

INSPECTION REPORT

BRIERLEY HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Brierley Hill

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103776

Headteacher: Mrs Sue Cameron

Lead inspector: Mr Brian Griffiths

Dates of inspection: 17th - 19th November 2003

Inspection number: 255606

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:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	185
School address:	Mill Street Brierley Hill West Midlands
Postcode:	DY5 2TD
Telephone number:	01384 816980
Fax number:	01384 816981
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend M. Mason
Date of previous inspection:	8 June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an average sized primary school that mainly serves the Chapel Street Estate area of Brierley Hill in the West Midlands Black Country. Numbers attending the school have fallen in recent years from a high point of 364 to the current 185 and there is a considerable amount of movement of pupils in and out of the school; in recent years over 40 per cent of pupils in successive Years 6 transferred into Brierley Hill from other primary schools and an even greater number who started at Brierley Hill left before reaching Year 6. Children's attainment on entry to the school is well below average. Many of the children live in high rise buildings and the locality is one of high unemployment and considerable socio-economic stress. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is, at 36 per cent, above average. Eighty-four per cent of pupils are of white British origin and the others are of twelve different ethnic origins; of these, currently, fifteen are children of asylum seekers or refugees although numbers vary as children often move on a few months after arrival. There is an above average proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs (30 percent) and three of these have statements of special needs. These needs include moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, physical difficulties, Downs Syndrome and autism. The headteacher has been in post for less than two terms. The school participates in local and national initiatives, including Leadership Development Strategies in Primary School, Sure Start, Children's Fund, the Gung Ho! Networked Learning Community and is a lead school for the 'You Can Do It!' Project. It has won awards for Healthy Eating, Investors in People, Investors in Parents and has a School's Achievement Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2607	Brian Griffiths	Lead inspector	Mathematics; art and design; PSHE/citizenship; music; religious education.
9224	Michael Vineall	Lay inspector	
30823	Brenda Clarke	Team inspector	Science; geography; history; English as an additional language
25623	Ted Cox	Team inspector	English; information and communication technology; design and technology; physical education; Foundation Stage; special educational needs.

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International
Upperton House
The Avenue
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN21 3YB

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

This is an effective school which has a positive ethos and in which relationships at all levels are good. It is led very well. Teaching is good, so that pupils are enabled to achieve well in their academic work and to develop well as confident young people. The great majority of pupils and parents have a high regard for the school and **it gives good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- although standards are below average, pupils, including the large proportion who arrive at the school after the usual starting age, achieve well from a low base on entry;
- potentially high attaining pupils are not always stretched sufficiently;
- there is a positive working atmosphere and good teaching, that owe much to very good leadership and effective teamwork at all levels;
- parents value its work, although a significant proportion gives little practical support;
- the short teaching day in Years 3 to 6 holds back standards in some subjects;
- the school's otherwise good work in improving pupils' ability to concentrate and behave well lacks a systematic programme of rewards and sanctions;
- although there is a thorough programme for making further improvements, parents, governors and pupils have not been invited to make full contributions and the benefits for pupils have not been made clear.

Improvements have been made at a good pace in all areas identified by the last inspection. Teachers' lesson planning is better and contributes considerably to pupils' learning; the buildings and grounds are safe and welcoming, and the provision for the teaching of information and communication technology is better. High quality information is sent regularly to parents. Pupils continue to achieve well and test results are better than they were.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	D	D	B
mathematics	E*	C	E	E
Science	E	C	E	C

*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.*

Pupils achieve well. They start school with attainment that is well below average and by Year 6 it has risen to below average. However, pupils' attainment is not high enough, especially in English, mathematics and science. Year 6 test scores do not tell the full story, as many who take the test have joined the school after, or long after, the rest of the year group and many others who started at the age of four have left. The overall findings of the inspection are that standards reached by Year 6 pupils are below average in English, mathematics and science and well below average in religious education and art; in information and communication technology (ICT) they reach nationally expected levels; singing is good and tuneful but evidence of other music was limited. No judgements are made in other subjects as too little evidence was seen. In general, standards are better than at the end of Year 2, so that progress is good. At the end of Year 2 standards are well below average in English, mathematics, science, religious education, music and art. No judgements are made in other subjects as too little evidence was seen. Children in the nursery and reception classes are benefiting from improved provision. The emphasis on their personal, social and emotional development ensures that they make good progress from well below average to below in this area of learning and this is matched in their knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development; achievement is satisfactory in communication, language and literacy and standards are well below average. Pupils with special

educational needs make good progress, as do those for whom English is an additional language. Children of refugee and asylum seeking families make good progress because well-considered learning programmes draw on the careful assessments made of their needs. Throughout the school a small proportion of pupils reach above average standards but more could do so.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The great majority of pupils behave well, attend regularly and promptly, and work hard and with obvious enjoyment. They accept increasing responsibilities as they become older so that by Year 6 they play a significantly positive part in the life of the school; a number of pupils have overcome earlier unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour. This is not true of a small minority. These pupils do not concentrate appropriately and their behaviour is frequently unsatisfactory. Adults usually handle this well, drawing on a well-understood programme designed to enhance pupils' self-esteem and thus their attitudes. However, in a significant minority of lessons poor behaviour is allowed to continue too long, as there is no systematic use of a programme of rewards for good behaviour and sanctions for poor.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides good quality education. Teaching is good and ensures that pupils make good progress. In the best lessons, teaching is characterised by good planning and use of resources and by an infectious enthusiasm. Whilst all the teaching observed was at least satisfactory, on a small number of occasions learning was slowed because of the uncorrected poor behaviour of a small number of pupils. The curriculum is enriched by a stimulating range of educational visits and by visiting experts. Teaching time in Years 3 to 6 is less than nationally recommended and this, together with the shortness of the last lesson in the morning, means that some subjects are not given enough time. Productive links with local industry and commerce bring extra and often exciting dimensions to learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is very well led and well managed. Governors meet all of their statutory duties well and are fully included in the very strong team spirit that is greatly encouraged by the example of the headteacher and deputy. Financial management has been good, and has coped well with the difficulties associated with falling numbers.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents strongly support the school and especially value the ways in which children are helped to settle in and then are expected to work hard. Leadership and management are viewed positively and almost all parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with worries or concerns. A small number of parents think that behaviour should be better and that there may be bullying. However, no evidence could be found to support this view, although behaviour is occasionally less than satisfactory and playtimes are sometimes boisterous.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Improve standards, especially in English, mathematics and science.
- Give more advanced work to potentially high attaining pupils so that they reach higher standards.
- Lengthen the teaching day for Years 3 to 6 and increase the time given to art, religious education and music.
- Make more systematic the rewards and sanctions that are used to support the school's otherwise good work in improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- Involve more people in the identification of priorities for improvements to the school's provision and make it clear what the pupils will gain from the changes.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve well but from a low base so that standards in Year 6 are below average in most subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in the nursery and reception is good overall.
- Achievement in all subjects where judgements are made is good, except in religious education where it is satisfactory and ICT where it is very good.
- Standards are below average in English, maths and science.
- Standards are well below average in religious education throughout the school and in art in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	11.9 (11.7)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	10.1 (10.5)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	14.0 (15.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 20 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	25.8 (26.5)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	23.6 (26.5)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	27.2 (29.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. The overall findings of the inspection are that standards in Year 2 are well below average in English, mathematics and science and in Year 6 they rise, but only to below average. However, test scores do not show the impact of teaching nor pupils' real achievement. This is because large numbers of pupils who arrive at the school stay for a while and then leave, whilst others arrive from other schools and their test results appear in tables such as the ones above. Over the past five years, 40 per cent of pupils who took the Year 6 tests did not begin their education at this school; an even greater number who began here left for other schools before taking the tests. In one recent year the proportions reaching nationally expected levels in Year 6 were reduced by 20 per cent in English and by only a little less in mathematics and science because of the impact of newer arrivals; the 2003 results were lowered by an influx of pupils in Years 5 and 6. Because many pupils who arrive part-way through their primary schooling have well below average attainment on entry, their test results, though below average, are often creditable and they make the same good progress as others.

2. Children's attainment when they enter nursery is well below average in all areas of learning. Their achievement is good overall, so that children reach below average standards in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical

development and creative development. Progress is steady in communication, language and literacy and standards are well below average; there was too little evidence seen to judge standards in mathematics.

3. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory; standards are well below average in English, mathematics, science, music, religious education and art. Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology and reach nationally expected standards; this is mainly because high quality facilities and resources are used expertly by teachers and teaching assistants. No judgements are made on standards in design and technology, history, geography and physical education, as too little evidence was seen.

4. In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve well overall. Standards rise in English, mathematics and science mainly because national strategies have been intelligently adapted. Teachers make it very clear, both to groups and individuals, what they are going to learn and this focuses everyone's mind well. Pupils sing, for example in assemblies, with immense enthusiasm, articulating words well and in tune. On occasions the work given to higher attaining pupils is not sufficiently demanding. The shortness of the teaching week has the most negative effect on music, religious education and art. In these subjects achievement is limited because lessons are too short or too spaced out over the term. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

5. Attitudes to school and behaviour in it are both satisfactory overall, but display a wide range of variation from exemplary to unacceptable. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. The school works hard and imaginatively to try and ensure an harmonious community and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are effective systems for monitoring attendance and strenuous efforts are made to improve levels.
- Efforts and schemes to improve behaviour and personal development are thoughtfully implemented and generally successful.
- Older pupils' respond well to being given responsibilities
- The occasional unsatisfactory behaviour of a minority of pupils in lessons has a negative effect upon others' learning.
- Children's understanding of living in a multicultural society is underdeveloped.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.1	School data	0.4
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

6. For some years attendance levels at this school have fluctuated around below or well below the national norms, around 93 per cent. Through well-focused effort, the school has reduced unauthorised absence to below national levels and is continuously attacking any absence through good monitoring and impressive teamwork between the deputy headteacher and a very active education welfare officer. Lateness is also tackled vigorously and has been reduced to a few core families and more acceptable levels.

7. Efforts to improve pupils' attitudes to school and behaviour in it are a major part of all staff's work. The school works tirelessly to create an acceptable school environment that is harmonious and conducive to learning. These efforts are linked to the good work done on the personal development of pupils. Many pupils enter the nursery low in self-esteem and social and communication skills. By the time they leave the reception, dramatic improvement may be seen; then to talk to a group of Year 6 children and hear them discuss, maturely, how they take responsibility and wish to change things in school, is to witness how well personal development in the school works.

8. However, in almost every class there is a significant minority of quite disturbed and potentially disruptive children who are demanding of teacher attention and, at times, have a negative effect upon other pupils' learning. At the other extreme, very good attitudes and behaviour may be seen (for example, in lessons in several classes or a whole school assembly). Overall, a satisfactory situation prevails, but not without considerable staff effort.

9. A major strategy in use is the *You Can Do It* scheme that undoubtedly has a significant effect, especially with the more difficult pupils. Behaviour policy is very positive and there is a clearly set out chain of staff responsibility for dealing with individual misbehaviour. On some occasions the absence of a clear hierarchy of rewards and sanctions results in unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons continuing unchecked for too long, so that learning is affected. However, in view of the number of pupils who have severe disruption in their lives, staff do well in ensuring that the school remains a place of relative calm and harmony, with much serious work progressing. As a last resort the school is prepared temporarily to exclude pupils and this is done appropriately.

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	133	8	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	0	0

10. An issue raised by a significant minority of parents was bullying, and inspectors made this topic a special focus. Investigations show that when there is inappropriate behaviour it is nearly always identified and is then dealt with appropriately. In discussions with older pupils (some of whom had acted as *Bully Line* representatives) it became clear that many of them felt that what was often termed 'bullying' was a 'falling out' of erstwhile friends - or similar, lesser problems that quickly resolved themselves.

11. The personal development of pupils is well assisted by good social and moral development, which is very evident in all discussions on behaviour, in *You Can Do It* lessons and in related assemblies. Spiritual development is satisfactory, although too few opportunities are made for all curriculum areas to contribute. Cultural development is good in terms of children understanding the indigenous culture. A wealth of visits and visitors enhance this – for example, to musical concerts and (during the inspection) to the Black Country Museum. However, more could be done to give positive insights into the multi-cultural nature of the local community and the wider world.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

12. The school provides good quality education.

Teaching and learning

13. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Assessment arrangements support teaching and learning well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan lessons with clear learning intentions, explained effectively, so pupils know precisely what is to be learned.
- Ongoing assessment is used well to provide work that closely matches the needs of most pupils. However, higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged.
- The unsatisfactory behaviour of a small minority of pupils sometimes has a negative effect on the learning of the class.
- Teaching assistants provide very good support to pupils' learning.

Commentary

14. Throughout the school all lessons are characterised by good planning and by teaching that builds carefully on earlier learning. Hence, pupils develop knowledge and understanding in a consistent way. Because teachers communicate clearly, pupils know what to do and most of them approach new work confidently. The work of teaching assistants, who are well informed about teaching and the curriculum, adds much to classroom practice; most groups of pupils receive effective additional support in lessons. Teachers use modern technology effectively, especially to revise pupils' earlier learning.

15. A significant minority of pupils have behavioural problems but teachers successfully maintain a positive ethos whilst managing inappropriate behaviour calmly. However, this sometimes results in teachers allowing individual pupils too many chances and their inappropriate behaviour affects the learning of others in the class.

16. In the very best lessons, mainly seen in the reception class and Years 2 and 5, teachers use good questioning techniques that make pupils think. The dynamic style of teaching captures pupils' interest so they listen attentively. Learning intentions and instructions are explained clearly, resulting in real purpose to pupils' work. No time is wasted and there is a sense of challenge and urgency in teaching and learning.

17. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, find learning fun because teachers provide a good range of activities to interest and engage them. Learning is effective because teachers have good subject knowledge, and break down learning into small steps. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to work independently and in small groups. Throughout the school, pupils are provided with sound opportunities for independent research, so that, by Year 6, most develop good strategies for personal study. Parents rightly judge

the quality of teaching to be good overall and 80 percent of pupils responding to the questionnaire say they learn new things in lessons.

18. Teachers effectively evaluate their lessons and adapt daily planning to meet pupils' needs. All teachers conduct termly assessments in English and mathematics and use the information well to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in the learning both of individuals and the class. Future planning is conscientiously adapted to meet the needs of the class as a whole and especially for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. However, most teachers differentiate insufficiently for higher attaining pupils by providing additional challenge to motivate and extend their learning.

19. Pupils are set individual, appropriate targets for improvement, such as *Use paragraphs in my writing*. This is effective in helping pupils to develop an understanding of where they are and what they need to do to improve. The use of these targets is inconsistent; for example, in some classes pupils know their targets well and adapt their work, whilst in others pupils are less sure, or the target has already been met, and impetus is lost.

20. Most aspects of English and mathematics are well taught. However, because handwriting is not consistently taught, many pupils fail to develop a fluid handwriting style by Year 6, and this affects the overall presentation of their work. Too few opportunities are made for pupils to write at length, limiting fluency and individuality of style.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in [number] lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	7	6	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

21. Curricular opportunities are satisfactory overall, with good opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The timetable for the junior classes is shorter than the nationally recommended time. This and the short lesson before lunch means that some subjects are not given enough time.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures they make good progress.
- Clubs, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum.
- The building is spacious and is used well, although outside play area is limited.

Commentary

22. Curriculum provision is good in the nursery and reception classes and in English, mathematics, science and ICT in the rest of the school. In other subjects it is satisfactory apart from PE, in which too little evidence was seen to make a judgement.

23. The lack of a nearby playing field limits what the school can offer in physical education and games. However, the school compensates for this by hiring a local sports stadium where pupils learn netball, football, hockey and athletics skills. First steps have been taken to improve facilities in the playground used by infants and juniors; for example, fixed basketball posts have been provided. The school has rightly identified the outside play area for nursery and reception children

as needing improvement. Some of these improvements have already been made and the space is used well to support learning.

24. In recent years numbers have fallen, resulting in some rooms being no longer needed for whole-class teaching. These now provide well-used spaces for effective specialist provision, work in small groups for those who need it and work stations for computers. The lack of a good library space is about to be remedied.

25. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Suitable sex and drugs education policies and schemes of work are in place. These are supported by productive visits from the health visitor. Much good work is done using the *You can do it* approach, enhancing pupils' self-esteem and improving their attitudes.

26. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good because teachers and classroom assistants support these pupils well. This enables them to access all areas of the curriculum. They benefit from being given work suited to their abilities in class lessons and from receiving specialised help from special educational needs staff in small groups. Pupils who speak English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum.

27. Through a rich programme of visitors and visits the school establishes strong links with its community. A notable feature of the curriculum is the strong links the school has built up with many local businesses. The use of these visits and visitors to support several subjects at the same time is especially effective.

28. The timetable for junior classes is shorter than the recommended time by about an hour a week. There is also a short lesson each day before lunch. Because pupils are often returning from group work in other parts of the school, time is lost in this lesson. This means that the time available for music and religious education, which are often taught at this time, is restricted. Some timetable slots are shared between art and design and technology and this works much better for design and technology than for art.

Care, guidance and support

29. The good systems for the care and support of pupils underpin all that is achieved in this school and are part of its key strengths.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The health, safety and welfare of children are successfully promoted.
- Relationships are good between all staff and pupils
- Continual well-informed support for individual children guides provision.
- Pupils are productively involved in the running of the school

Commentary

30. All aspects of care and support in this school are good. They are based upon a network of good relationships that underpins the mass of work done to encourage good attitudes, behaviour and personal development. The universally good relationships start with the role models of the staff themselves who are very much a team, whilst the headteacher and her deputy offer a seamless partnership. All members of staff know individual pupils well and they use this knowledge to provide effective and constant support and guidance. Additional resources are also drawn in to support the many children needing constant guidance - such as the effective 'Special Friends' who are volunteer mentors from a local church and other sources.

31. Pupils, justifiably, feel safe and secure in school both physically and emotionally. Matters such as health and safety, child protection, first aid and health development are all efficiently attended to from the governing body through to an active staff. Appropriate records are efficiently

kept.

32. Induction into the school, through the stages and on to whatever secondary school pupils go to is diligently and sensitively handled.

33. Older pupils are very much involved in the running of the school. They readily accept many responsibilities and are involved in wider issues too. Thus several Year 6 pupils have been involved in the School Council, currently moribund, but about to be restored and several Year 5 pupils have been involved in importing new ideas to Brierley Hill through the *Gung Ho!* scheme with local schools.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

34. Good links have been established with the local community and with other local educational establishments. There are satisfactory links with parents.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Communications are good to parents, including reporting on pupils' progress.
- Good work, led by the Link Worker, attempts better to engage parents. However, a few do not respond to the school's approaches.
- Good links with the local community, including local businesses, and good links with other schools in the area, add extra dimensions to the curriculum.

Commentary

35. It is hard to fault the continuous efforts being made by the school to inform parents and to try and better engage them. Communications home are particularly good – not only regarding day-to-day matters, but also through particularly well thought out and produced leaflets on topics such as *Working Together*, *Reading Matters*, *Attendance Matters*, and a series of *Your Child in Year X* booklets. All these give insights into what the children do and how parents can help.

36. These printed media have been supplemented by not just parents' evenings, but many initiatives embracing face-to-face instruction and community education initiatives. A teacher (Link Worker) has been given specific time and responsibility for these initiatives, which, sadly, have gained little response (even an ICT course on *Keeping up with the kids*). But the school continues to make the effort with new ideas and attempts to resurrect old ones, like the Parent Teacher Association.

37. Nonetheless, a parents' questionnaire and the few parents at the parents' meeting with inspectors indicated that attitudes to the school are overwhelmingly positive. Two of the negatives expressed by a minority concerned bullying and communications – both points not supported by the evidence of the inspection. The efforts of the school with parents and the work being done for the children deserve a more positive response and a closer interest in the work of the school from the significant minority of parents who regularly do not respond to the school's approaches.

38. The good links that exist with other schools in the area include the imaginative *Gung Ho!* scheme and joint work on developing the curriculum. (*Gung Ho!* is a local project that enables the sharing of good practice in school management and the curriculum). Good work is done to ensure that the links with all secondary schools served are kept open and good links exist with local Further Education and Initial Teacher Training Colleges.

39. Links with the wider community are good and also benefit teaching and learning. These include links with local businesses – the factory across the road, a manufacturer who helps on design and technology projects and the Merry Hill Shopping Centre. Local facilities and institutions are well used in broadening and refreshing the curriculum.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

40. The school is very well led and well managed. Governors make good contributions to the school's positive approach.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's strong sense of purpose is ably complemented by the deputy, the two working in real partnership.
- Leadership and management benefit from the powerful team spirit and work ethic of staff.
- Financial management has been secure over a number of years during which falling pupil numbers have caused the budget to shrink.
- Careful monitoring and evaluation ensure that all improvements planned match the school's needs, although
- Too few non-staff members contribute ideas at the planning stage and
- The effects of planned changes on pupils' achievements are not spelled out clearly enough.

Commentary

41. Leadership from the top is strong but all staff contribute to, and share in, the school's positive vision and approach. Good and well-understood management systems are operated well by all at the school, often working in small groups in which the views and skills of all are put to very effective use. The result is that policies and practices are almost invariably consistent throughout the school. Thus pupils feel secure and their personal development and academic standards benefit. A good example of the team approach is seen in the production of plans for further improvement to all aspects of the school's work. All staff are systematically consulted; the management skills of co-ordinators and senior staff are used to prioritise and give shape to the ideas; governors scrutinise the draft plan and make their own suggestions; the resultant plan is a thorough, detailed description of how the school intends to move forward. However, there are two gaps. Firstly, as only staff members participate in the early stages there is a danger that issues important to parents, pupils or even governors may not get the attention they deserve. Secondly, although the plans include 'success criteria', they are rarely centred on the intended gains for pupils' welfare or achievement so that it may be possible for the success criteria to be met without any recognisable gains for pupils.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	571474	Balance from previous year	32529
Total expenditure	560749	Balance carried forward to the next	43254
Expenditure per pupil	2503		

42. Governors have managed finances very well. Over the past five years, numbers on roll have almost halved, with a considerable reduction in the school's budget. This could have had a crippling effect on finances, with difficult to manage staff losses and possible low morale, empty classrooms that still need maintaining and the possibility of overspending. Although times were difficult, none of the foregoing is to be seen. Staff numbers are adequate and morale is high; good, newer uses have been found for spare spaces; all rooms are attractively presented and improvements have been made to the grounds; there are secure plans to enhance the premises by providing the necessary library; the budget is balanced. The governors also meet all other statutory responsibilities well and play an appropriate part in shaping the vision and direction of the school.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

43. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage (the nursery and reception classes) is good - as it was at the previous inspection. There are currently ten children in the reception class and a further thirty-eight children who attend the nursery part-time. Children stay in the nursery longer than at most schools and many are already reception age. Their attainment on entry to school is well below average. Children have weak speaking and listening skills and many do not co-operate readily. Nevertheless, children achieve well in most areas of learning because teaching is good and the curriculum is planned to provide a suitable range of interesting and relevant activities, well matched to their needs. All adults work very effectively together as a cohesive team, monitoring and supporting children's progress well. The inside accommodation is spacious. Outside, the small playground is being developed to make it a more stimulating environment. Resources are generally satisfactory but the range of fixed equipment for outdoor activities is limited.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children feel confident and happy because supportive relationships are quickly established.
- Children behave well and soon settle into classroom routines.
- Induction arrangements are good and there are good links with parents.
- Many children play alongside other children rather than play with them.
- A significant number of children do not persevere for very long.

Commentary

45. At the end of the reception year, children's personal, social and emotional development is below that expected for their age. Children come willingly to school and have settled well. They have quickly learnt, and follow, school routines. They behave well and listen to each other's contributions without interrupting. Adults explain activities very well to children and give them the opportunity to choose the activity they want. However, children do not persevere for very long at some activities, quickly losing concentration, for example when attempting to complete a jigsaw. When they find an activity that catches their imagination they stick at the task for a long time with single-minded attention and some resent other children trying to join in. Often children play alongside each other rather than co-operating, and this limits the development of their social and language skills. For example, three children each used large plastic bricks to build a wall at the same time but did not work together to use all the bricks to make a large wall, nor did they talk to each other – even though they had been encouraged to do so in earlier lessons.

46. School staff visit children and parents in their homes, and parent and child sessions are arranged in school. Parents are kept well informed about the school through booklets and newsletters. The teacher and assistants have established good relationships with the children. There is a positive atmosphere in which children's efforts are valued and achievements celebrated. Children are kept busy because there are many activities for them to pursue. On occasions, adults do not direct children to activities often enough in order to improve their perseverance and concentration at the best possible rate. Nonetheless, in general, adults in the class support children well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults' imaginative approach to lessons engages and motivates children well.
- Children receive very good support from the teacher and classroom assistants.
- Some opportunities are missed to develop writing and speaking and listening skills.
- Planning is clearly linked to this area of learning.

Commentary

48. The majority of children are on track to be well below the nationally expected level in this area of learning by the end of the reception year. Many children enter school with poor language skills. Many find it difficult to explain what they want to say because they do not speak clearly or know enough words. This seriously affects standards in all areas of learning. Nevertheless, teaching is good and children learn well. The teacher plans lessons well and all adults in the classroom are used very well to support children's learning. Children's imagination and interest are caught because tasks are often imaginatively presented – for example, when adults and children dress as characters from nursery rhymes. This helps children maintain interest over several days as they carry out tasks connected to the topic. Reading skills are developed well – for example when the teacher and classroom assistant show and read the story of 'Humpty Dumpty' and the similar 'Little Lumpty' story. Children say what happened at the beginning, middle and end of the stories. They begin to work out the meaning behind the stories. Although children are keen to answer, many reply only in short phrases. Staff make too few opportunities to show them how to answer in sentences. Children are beginning to recognise letters of the alphabet and some higher attaining children identify letters from their names in books. Several can write their first name. Not enough use is made of the writing and home corners/role-play areas to develop oral and writing skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

49. Not enough work was seen to make judgements on provision or standards in mathematics. Teachers' planning shows that the curriculum is appropriate to children's needs and reflects national guidance. Children have the opportunity to develop mathematical skills and understanding through activities such as counting games, for example, when catching fish using a magnet. They receive good support from the teacher in learning to count money. Satisfactory opportunities to develop an understanding of time are planned through activities such as talking about 'Hickory, Dickory, Dock'.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are well-planned and link effectively with other areas of learning.
- Adults support children very well.
- Adults use questions well to develop children's knowledge of the world about them but sometimes miss opportunities to fully extend their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Commentary

51. Teaching and learning are good and children learn well, although most children are working below expected levels for their age. A good variety of interesting activities is provided to stimulate

children's curiosity. For example, children were excited, and adults used this to ensure that they learned at a good rate, when they marched outside playing drums. As on other occasions, teaching captured children's imagination and well-phrased questioning extended children's knowledge. Children concentrated well and described the drums, saying the sides were made of metal and wood. Children learn to control actions using a computer; for example, using the mouse to build pictures of spiders by dragging legs onto body shapes. Children are let down by their poor language skills and limited vocabulary. For example, in the follow-up to the marching with drums session they could name the colours gold and silver but could not talk about the properties of the metals; they did not know what a cardboard box was made from. When talking about pots they had planted with bulbs in a previous lesson, some children could not remember why the bulbs needed to be planted in compost or soil. On occasions, adults miss opportunities to develop children's knowledge of the world around them. For example, when they did not remind children how to build a stronger plastic brick wall by overlapping the bricks as in the classroom walls.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

52. Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good support is given to children by adults.
- Provision for outdoor play has limitations.
- Children behave well in exciting situations.
- Children learn to use tools accurately.

Commentary

53. Children are on track to reach standards that are below the expected goals by the end of the reception year. No lessons in the hall were observed but observations in the playground and the classroom show that children have reasonable control of their movements. Although some find cutting with scissors difficult, and results are disappointing, most have satisfactory control of pencils and brushes and colour reasonably accurately within shapes. Adults provide good support when they help children to learn how to use scissors. Children develop manipulative skills steadily when handling dough and pastry cutters. Adults lead children in exciting and stimulating exercises such as marching to the beat of a drum. Children behave well in these sessions because teaching has established high expectations of behaviour. The outdoor play area, although it is being developed, has a limited amount of equipment and this limits the children's physical development.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of activities supports children's creative development well, although sometimes opportunities are missed to encourage creativity.
- Children have difficulty in handling small objects, such as jigsaws.
- The use of the home corner encourages children to use their imagination well.

Commentary

55. Most children are on course to achieve standards a little below the national learning goals by the end of the reception year. Children achieve well because teaching and learning are good. Adults develop children's literacy skills while they work at activities, for example talking about spiders and introducing words such as 'web' while children decorate biscuits. The teacher provides a good range of activities to support children's creative development, providing opportunities for

them to paint, cut out shapes, construct puppets, build walls and use train sets imaginatively. Some of the younger children find it difficult to roll out dough to cut out biscuit shapes but most colour inside shapes accurately. They also find it difficult to assemble a jigsaw and do not stick at the task very long. When painting, opportunities are missed to encourage creativity by, for example, mixing the paint colours themselves and making choices between brush sizes and types in order to get a desired effect. Children use their imagination well in the home corner when, for example, they make imaginary cups of tea to offer to adults.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

56. Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Because teaching is good, pupils achieve well from their well below average standards on entry; however, standards are below average in Year 6.
- The assessment of pupils' work is good and the information gained is used well to plan subsequent work.
- Teachers pay good attention to improving pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- Not enough is expected of higher achieving pupils, especially in writing.
- Classroom assistants are used very well to support pupils.
- Pupils benefit from the attention paid by teachers to spelling, which is good by Year 6.

Commentary

57. Teachers' clear explanations and quick-fire questions ensure that pupils understand the objectives of lessons, and keep them on their toes. Teachers use imaginative methods to reinforce teaching points, for example, pronouncing the silent letters in words such as 'gnarled' and 'know'. The structured approach to spelling adopted by the school is the reason for pupils' good standard of spelling by Year 6. Teachers are able to plan work that builds well on earlier learning because they assess pupils' work well, give them individual targets and give praise when they reach targets such as not putting capital letters in the middle of sentences. This gives focus to pupils' learning and encourages them in their efforts. A particular strength of teaching is the very good use teachers make of classroom support assistants, carefully planning how they are used to help pupils, with work well-matched to their abilities.

58. Standards in speaking and listening are well below what is expected for their age by Year 2 and, although they improve, are still below expectations by Year 6. This affects progress in subjects such as science where pupils have difficulty explaining what has happened in an experiment. Nevertheless, teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills; for example, pupils are asked to explain their working to the rest of the class. Pupils with special educational needs are asked carefully phrased questions and their answers show they often listen carefully. Teachers speak clearly and set good examples when they read stories.

59. Standards in reading are well below average by Year 2. This is partly because, for some pupils, reading does not play a big part in their lives out of school. Few pupils can name a favourite book or describe a story they like. Not all pupils know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. Lower and average attaining pupils often guess at words and do not recognise when they have made mistakes. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to read with expression and recognise many words. By Year 6, reading is below average. Pupils name authors such as J K Rowling and Roald Dahl. Visits to the local library compensate to some extent for the lack of a school library and pupils understand how to find the books they want. Most pupils have a sound knowledge of words and use their understanding of letter sounds and the context of the book to work out new words and

phrases such as 'curtain of ivy'. However, only higher attaining pupils understand what they are reading well enough to work out hidden meanings in stories.

60. In writing, standards are below expected levels by Year 6. Pupils follow formulae prepared by teachers to help them put their writing in sequence. However, this method does not encourage pupils to be adventurous in their writing and to show that they know how to arrange their stories. Good teaching means that pupils in Year 2 have progressed from writing in phrases, often without verbs, to sentences with capital letters and full stops. However, their choice of words is mundane and reflects their lack of familiarity with books and their below average reading skills. By Year 6, many pupils produce neat handwriting. However, not many pupils join their handwriting, often relying on letters butting up to the next letter rather than performing a correct join. The handwriting of some teachers does not present good models for pupils to copy.

61. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress towards their learning targets because of the good support they receive from class teachers, special needs teachers and classroom assistants.

62. The management of the subject is good. Training for teachers and classroom assistants is arranged to address weak areas of the curriculum, such as reading. The results of national tests and pupils' work are analysed to identify what parts of the curriculum pupils find difficult and to amend planning in order to better help pupils. Resources are satisfactory but there is no library. This limits opportunities for pupils to carry out personal research.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. Work in other subjects is used to teach English skills, such as writing reports of the life of Florence Nightingale in history. However, not enough writing is done in subjects such as history and geography to develop pupils' writing skills. Pupils use skills taught in information and communication technology effectively when word processing their written work.

MATHEMATICS

64. Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good.
- A significant proportion of lessons is taught very well.
- Pupils work hard in many lessons although when teaching is unstimulating some of them lose concentration.
- Good techniques for assessing pupils' understanding are used well to plan later lessons, enabling most newcomers to the school to do as well as the other pupils.
- Higher attaining pupils could do better.

Commentary

65. Although standards are well below average by Year 2 and below average in Year 6, pupils achieve well from their low base on entry. Not only is the average level of attainment low on entry from reception class, but many pupils who arrive later than that often arrive with a combination of low attainment and difficult personal circumstances. Two features of the school's work contribute to the good levels of achievement. Firstly, the school has a friendly, welcoming atmosphere that allows pupils to settle in quickly and, secondly, rigorous assessments are made regularly of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills so that subsequent work is often matched well to their needs. However, the potentially highest attainers are regularly given work that demands too little of them, so that some do not reach the standards of which they are capable. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are supported well both by teachers and support staff and so they make good progress.

66. The most effective lessons are characterised by teachers' clear, expressive explanations that set a purposeful and happy learning atmosphere. Very effective use is made of modern technological aids such as computer driven white boards; the smoothly unfolding explanations and illustrations hold pupils' interest and make the learning clear to them. Pupils are used to this way of working and even those with special needs contribute to lessons by changing the computer display by clicking or tapping in the correct spot. In these lessons pupils not only retain their interest for good lengths of time but there is often a light in their eyes and an eagerness in their response.

67. Teachers' planning is universally strong and this contributes well to the judgement that all lessons observed were at least satisfactory. Lesson plans are often adapted in the light of how well pupils coped with earlier work, and this helps to build well on earlier learning. However, a minority of lessons lack sparkle; material that could be made interesting is presented in an accurate but mechanical fashion that fails to hold the attention of pupils with low levels of concentration. On these occasions teachers and support assistants have to work hard to maintain discipline; they usually do this successfully but on occasions teachers wait too long before they correct unsatisfactory behaviour and they are inhibited from doing so because there is no clear hierarchy of rewards for good behaviour and sanctions for poor.

Mathematics across the curriculum

68. Mathematics is used satisfactorily to support work in other subjects and in turn these subjects support learning in mathematics. Data handling in ICT and science make good contributions to mathematics and work such as co-ordinates in geography and analysing dates in history make sound contributions to learning.

SCIENCE

69. Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Subject leadership is good and there are clear guidelines on the skills and knowledge to be taught.
- The curriculum is well planned to ensure a good amount of lesson time and consistent opportunities for new learning and revision.
- Teachers do not provide work that sufficiently challenges higher attaining pupils.
- The effective deployment of teaching assistants helps to hasten pupils' progress.
- The unsatisfactory behaviour of individual pupils in some lessons impacts on the learning of others.

Commentary

70. Most pupils start Year 1 with well below average attainment in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and achieve steadily to attain well below average standards at Year 2. Well below average literacy skills have a significant effect on pupils' ability to express ideas or write simple reports. By Year 6, most pupils develop good subject knowledge, but below average literacy skills continue to affect the quality of recording the outcomes of experiments and the communication of hypotheses. Achievement is good and standards improve to be below average.

71. The introduction of effective subject guidelines has enabled teachers more carefully to plan appropriate scientific provision so that pupils develop new skills and knowledge in a consistent way. The result of this is that Year 6 pupils' attainment in national tests rose significantly from well below average in 2000 to above average in 2002. A decline in 2003 is attributed to a new test format that taxed pupils' below average literacy skills. Also, approximately one-third of pupils in this cohort joined the school part way through their education, mostly in Years 5 and 6, resulting in limited time

to address inconsistencies in their learning. The current generation of Year 6 pupils is now back on course, so that a good proportion is predicted to attain average levels or higher.

72. Teachers plan work that shows clearly what pupils will learn in each class and lesson. This enables pupils to gain a firm base of knowledge and understanding and is a strength of teaching. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' work over time, but the information gained is not always used effectively to plan work that closely matches the differing abilities of pupils, especially the higher attainers.

73. In the two lessons observed, teaching was satisfactory. Teachers used new technology well, effectively capturing pupils' attention and enabling very effective revision of earlier learning. Teachers' explanations were carefully structured and clearly spoken so that pupils remained focused and listened attentively. Adult support was deployed effectively to support small groups, providing good opportunities for pupils to verbalise their ideas, and to concentrate for appropriate periods of time. In one lesson, the unsatisfactory loud behaviour of one pupil, being insufficiently checked by the teacher had a negative effect on the learning of others.

74. Teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for pupils to apply skills taught in literacy and numeracy, for example writing up an experiment in Year 6 or constructing a block graph about favourite foods in Year 2. Standards of presentation are sometimes marred by the lack of a fluid hand writing style or incorrectly spelt scientific words. Pupils are beginning to apply ICT skills in science lessons; for example, Year 5 pupils used sensors to measure the melting point of ice. However, opportunities are also missed in lessons, for example, by producing computer-generated graphs to record investigation outcomes.

75. Good leadership has resulted in all teachers having a good grasp of the subject and how to plan for effective learning. Effective analysis of test results has enabled the co-ordinator to identify strengths and to take whole school action to address gaps in provision. Effective monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work enables the co-ordinator to systematically track pupils' progress across the school. Pupils' standards are below those reported at the last inspection, but comparisons are unreliable due to the now high levels of pupil mobility and the significantly smaller number of pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

76. Provision in information and communication technology is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- The school has good resources for ICT and good decisions have been taken regarding the most effective way of using the resources in the school.
- Arrangements for training staff are good and have resulted in staff having good subject knowledge.
- Higher attaining pupils are sometimes not given work that makes them think hard enough.

Commentary

77. Pupils develop a range of skills that matches national expectations. As they start school with well below average standards, this represents very good achievement. Year 1 and Year 2 pupils use different fonts, change letter size and colour and add explanations to pictures they have drawn. Older pupils use sensing equipment to measure temperature and draw graphs of the results. They have good keyboard skills, which they use to produce, for example, election speeches, importing graphics and digital photographs. Pupils use a variety of techniques to display their work, for example, setting it out in three columns. They enter commands to move a pointer about the screen to draw mathematical shapes. Pupils give instructions to make traffic lights work in sequence.

78. In the one lesson seen in Year 2, the teacher's good knowledge of the subject enabled her to explain the task clearly and simply so that pupils learnt how to use an index to find information about animals. The good teaching meant that pupils found the information they needed.

79. A notable feature of the use of ICT in the school is the way teachers use the technology as a teaching aid. Several classrooms are equipped with touch sensitive screens which teachers use to illustrate lessons. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, the teacher displayed successive examples of writing of increasing complexity to show how writing could be developed. Pupils make good use of the digital camera to record events in school and on visits, and they incorporate the images in their work.

80. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator is a skilled user of ICT and passes knowledge on to colleagues so that they are gaining confidence and skill in using ICT.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

81. Satisfactory use is made of ICT for supporting work in other subjects. All classes use word processing programs to copy up work in English. In science, pupils use sensing equipment to measure temperature. They compile lists of data, such as football results, in mathematics lessons and produce graphs to illustrate and interpret the data. In Year 6, pupils use a variety of media to present work on the Victorians

HUMANITIES

82. Religious education, history and geography were timetabled during the inspection but only a little teaching was observed due to the competing demands of the inspection and the timing of lessons. However, teachers' planning and pupils' work were examined and discussions were held with pupils and staff about all three subjects. Thus judgements are made on some, but not all, aspects of provision.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

83. Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and visiting experts.
- The time given religious education is too little for pupils to benefit fully.

Commentary

84. Religious education is seen by the school as having a strong place in school life. This is very true of the morning acts of worship which play a powerful part in starting the day on a warm and positive note – sometimes even an inspirational one. It is also true of the contributions made by visitors who come to talk about their beliefs and of visits to study a number of faiths - for example the Year 5 visit to 'Faith City'. It is less true of normal religious education lessons. Many of these are slotted into the last 30 minutes of the morning and, in practice last much less than that. Thus teaching is rushed and pupils' work lacks depth. There are effective touches such as when pupils from different backgrounds explain their beliefs and religious practices but overall the result is that standards are well below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

Geography and history

85. Provision in geography and history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop a real interest in the subjects.
- Learning is enriched by well-chosen educational visits and visitors.

Commentary

86. Pupils' enthusiasm for both subjects stems largely from the often exciting ways in which they are presented. Each class makes at least one well-planned visit to a place that stimulates interest and that gives food for thought and material for further study. The use of these visits also to support work in a number of subjects, including art, ICT and English, further enriches learning in each of them. Not all learning is supported by visits but nonetheless is made relevant – for example when older pupils complete sustained studies about the Indian sub-continent, during which they draw on the expertise and knowledge of pupils' family backgrounds. A lesson observed in history illustrates well the school's approach. The teacher introduced a 'real-life' servant girl fleeing from Elizabeth 1. Pupils put to her questions about her life and work and made good progress in their understanding about the similarities to and differences between life then and now. Some of the work done by Year 6 pupils is not sufficiently demanding and higher attainers could do better.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

87. It was not possible to observe enough lessons to make judgements about the qualities of teaching and learning in art and design, design and technology and physical education. Analyses of pupils' work allow judgements to be made on standards in art and design and music.

ART AND DESIGN

88. Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The systematic, though occasional, use of visiting artists brings excitement to learning and stimulates a good standard of pupils' work.
- Normal provision is limited in its scope.

Commentary

89. There are considerable differences in the quality of pupils' work, and standards range from well below average to good. At the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, overall standards are well below average. Work that is undertaken as a result of using visiting artists is powerful. Large murals, in a variety of media including paint and mosaic, are broad in their scope and imaginative and skilful in their execution. They have clearly been carefully planned and their quality is underpinned by a recognition of the effects of colour, texture and form. Whilst adults have had inputs, it is pupils' work that has the impact. These projects do not take place often enough to have a major impact on standards in art – although they make a lasting contribution to pupils' appreciation of art, as they are permanent features, large, colourful and strategically placed.

90. The work that is done in more normal art lessons varies. There is a good deal of sketching in other subjects but little emphasis is placed on this work as a means of acquiring skills or aiming for artistic effect – rather it is a simple method of recording what has been learned in, for example, religious education and history. Other work, undertaken in art lessons, is overall at a well below average standard. However, there are pockets of real quality that could be built on: a Year 2 pupil's drawing of a big cat, illustrating the story of 'Mog', has immense charm and captures the character well; some of the observational drawings in Year 5 show an improving use of shading and texture and in parts they were well observed and executed.

91. In the timetable, art is bracketed with design and technology. Teachers' plans and the samples of pupils' work seen in both subjects, suggest that this works at least satisfactorily for design and technology, which gets the greater proportion of the time, but not so for art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

92. No lessons were observed and only a small amount of pupils' work was seen. However, the curriculum has some good features to which pupils' respond well – largely because of its practical nature. For example, Year 6 pupils draw well on existing skills when their work is linked with a local manufacturer of the school's sweatshirts: they visit the factory and see how they are made; the cost of manufacturing is worked out, with a number of variables such as quantities and sizes considered. Back at school, they use templates provided by the manufacturer to make sweatshirts for teddy bears; they decorate them with appliqué patterns and learn how to use sewing machines and hand stitching where they are appropriate. School documentation makes it clear that the subject is fully covered and resources are adequate.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

93. The school works hard to overcome the limitations of its site – in particular the lack of a grassed area. A local sports stadium is hired for aspects of physical education and games. After school netball and football clubs take place, the latter with contributions from Birmingham City Football Club. Good use is made of the hall for physical education lessons and the outside play areas are being developed by, for example, basketball posts provided by a local business. Swimming is taught and a gala entered. Dance is encouraged, particularly through work with a local performing arts group.

MUSIC

94. Only one lesson was observed, although the whole school was heard singing in two assemblies. Learning is extended by visiting teachers of woodwind and keyboard instruments; there are well-attended clubs for instrumental teaching such as ocarina playing and there is a singing club; the local high school provides recorder tuition. Singing is immensely enthusiastic and usually tuneful. The one lesson observed was short, as it took place in the last half-hour of the morning, immediately after a numeracy session. However, the teacher's careful preparation and drive ensured that maximum value was gained. Pupils were interested and enthusiastic. Some pupils found it hard to contain their enthusiasm and lacked patience, but the teacher handled them skilfully and behaviour and relationships remained good. Almost all pupils mastered relatively complex new rhythms in order to sing well a song from 'Bugsy Malone'. On other occasions it is reported that the lessons at this point in the timetable feel rushed.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Skills and knowledge taught in discrete lessons are systematically and effectively referred to and built upon on many occasions.
- Older pupils are ready for a more imaginative approach to a wider range of issues.

Commentary

96. When pupils start at this school, many have limited personal and social skills; sometimes they have experienced, and have to come to terms with, very difficult personal circumstances.

Throughout the school this can show itself in low self-esteem, slow rates of learning and challenging behaviour. The school's programme of personal, social and health education draws heavily and successfully on the *You can do it* approach; this helps the great majority of pupils to succeed both socially and emotionally and also helps them to progress academically. Pupils are helped to acquire an understanding that they are of worth, and that they can rise to challenges of all kinds. The school's approach in this area underpins all of its work and ensures that a significant number of children experience success in spite of the difficulties they have gone through. In order to cope, let alone succeed, a significant minority needs the all-pervading influence of *You can do it*, with its posters, notices and verbal reminders from adults in order to persevere, and so make social, emotional and academic progress. Many pupils who behave poorly from time-to-time are able to discuss their motivations, and know what they have to do in order to improve. Having benefited from the approach, a number of older pupils express some boredom and report, 'We did that years ago and we know it now', and teachers' plans show that there is, for many pupils, an unnecessarily close focus on personal issues when their maturity would allow them to benefit more from considering increasingly sophisticated issues, more of which could be concerned with issues well beyond school and the here and now.

97. Pupils develop a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy life style and know the consequences of drug misuse. There is an effective programme of sex education. The school has won awards for its approach to healthy living and pupils can explain why school snacks are dominated by healthy foodstuffs rather than crisps and sweets.

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	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	4
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
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	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
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	4
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	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

