	353	8	0
White – Irish	4	0	0
White – any other White background	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	23	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	18	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	14	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	109	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	17	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	5	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	35	0	0
Black or Black British – African	7	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	16	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	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** education for its pupils. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Assessment arrangements are **very good**. The curriculum is **broad, and well organised** with a wide range of extra-curricular activities that support the pupils' interest in school. The staff take **good** care of the pupils. There are **good** links with the parents and the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall and mostly satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Teaching is stronger in the foundation stage and most classes in the juniors, although there are some weaknesses in Year 5. The school's assessment systems are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good quality of teaching in the foundation stage and in the juniors, particularly the strength of teaching in Year 6.
- The very good quality of assessment and record keeping systems.
- The detailed planning for the term's work and the thoroughness of lesson planning, which considers different pupils' needs.
- The quality of teaching in Year 5 slows down pupils' progress in the juniors.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 72 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (1%)	13 (18%)	30 (42%)	27 (38%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

11 Overall, the quality of teaching is good and similar to the last inspection. It is good for the most part in the foundation stage, in which approximately one-third of lessons were very good, and in the juniors where about two-thirds of lessons were good and better. Most teaching in the infants was satisfactory, with about one-third of all lessons observed being good. Teaching was best in Year 6, in which approximately half of all lessons observed were very good and occasionally excellent. The quality of teaching is not as good in Year 5, where management of pupils' behaviour is not secure and pupils' progress is affected adversely. Too much time is spent in these classes securing the pupils' attention and managing the pupils' behaviour, which interferes with the pace and flow of lessons. The quality of learning and their progress suffer. Lessons are less stimulating in this year group and pupils' interest is not secured sufficiently well.

12 The teaching in Year 6 is particularly good. There are several reasons for this. The team works together effectively. The teachers pool ideas for lessons and plan in thorough detail, building securely on what has been taught before and ensuring that the work challenges all pupils well. They have established very good relationships with the pupils and secured their respect. Lesson material is presented to the pupils in interesting ways, gaining the pupils' interest, sometimes with a keen sense of fun, as when less able pupils had to touch their noses when the teacher pointed to examples of acute angles in a mathematics lesson. They use praise judiciously and effectively, encourage the pupils to try and, in so doing, promote their confidence and self-esteem. Year 6 teachers explain the work very well, as when pupils were taught how to make a decision tree in science about living creatures and their environments which, when followed logically, gave a relevant answer. They want to do the best for the pupils who are in their care. Above all, they have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and make sure that the methods they use enable the pupils to succeed. Pupils make good progress in Year 6 as a result.

13 Teaching is also good in the foundation stage where the children make a good start to their education. New children quickly settle to the good routines and the well planned curriculum keeps the children excited. In one class, the children receive 'a letter' each day and the pupils have to decide who they think the letter is from. This promotes the pupils' speaking skills, as they discuss their ideas as to the clues that has been left in the classroom. In one lesson, the children were treated to a big surprise when a blanket was taken off two transparent plastic tanks, which contained a 'garden' of vegetables. The teacher crafted good learning from this well planned and imaginative idea. In so doing, she taught the pupils about some common vegetables and introduced new vocabulary for them as they examined the roots and talked about their function and the requirements for growth of plants. They looked carefully at raw and cooked turnip, contrasted the colour and examined the feel of the peelings. The teacher sensitised the children to words such as rough and smooth and the softness of the mashed turnip as they had a turn themselves and felt its texture, developing well their spoken vocabulary.

14 The teaching of literacy and numeracy in Years 1 to 6 is mostly good. This work is well planned and the teaching arrangements ensure that the pupils are well matched to their activities. Teachers subdivide the ability sets even further and make good use of the teaching assistants to support the pupils who are less capable and help them to succeed with their work. Teachers make good use of resources in these lessons, as they do in other subjects. The use of whiteboards in the introduction to lessons ensures that all pupils are thinking for themselves. Good use is made of overhead projectors in some classes and the use of acetate sheets of prepared examples adds a sharpness to the lesson presentation. Insufficient lessons were observed in design and technology, art and design, geography, music and history to judge the quality of teaching. In religious education and ICT it was mainly satisfactory and mostly good in physical education. In the one unsatisfactory lesson in physical education, pupils did not have enough skill practice, they were boisterous and they did not make enough progress in the lesson. Teaching was mainly good in science.

15 The small number of pupils who have very little or no English when they start school receive good support from a bilingual assistant. Her knowledge of their home language helps in the explanation of the tasks that the teacher wants them to do. She uses a good balance of their known language and English vocabulary so that they gradually acquire English. The good use of equipment so that they can work practically supports the spoken word. These pupils make good progress in acquiring English through the structured learning and the informal opportunities for conversation in the general life of the school, which are brought about by the good relationships with other pupils. Other pupils with English as an additional language are generally competent in English and are taught with other pupils, where they are given similar opportunities to take part in discussions and their contributions are fully valued.

16 The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teaching is well focused on pupils' needs and the targets on individual education plans are clear and realistic. Pupils are helped well by very knowledgeable teaching assistants. They explain to pupils in their group what they have to do and often support them through the very small steps of learning that these pupils require. Consequently, their learning is good, particularly in English. The setting arrangements in mathematics ensure that the pupils with higher prior attainment make progress commensurate with their abilities and their needs are well planned for in other lessons.

17 A strong feature of teaching is the very good quality of assessment. Pupils' progress is monitored at regular intervals, long-term targets set for their future attainment, monitored at regular intervals and teachers are held to account for the progress that the pupils make. Statistical information is extremely detailed and used to analyse performance. The analysis of pupils' answers to test questions is used to work on areas in which the pupils have shown some insecurity. Responses to work in lessons are often used to overcome their misunderstandings. Pupils' individual targets in English and mathematics indicate to the pupils, in terms that they can understand, what they need to do to improve and the steps they must take to get to the next level but insufficient numbers of pupils keep these targets to the forefront when they work. Teachers' comments in their books alert the pupils to how the work can be improved. Pupils' books are almost always marked up to date but some examples of unmarked work were evidenced in Year 5 and substantially so in part of Year 5 in history.

The curriculum

The curriculum is broad and balanced and of **good** quality. It enables pupils to achieve satisfactorily in the infant and junior classes. In the foundation stage they achieve well. A **good** range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors all enrich the basic curriculum. Statutory requirements for collective worship are not always met. Accommodation is **unsatisfactory** and learning resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good curriculum planning. Very good evaluation and monitoring of the curriculum.
- Good whole-school approach to curriculum innovation.
- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Good enrichment of the curriculum through extra-curricular activities.
- Shortcomings of accommodation mean that some pupils need to walk across the playground to use toilets.
- Statutory requirements for collective worship are not always met.

COMMENTARY

18 As at the last inspection, the curriculum is very well planned to ensure that pupils of all abilities are given a curriculum, which is broad and balanced. Provision is better for the children's physical development in the foundation stage. Thorough attention is given to long- and medium-term planning, and this helps ensure a consistent approach, for instance between the different classes in the same year group. The headteacher and other senior managers monitor the curriculum carefully, to ensure that all areas are given appropriate coverage. This means that they have a clear picture of those aspects, which are particularly successful, and those which need to be modified.

19 Because of this careful scrutiny of its work, the school is able to adopt an innovative approach to curriculum planning. It is able, for instance, to try different approaches to time-tabling and class organisation. It then monitors the effectiveness of these approaches and either adopts them, or adapts them in the light of their success. For example, the system of putting pupils into groups with others of similar ability in English and mathematics is having a positive effect on standards. In this way the most effective strategies are adopted, so as to help raise standards in the most productive way.

20 The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school tries to ensure that pupils' special needs are identified as soon as possible so that lessons can be modified to provide for everyone's needs.

21 Support staff provided to meet the needs of pupils with statements of educational need, do so very well. Other staff supporting pupils with special educational needs also undertake their duties very well, planning carefully with the teacher. However, due to the large number of pupils in need of this support, some lessons are not sufficiently supported to meet fully the needs of all these pupils.

22 The school provides a good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. These are well supported by pupils and cover a wide range, from golf, cricket, rounders and football activities, to French, chess, computer and art clubs. There is also a school choir, and drama club. The school has recently also had success in the Birmingham Schools athletics, rounders and football competitions. Approximately two-thirds of the school's pupils take part in these activities, which are run by members of staff as well as by outside coaches and teachers. Visitors, such as those from the Birmingham City Mission, and visits such as the annual Year 6 residential visit to an outdoor centre also play a valuable part in enriching the basic curriculum. In addition to the National Curriculum subjects and religious education, there is a very good programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education. This equips pupils very well in their understanding of personal, moral and cultural issues that they might meet in later life.

23 Some lessons seen during the inspection were too long, and this led to pupils becoming bored and losing their enthusiasm for the work. There is a need to review the way in which some subjects are timetabled, so as to ensure better time allocations.

24 Statutory requirements for the curriculum to include a daily act of collective worship are not met. Many of the assemblies held in classrooms, and those where pupils come together in the hall, do not comply with requirements. Those seen during the inspection lacked focus, and although they followed the planned schemes of work, often did not include opportunities for reflection. Such assemblies did not meet the requirement for a daily act of collective worship, and do not contribute appropriately to pupils' spiritual development.

25 The school has sufficient teachers and other staff to meet the needs of the curriculum, although staff recruitment is difficult. Accommodation, however, falls far short of what is needed. At present, for instance, pupils from classes in outside temporary classrooms have to walk across the playground to use the toilets. Not only does this waste time when pupils should be working, but it is also potentially hazardous. Replacement of the school building is planned, but this could be some years away, and present inconveniences and hazards are a source of concern for the school.

Care, guidance and support.

The school **effectively** ensures pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Staff provide **good** support and guidance for pupils based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. The school has made **good** progress in seeking to involve pupils in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures to keep pupils safe and secure in school are very good.
- Child protection procedures are good.
- Support and guidance for pupils are good overall but there is some inconsistent provision for pupils.
- There is a lack of continuity in the strengths of this aspect at lunchtimes.

26 The good care procedures reflect the provision reported at the last inspection. Members of staff, together with the governors' health and safety committee, are vigilant in reviewing risk assessments, site security and pupils' and staff safety with a planned agenda each half-term to meet the school motto statement 'safe and secure'. The school has been complimented by the local education authority for the systems to overcome the difficulties the local area causes the school. For example, windows broken by teenage stone-throwers are replaced with unbreakable material; playtime and lunch-times are staggered to accommodate all pupils on the playground. Good links with the police assist in the discussion of relevant issues, such as parents' parking around the local streets, to ensure the pupils' safety.

27 Given the large number of pupils in school, five members of staff have been fully trained in the locally agreed Procedures for Child Protection. The designated person annually updates staff on the procedures to be followed.

28 The very good assessment procedures are used well to provide support for individual pupils to improve their learning. Setting in some subjects and targets for individual learning help pupils to know what level they are working at and how to move on. However, some teachers do not encourage pupils to refer to their targets during lessons or regularly review them with pupils so they can improve as quickly as possible. Learning mentors work effectively with pupils in groups and individually to support learning and behavioural needs. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils during group work, although not all classes have an assistant to help them. The local police regularly work with pupils in school to overcome external negative influences in the area and improve community relations. For example, SNAP (Say No And Phone) drugs education for young people or by organising children's discos.

29 The school recognises that the lunch-time supervisory assistants have not been enabled to provide the same quality of care for pupils as other staff through training for first-aid, behaviour and playground management and meeting the needs of the pupils. The number of midday staff on duty can vary greatly, so senior staff in school are always on duty at lunchtime. Plans to address this area are in the school development plan.

30 The school provides an appropriate level of care for pupils with special educational needs. Staff know their pupils well and provide effectively for their needs. This is well planned to take account of the provision outlined in the pupils' statements. Pupils' targets are reviewed each term and pupils are fully included in these reviews. Class teachers and support assistants are responsible for the daily needs of pupils with special educational needs and together keep comprehensive records of achievement. These provide a very good record of each pupil's personal achievements and academic progress through the school. Procedures for promoting regular attendance are maintained well but have not yet secured a sufficient response from some families.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents, the local community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents receive very good quality information about the school and its work.
- Consultation with parents is good.
- Good links with the community.
- The school appreciates the good support most parents give to its work but not all parents ensure pupils attend regularly and arrive on time.

31 The good links with parents are similar to those reported previously. The school prospectus, monthly newsletters, regular letters from staff and curriculum information each half term keep parents very well informed. This communication informs them about the school's organisation, events pupils will be involved in, what pupils are learning in lessons, how they can support the teachers and their children and what their responsibilities are. Parent information sheets are attractively presented. These easy to read one-page summaries of school policy and procedures on areas of parent involvement, such as anti-bullying, attendance, target setting and homework keep them well updated. Parents are very happy with the information they receive and state pupils settle into school quickly when they join.

32 The 'Parents Forum', introduced in the spring-term, enables genuine consultation to take place with parents. Staff and parents work together to give and receive information about any concerns or issues they wish to raise. Questionnaires are also used to give all parents the chance to contribute their views on areas, such as homework, reading diaries and bullying. Parents feel the school is doing enough to combat any problems with bullying, such as the anti-bullying day, when all year groups worked on projects producing displays like 'Spot the bully' or the Year 5 booklet called 'Tell'. All parents receive brief progress reports in the autumn and spring terms and an annual written report at the end of the academic year, which are helpful in keeping them informed on their children's strengths and weaknesses in different subjects. They do not include written targets for the next step in pupils' learning but parents say these are discussed with teachers. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed and involved in the progress their children make. They are invited to discuss their children's individual education plans each term. Parents of pupils with statements of special educational need are kept in daily contact with their child's support assistant through a daily diary.

33 Good links with the community provide worthwhile visits for all year groups to enhance pupils' learning in different areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 4's Tudor history visit to Blakesley Hall Museum, Year 5's visit to the Jaguar factory looking at computers and pneumatics and the Powergen sponsored weather project at Hams Hall for reception children. Visits from police and

health services help to raise the profile of law and order, building pupils' self esteem and combatting external influences that can affect young people.

34 The school has good support from a lot of parents, such as helping with homework, assisting in school, attending the language workshop to make resources for pupils to use at home or supporting events held in school. However, not all parents support the school to this same degree, as is reflected by the poor punctuality and attendance of some pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is **very well** led and managed. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the future development of the school.
- The support and contribution of the senior management are very good.
- The school has very strong and positive strategies in place to evaluate strengths and areas for development.
- The chair of governors supports the school very well.

Commentary

35. The headteacher provides very good leadership and gives the school very clear educational direction. She has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Through the very high professional expectations she has of all staff, she gives a clear and purposeful lead in meeting the aims of the school. Her vision for the school is very well achieved through rigorous systems of school evaluation to identify areas for improvement, which in turn are supported by very effective action planning. The very good leadership and management of the school reflect that previously reported.

36. The headteacher is very well supported by a hard working and enthusiastic senior management team, particularly the support and work of the senior deputy. A new management structure is in place and this is proving to be effective in promoting communication and consultation. The roles of the deputy heads and year group leaders are clearly defined and they make a significant contribution towards the quality of education and pupils' attainment. They successfully ensure that all subjects of the curriculum are appropriately taught in all classes. Procedures in place for the monitoring of teaching and curriculum development are systematic and consistent. Monitoring of lessons takes place in pairs so that teachers share and learn the monitoring process. Observations are carefully recorded and form the basis of professional development meetings with teaching staff and have contributed to improved teacher performance

37. Good quality arrangements for professional review have been implemented and form part of the school's performance management strategy. New members of staff are provided with sensitive and supportive induction arrangements and other staff are provided with regular training.

38. The contribution of the governing body is an important factor in the success of the school. Its members are well informed, supportive and committed to further improvements. The chair of governors is particularly dedicated to the school and works very well in close partnership with the headteacher. She is a regular and much welcomed visitor giving a great deal of practical support to the teaching staff. The work of the governing body is satisfactory.

39. The day-to-day management of the school is effective. The administrative officer and school secretary are hardworking and efficient. Day-to-day financial control is good and information and communication technology is used well for administrative purposes. The most recent Local Education Authority financial audit report was very favourable. Information given to governors is detailed. It enables them to fulfil their monitoring role and have an insight of the school's financial position.

40. Despite the very good leadership, there are barriers to raising achievement in the school. Some are related to elements of social deprivation in the area surrounding the school and demographic change. Levels of pupil absenteeism are high and attendance is well below the national average. There is a large number of pupils who have special educational needs. There is also difficulty in recruiting appropriate teaching staff and retaining their services. The unsatisfactory accommodation does not assist the staff to raise standards of achievement.

41. The leadership of special educational needs is very good. The co-ordinator has developed a strong team, where all are very aware of their responsibilities and objectives. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is also very good.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,308,426	Balance from previous year	75,812
Total expenditure	1,355,528	Balance carried forward to the next	28,712
Expenditure per pupil	2,558		

Example of outstanding practice

The headteacher's strategic planning is exemplary.

The headteacher's various strategies for monitoring and promoting further the school's work are outstandingly well planned and thoroughly detailed. A colour-coded chart indicates which aspects of the school's development are to be monitored during any particular week for a twelve month period ahead whether it be the quality of teaching, learning, or curriculum development and linked very carefully to the school development plan. Procedures for tracking individual pupils' progress are rigorous. Information gleaned from careful analysis of assessment data is used to identify pupils who might be regressing or making insufficient progress and appropriate action is taken. Subject leaders are meticulous when reviewing the results of statutory and voluntary tests. Pupils' performance is also carefully monitored for variations in terms of gender, attainment, background and ethnicity. The curriculum is accordingly modified. Teachers' planning is examined to ensure that it meets the criteria identified as conducive to good teaching and learning and feedback is given, the outcome of which is further monitored to encourage continuous development. Examples of pupils' work are regularly examined with particular reference to selected aspects of provision. The wide range of information from the above and other sources is examined by the headteacher and senior management team and shared with staff and support the drive for higher standards most effectively.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

43 The reception classes provide a stable, pleasant and caring environment. The children are encouraged to enjoy learning and to take part in a wide range of lively, practical activities, which support their progress effectively in all areas. Relationships are strong and supportive. Teamwork between all staff is especially effective and has a considerably beneficial effect on children's learning. Although attainment varies, many children start school with skills, which are well below the expected level in almost all areas of learning, particularly in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Many children have poor skills in understanding and expressing themselves in English as this is not their first language and in some instances is not spoken at home. Many children's knowledge of life in the world beyond their home is limited. By the time they are in Year 1, almost all children have achieved well in all areas of learning. This is due to a well planned curriculum and good quality teaching. Children with special education needs are very effectively supported and have full access to the curriculum. Children for whom English is an additional language have bi-lingual support and all staff work hard to ensure that these children develop their vocabulary and understanding of English. Despite the good progress made, many children do not attain the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world by the time they enter Year 1. This attainment is lower than that reported previously but reflects the change in the ability of the cohort.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff support children well and help them to develop confidence and independence.
- Children achieve very well because of well-established routines and very good teaching.

Commentary

44 Children in the reception classes enjoy school and have positive attitudes to their learning. Their behaviour is good. They enjoy the good range of activities provided and participate in them with much interest. They apply themselves well, sustain their application and concentrate on one activity at a time. Teaching in this aspect of their learning is very good. Children become independent in selecting activities for themselves. They work well together and share equipment with others. They consider the feelings of others when, for instance, they learn about there being 'no room in the inn' in the story of the first Christmas and reflect on how scared and frightened they might be in a similar situation. In this area most children will reach the goals set by the time they move into Year 1.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are interesting activities to promote very good learning
- Staff take every opportunity to develop speaking and listening skills.
- Parents are involved in the learning process.

Commentary

45 Teaching is very good. Children achieve well in this area but many are unlikely to reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Many lack confidence in talking to adults and to each other. Their speech is often indistinct and they are reluctant to speak in group situations. There is a wide range of stimulating experiences and activities and staff regularly intervene to develop and extend children's language and literacy skills. In one class there was great excitement each day as children discovered items and messages left by 'an intruder', who visited their classroom when they were not there. Thinking, speaking and listening skills were extended through animated discussions as children tried to identify the person from these 'clues'. When some children suggested that it could be a giant, one child reasoned "A giant couldn't get through the door!" The relevance of reading and writing is continuously emphasised. Children select their own name card as they register their presence at the start of a session. They read the letters left by the intruder. Planting bulbs is accompanied by reference to a series of written instructions. Composing a shopping list for use in the class shop provides opportunities to develop early writing skills. Parents are helped and encouraged to become more involved in their children's literacy development. The 'Fun Workshop' provided a very good opportunity for parents and children to work together making equipment and games to support phonic learning. Books are taken home regularly to share with parents, which has a very positive effect on children's progress in learning to read.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Mathematical concepts are made relevant to children's experiences.
- Teachers' planning focuses clearly on the basic skills to be taught so that children learn well.

Commentary

46 Many children enter the reception classes with little experience of counting. Some do not recognise and name numbers reliably. Children achieve well because the teaching is good, but many are unlikely to reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they start in Year 1. Teachers provide a variety of interesting well structured practical activities, which support learning well. Children enjoy playing in the class shops, 'weighing' and counting the vegetables and using the till. They put on hats to represent the customers in the queue identifying who is first, second and so on. They count the items on their shopping lists. Children develop a sense of number, order and sequence through counting routines, such as helping to count the number of children present or the number of bulbs to be planted. Staff also use counting songs and rhymes to motivate and interest children. They make good use of incidental opportunities to promote mathematical development, for instance, asking children engaged in counting out small objects to match particular number cards: "If you had one more, how many would you have then?" and explain to the children the importance of learning about numbers.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children engage in a good range of activities to enhance their learning.

Commentary

47 On starting school, many children have had very limited experience of the world around them. Although they achieve well, standards in this area of learning are below those expected at this age. This is mainly due to the children having insufficient English language skills to enable them to support their learning. Teaching is good and staff plan a wealth of interesting first-hand experiences to enhance children's learning. All staff use questions skilfully to encourage the children to think for themselves. Children were fascinated by the vegetables 'growing' in soil and began to develop an understanding of the function of roots. They enjoyed examining the skin of a turnip and with help from the teacher described properties such as smooth and rough. As they planted daffodil bulbs they were helped to understand that water and light would be needed for the plants to grow. Through stories and celebrations, for instance Eid, Ramadan and Christmas, they are learning more about their own and about others' cultures and beliefs. Children have regular access to computers, which they use with increasing confidence and independence.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Accommodation has improved and children have access to a pleasant, enclosed outdoor area to develop their physical skills

Commentary

48 Teaching is satisfactory. Resources and accommodation have improved since the time of the previous inspection and there is now an enclosed outdoor play area. Children's physical development benefits from the use of a range of small and large apparatus, including a climbing frame. Staff manage children well with praise and encouragement and are aware of safety factors, for instance in the use of large equipment. Opportunities are provided for children to improve their fine movements and control. Children are learning to use tools such as scissors and hole-punches safely to complete tasks such as making their own "Gingerbread Man" books. They use large and small construction kits that develop their manipulative skills well. The children are on target to achieve expectations in this area of learning by the end of the reception year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Role-play is used well by the staff to develop the children's speaking skills.
- Activities are designed to be stimulating.

Commentary

49 Good teaching and learning ensure that the children achieve well and many are on line to achieve the goals in this area of learning by the end of the reception year. They enjoy a good range

of well planned art and design experiences exploring a wide range of media and techniques, which stimulate their imagination. They are involved and collaborate effectively in role-play, which is actively supported and extended by staff involvement. After listening to the story of 'The Enormous Turnip', children dressed up and took on the roles of the characters, re-telling the story, which effectively developed their imaginative, as well as their speaking and listening skills. Children have opportunities for singing and making music with a wide range of musical instruments. In one very good session, children played and learned the names of a variety of instruments before embarking on the challenging task of reading symbols to perform a composition of sounds made using their body, which the teacher described as the best instrument of all. Their faces registered absolute delight as they listened to a recording of their efforts and there was a chorus of "That's me. I did that".

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English have recently improved in comparison with other schools.
- Lack of a central library inhibits the development of pupils' library skills.
- Progress of pupils in Year 5 is inconsistent.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work.
- The quality of teaching is good and, as a result, most pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- There are very good procedures in place to assess pupils' progress and set targets for them to achieve.

Commentary

50 Pupils' achievement by the end of Years 2 and 6 is good, although standards in reading and writing are below average and reflect those in the national tests immediately after the previous inspection. Whilst progress is good in most years, pupils in Year 5 do not progress as well. There has been satisfactory improvement in comparison with similar schools since the last inspection. By the end of Year 2, pupils' reading skills are beginning to accelerate from a well below average start on entry to the reception class. Higher attaining pupils begin to read with good expression, though most find the combination of reading words and expressing them in an interesting way quite difficult. Older higher attaining pupils in Year 6 talk very well about their favourite books and authors. They read expressively with very good levels of fluency. However, lower attaining pupils, though reading more simple books fluently and with understanding, are still acquiring basic reading skills. They show very little interest in books. Many pupils have limited knowledge of library skills. Writing has been targeted across the school as an area for improvement, and teachers are looking in more detail at how the pupils can plan and structure their writing. Pupils in Year 2 write for different purposes with higher attaining pupils showing some good skills in simple punctuation techniques. Pupils' spelling is generally phonetically accurate and their writing clear. In Year 6, the higher attaining pupils' writing is interesting and readily engages the reader. Use of grammar is satisfactory. Handwriting is fluent, joined with a neat style. Spelling is generally accurate. Lower attaining pupils write in well constructed sentences that are inherently interesting.

51 Pupils have good attitudes to their work. They work hard with their tasks and demonstrate good levels of application. When pupils are asked to work together in groups, they do so well and show they are prepared to listen to others' ideas and suggestions. Speaking and listening skills are generally in line with expectations though some pupils find listening attentively difficult in whole

class settings. Many pupils are keen to answer teachers' questions, though significant numbers are more reticent in making contributions.

52 Teaching and learning are good and sometimes very good. Where teaching is very good, pupils are quite clear about their learning, the level of challenge is high and the pace of learning demanding. Where teaching is not so strong, the pace is slow and some pupils are insufficiently challenged. Learning objectives are generally shared with the pupils at the beginning of lessons and so learning is focussed. Pupils have individual targets for improvement. However, in some classes they are unaware of them. Pupils' work is marked well and informs them what they need to do next. The pupils enjoy their English lessons and talk about the interesting texts the teachers choose to share with them. Teachers motivate the pupils well. Pupils of all levels of ability, of different ethnic groups and those new to the school, are thoroughly involved in lessons and as a consequence achieve well. Careful preparation means that each pupil is catered for and activities are well matched to their needs.

53 Leadership and management of the subject are very effective. At the time of the inspection, the subject was being jointly led by the headteacher and her deputy. Both have a very clear grasp of standards, strengths and areas for development in the subject. Their observations of teaching and learning have helped teachers to improve. Teachers have particularly valued planning and working alongside each other to share ideas and techniques.

54 Procedures to assess pupils' progress are very good and are leading to improved standards. In addition to mid and end-of-year testing of pupils in English, there are regular assessments made in all areas. Staff then set targets, and identify for pupils the steps necessary to achieve them. Pupils' progress is tracked very carefully. The effectiveness of this system is being very carefully monitored. Information from all forms of assessment is used to set pupils in ability groups for the teaching of English. This has led to good achievement by all pupils. However, given the large number of pupils with special educational needs present in the lower ability sets, a greater number of support assistants in these classes would improve these pupils achievement even further.

Language and Literacy across the curriculum.

55 Literacy is supported well in other subjects, for example in science when the pupils record the results of their experiments. As part of a geography topic, Year 3 pupils wrote very descriptively about rocks, while older pupils make good use of their literacy skills as they wrote letters to local residents asking them what they remembered of the Second World War. The way in which the skills of literacy are used wherever possible in other subjects both enriches writing skills and helps deepen knowledge and understanding of the subject being studied. As a result, it is effective in helping to raise achievement in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective subject management by the headteacher and deputy head.
- Very good analysis of assessment data, monitoring and target setting.
- Good implementation of National Numeracy Strategy.
- Some lessons are too long.
- Inconsistent quality of teaching in junior classes.

COMMENTARY

56 Standards in mathematics are below average by the end of Years 2 and 6. The most recent national test results show that 42 per cent of pupils in Year 2 did not reach the expected level, and the girls did better than the boys. Compared with similar schools, those serving areas of similar

socio-economic circumstance, results were well below those expected. Year 6 results showed the school to be well below the national average. Results were in line with those of similar schools. In the junior classes, boys achieve significantly better than girls. In relation to the levels at which pupils enter the school, these results indicate that pupils achieve satisfactorily in both the infant and junior classes. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in the Infant classes, and satisfactorily overall in the juniors. They are well supported by both teachers, and teaching assistants, where they are available. Pupils from ethnic minority groups make similar progress to others. Pupils of all abilities are well supported by the system of setting, which has been introduced in Years 1 to 6.

57 Overall standards in mathematics have fallen from the last inspection report but are broadly similar to those in the national tests that followed. The below average attainment is due to variation between different year-groups, and also to increasing numbers of pupils leaving and joining the school. The school has also experienced difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff, and this has led to some inconsistency in teaching. On entering the school most pupils now have an understanding in mathematics, which is well below that expected. By Year 2, however, most have developed understanding of basic number activities, such as counting on and back in tens, and carrying out simple multiplication. They are also introduced to simple fractions, and learn the names and properties of two-dimensional shapes. In the junior classes, pupils of all abilities continue to build soundly on their mathematical understanding. Year 4 pupils learn to change improper fractions into mixed numbers and carry out simple mental calculations with increasing confidence. By the time they are in Year 6, most pupils classify two-dimensional shapes according to their properties, and choose the most appropriate units with which to measure different sized objects.

58 The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory in the infant classes, and good in the juniors because teachers of the older pupils provide stimulating, well prepared lessons and explain the work very well. There are very good assessment systems, which give teachers clear information about what their pupils know and can do, and what they need to do next. Lessons are well planned, and teachers are good at keeping their pupils fully involved in the work. Pupils have clear targets, and most know how they can improve. In lessons, teachers explain what their pupils will be learning, and then check later to see if they have been successful. In the best lessons, teachers challenge their pupils with a lively pace of work, and inspire them to try harder. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils learnt about the difference between acute and obtuse angles. The teacher's lively approach, and very good teaching methods, ensuring that 'every minute counts', enthused the pupils and enabled them to make very good progress. The excellent lesson was highly successful in promoting very good learning for all the pupils.

59 Despite the overall good quality of teaching in the junior classes, it is much more variable than in the infants. Some lessons are too long, and this results in pupils finding it difficult to concentrate. The introductions to some lessons go on for too long, so that there is not enough time for the other parts of the lesson. Opportunities to use ICT are underdeveloped. Teachers often miss the chance to use the computers to help their pupils learn mathematical concepts, when their use would assist the pupils' understanding.

60 The school has been successful in using the guidelines of the National Numeracy Strategy to improve the teaching and learning of mathematics. Teachers have adapted the official guidelines appropriately, to meet the needs of all their pupils. Pupils' work is generally well marked, so that pupils know how well they have done, and what they need to do next. Teachers often include helpful comments, which guide their pupils, and show them how to improve. The subject is very well managed by the headteacher and deputy head, albeit temporarily. They have monitored teaching and learning, and have also carried out extensive analysis of pupils' work, in order to identify areas of strength and weakness. The significant underperformance of girls in Years 3 to 6 has been well identified by the school, and appropriate strategies put in place to rectify it. The results of such analyses have fed into the ongoing Numeracy Action Plans. Much of this work is still quite new, and so has not yet had time to improve standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61 The development of pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects is satisfactory. Teachers identify occasions when pupils need to use their mathematical knowledge, for instance when measuring in design and technology lessons, or when using graphs and charts to record their results in science investigations.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attention given to investigative science and pupils' increasing understanding of the scientific process.
- The good progress pupils make in Year 6.
- The good curriculum coverage.
- The timetabling arrangements in Years 1 and 2 do not enable pupils to engage in science activities regularly enough.
- Pupils do not consistently reason their predictions and explain their conclusions in written work.

Commentary

62 Pupils' achievements by the end of Year 2 are satisfactory, including the pupils with special educational needs and pupils who are more capable. Their progress is sound. Science was not timetabled during the inspection week in Years 1 and 2 but work scrutiny indicates that most pupils are in line to reach the expected level by the end of Year 2. However, lessons are not regular enough in Years 1 and 2 leaving some long gaps in opportunities for learning. Consequently, pupils do not have the chance to refresh their knowledge regularly and build on what they have learned.

63 Pupils make good progress throughout much of their time in Years 3 to 6 and their learning is good. They generally achieve well in science by the end of Year 6, particularly in their practical investigations. However, the progress they make in Year 5 is not as brisk. Despite the generally good achievement, pupils' attainment in Year 6 at the time of the inspection was below average. They were, however, catching up on the poorer performance in Year 5 and making good progress as a result of the good teaching. If the good progress currently being made is maintained, most pupils should reach the expectations for their age by the end of the academic year. Standards in science are similar to those at the last inspection. There is no significant difference between the attainment of different ethnic groups by the end of Years 2 and 6.

64 The curriculum in science throughout the school gives a good coverage of the National Curriculum requirements and a central feature of the work is the good attention given to investigational work. Year 3 pupils carried out experiments to good purpose to find out which material absorbed water the best. Year 4 pupils took part enthusiastically in finding the best wrapping to keep plastic beakers containing ice cubes cool. Pupils engaged well in these practical assignments. Pupils enjoy the subject, particularly when working practically, and show much interest in their activities. They usually co-operate well together when they work in groups and help each other to organise their investigations. In the lesson observed in Year 5, white British boys, however, showed much less interest compared to other ethnic groups. In Year 6 there was equally good interest from all pupils and those with special educational needs were supported well so they could do their best. In the main, pupils contribute well to class discussion and boys and girls show equal levels of interest in suggesting how tests can be made fair. Pupils are making good progress in this aspect of their work. Their predictions are sometimes reasoned with good thought. Pupils make good use of mathematics in science, as they record their results in tables and graphs but they do not attempt to explain the conclusions to their tests well enough in their written work.

65 Not enough use is made of ICT in science to tabulate and report their findings. It was used successfully in one science lesson as a teaching aid to help Year 6 pupils understand the idea of a logic key. In this, pupils have to make decisions and answer questions in order to arrive at a correct piece of knowledge. As a result, pupils were able to route themselves through such a logic key, also known as a decision tree. Able pupils could design on paper their own logic key, applying their knowledge of life and living processes to good effect.

66 The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good with a range from good to satisfactory. It was not possible to judge the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 due to the lack of any science lessons. Teachers research the content very well in Years 3 to 6 and plan their lessons in detail from the very good medium-term planning, which gives a clear steer to teachers when they structure the activities. In Year 6, teachers stretch the able pupils with more challenging work, such as getting them to design their own logic key and using more difficult vocabulary in their assignments. All teachers make good use of resources and set them out ready so the pace of the lesson is retained when pupils begin their activities. On occasions the lessons are too long and do not sustain the pupils' interest, as in a Year 5 lesson about pollination when pupils drew different types of fruit in rotation and recorded various features about the different fruits. The pupils became restless as a result. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to promote the pupils' spiritual development. In the Year 5 lesson about fruit, there was no use of a video clip to help pupils visualise the pollination process and to help them to gain knowledge about the important work of insects and bees. Such omissions detract from infusing that extra spark to lessons, promoting pupils' interest and furthering their knowledge.

67 The leadership and management of the subject are both sound. Good plans have been drawn together which guide the work. There is a developing portfolio of samples of finished work to help teachers assess the levels the pupils are reaching. The subject leader has observed some lessons and the results have contributed in some ways to his understanding of the work in science. However, there is no regular scrutiny of work samples to maintain an oversight of standards on a continuing basis.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good development of hardware and software.
- Good subject management.
- Good provision of in-service training.
- Inconsistent use of ICT across the curriculum.
- The ICT suite is too small, crowded and uncomfortable.

COMMENTARY

68 The standards reached by pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 are below those found nationally. As pupils' attainment on entering the school is well below average, the realisation of these standards represents satisfactory achievement overall. In the few years since the last inspection, the school has done much to improve its supply of hardware and software. Both are now satisfactory for the needs of the curriculum. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject manager has worked hard to ensure that the ICT suite operates effectively, and there is a clear recognition that other computers now need to be deployed around the school to better effect. He has done a great deal to provide support for teachers and other staff, and to ensure that in-service training activities are relevant and useful. Training provided under the New Opportunities Fund was very relevant and gave teachers greater confidence in using ICT in their day-to-day work.

69 Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and very good in Year 6. Teachers plan the work carefully, and lessons taken in the suite deal thoroughly with basic computer skills. By the time they are in Year 2, pupils give a series of instructions for a screen 'turtle' to follow, although many of them require considerable adult help in order to carry out the tasks. They are learning to control the computer with keyboard and mouse, and to carry out basic operations, such as opening and saving work. Working with partners, sharing ideas and taking turns all make useful contributions to pupils' social and moral development.

70 Scrutiny of pupils' previous work, as well as discussions with teachers and pupils, show that all areas of the information and communication technology are given appropriate coverage. Pupils enjoy working with the computers, and can use the Internet to find information when given the opportunity.

71 There are good assessment procedures in place, and these ensure that teachers know what pupils need to do next. A portfolio of pupils' work has been collected as an aid to teachers in judging standards. The present ICT suite is too small and quickly becomes hot and uncomfortable. Because of the lack of space, the projector cannot be placed at the correct distance from the screen, and this means that its usefulness is restricted. The forthcoming new school building is an opportunity to end these barriers to learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

72 While work in the ICT suite was generally satisfactory and sometimes better, the use of computers in other subjects is more inconsistent. Teachers often miss opportunities to use information and communication technology as a tool for learning in other subjects. In many lessons seen during the inspection the computers were left unused, often not even switched on, when they could have made useful contributions to learning. Some good examples of computer use were seen in classrooms. There is a need to continue the previously good in-service training, so as to remedy the present shortcomings.

HUMANITIES

History, geography and religious education

Inspection evidence was insufficient to judge provision in history and geography.

73 In humanities work was sampled in **history** but only one lesson was seen. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in this subject. Work seen indicates that standards are broadly average.

74 Pupils in Year 5 described in great detail the work they had undertaken recently on the 'Second World War'. They talked about evacuation, air raid shelters and rationing. Much of their information came from interviews with and letters from residents in a local retirement home which not only made the information particularly relevant but also made a very good contribution to literacy development.

75 There was insufficient evidence to form overall judgements in **geography**. Three lessons were observed. Teaching and learning were satisfactory, with one good lesson seen. Observations of pupils' work indicate that classes are taught the requirements of the National Curriculum in this subject and that pupils' attainment is average.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good coverage of a range of world religions.
- Links to pupils' spiritual development underdeveloped.

76 The school's curriculum for religious education follows the guidelines of the locally agreed syllabus, and standards of attainment are in line with its expectations and similar to standards reported previously. Pupils cover a broad and balanced curriculum, and they achieve soundly throughout the school.

77 Teaching and learning observed during the inspection were satisfactory. Lessons seen during the inspection show that pupils develop a good understanding of world religions, their festivals, places of worship and customs. Good use was made of the festival of Eid, which occurred during the inspection. Year 2 pupils compared Eid with festivals in other religions, and enjoyed hearing from Muslim pupils about family celebrations. Such work helps pupils' cultural understanding, and prepares them well for life in a multicultural society. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have continued to develop their understanding of the place of religion in life. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, pupils listened to Handel's Messiah, learning about the role of the shepherds in the Biblical nativity story. The use of the music was very effective, and helped pupils to understand aspects of the Christian tradition.

78 Links to pupils' spiritual development are underdeveloped. While they learn the facts about different religions, pupils are not given enough opportunities to consider ideas of faith and belief. Where opportunities are taken to deal with issues of belief, the teaching lacks confidence, and so does not promote good learning.

79 The subject is soundly led and managed by the subject leader. Assessment procedures are in line with the school's assessment policy, and give teachers the information they need. Resources are sufficient for the needs of the curriculum.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education

Two lessons were observed in each of **design and technology**, **art and design** and one in **music**. Four lessons were observed in **physical education**.

Provision in these subjects is **satisfactory**.

Main strength

- Boys and girls have equal opportunities in different sports.

Commentary

80 Two art lessons were seen during the inspection and so too little evidence is available to make confident, overall judgements about provision. However, in work seen provision was good. Year 1 pupils successfully made clay tiles in the shape of a house, exploring the different ways they could make impressions in the clay to depict tiles, windows and doors. During this lesson pupils listened well to their teacher and to each other. Their achievement was satisfactory and they were working at a standard appropriate for their age. Pupils in Year 3 worked very well, experimenting with pastels to complete the foreground of a landscape they had previously painted in water colours. Pupils demonstrated good use and understanding of perspective as they completed their pictures in the style of Van Gogh.

81 Work displayed around the school shows good use of colour, different materials and design techniques. A particularly good display of pastel studies in the style of Picasso, demonstrated clear appreciation of his techniques. All indications are that standards of work are similar to those seen at the time of the last inspection.

82 There was insufficient evidence to judge the overall quality of teaching and provision in **design and technology**. In the two design and technology lessons observed, one in Year 2 and one in Year 5, the teaching was satisfactory and pupils made sound progress. Most pupils in the Year 2 class used a template to make a small cereal box and then decorated it, whilst a small group of other pupils made cakes to a prescribed recipe. Whilst the pupils enjoyed the activities, they had little opportunity to think for themselves. Nevertheless, they applied some important design and technology principles. In food technology, the teacher ensured that the pupils had clean hands before touching food. Other pupils gave good attention to careful sticking techniques to ensure the box fitted together correctly. In the Year 5 class, whilst the teaching was satisfactory and materials well prepared, the pupils showed well below average skills in thinking how to use different techniques to make moving parts for the page of a book. They lacked imagination and their cutting and drawing skills were immature for their age.

83 No **music** was taking place in Years 1 and 2 due to the organisation of the timetable. In the one music lesson observed in Year 6, the teaching was good. The teacher used musical terminology effectively, such as pitch and score, as pupils learned how musical composition can be written down to help to play it back. Pupils listened carefully to sounds from the rain forest to stimulate their thinking before they composed music on this theme for themselves. They worked hard and made good progress composing their own music and writing it down so they could reproduce it.

84 It was not possible to observe enough lessons to make an overall judgement of standards and teaching in **physical education** by the end of Year 2. The one lesson observed was unsatisfactory because pupils did not make enough progress, did not listen well enough to instructions and became over excited. They did not have enough opportunity to develop their skills individually.

85 Pupils' attainment was appropriate for their age in the limited number of observations in Years 3 to 6 and similar to that reported previously. Teaching in these lessons was mainly good and occasionally very good. In one lesson observed, however, the pupils had to sit out for small parts of the introduction to the lesson and take turns because there were not enough large balls for pupils to work with individually. This was the result of two classes from the same year group engaging in a similar lesson at the same time. Lessons seen in Years 3 to 6 have a good structure. In the best teaching, pupils build up their skills with increasing challenge. In Year 3 pupils extended their skill from bouncing a large ball on the spot to bouncing it around cones and showed good skills in control in these activities for their age. In Year 6, boys and girls practised football skills attacking in pairs against one defender and later in the lesson transferred these skills to good effect in a small group game. Teachers' use of praise with comments such as 'You're getting really good at this' promotes the pupils' confidence and encourages them to try hard and usually results in them making good progress in lessons. They enjoy their physical education lessons and boys and girls have equal opportunities to learn skills in different sports. The practice in Year 2 of pupils undertaking the same type of activity during their two weekly physical education lessons, does not enable pupils to re-visit different forms of physical education activity regularly enough.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

86 Only one lesson was seen in this area of the school's work so no judgements can be made about overall provision. The programme of work to be covered and planning documents indicate that it is an important, integral part of day-to-day life in the school, which fully meets requirements and enhances pupils' learning considerably. Very good links are made with other curriculum subjects. Year 6 pupils have liaised with the local police to discuss crime in the area and have produced a Power Point presentation to highlight the problems. After studying Ancient Greek

Democracy and its effect on modern government, pupils had their own 'Local Democracy Day' when they worked with members of Birmingham City Council Transport Department. Older pupils also learn about the principles and practice of representing others through the work of the school council. The school has worked closely with Birmingham Local Education Authority and Kidscape to develop Anti-bullying and anti-racism policies, which are proving to be very effective.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	4
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).

