

INSPECTION REPORT

THE CAPE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Smethwick

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 103937

Headteacher: Mrs Joanne Lloyd

Lead inspector: Judith Charlesworth

Dates of inspection: 26th – 29th January 2004

Inspection number: 255712

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 – 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 354 |
| School address: | Cape Hill Smethwick |
| Postcode: | B66 4SH |
| Telephone number: | 0121 558 1667 |
| Fax number: | 0121 555 8025 |
| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr Rajinder Bhogal |
| Date of previous inspection: | 22 June 1998 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Cape Community Primary School serves a significantly disadvantaged part of Smethwick on the outskirts of Birmingham. A new headteacher took up post in April 2003, following a period during which the school was led by several different headteachers. The pupils represent a wide variety of cultural and ethnic heritage. About ten per cent are of white European heritage; 51 per cent are of Pakistani (Mirpuri) and 13 per cent of Indian (Sikh) heritage. There are sizeable groups of African-Caribbean and African pupils. Eleven per cent of pupils are from refugee or asylum-seeking families, and there are pupils from at least nine other countries. English is the first language of a minority of pupils, and 31 per cent are at an early stage of learning the language. Three pupils are looked after by the local authority. About 80 per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals (the national average is 18 per cent). Thirty seven per cent are on the school's register of special educational needs, most at an early stage of concern. Of the others, the needs relate mostly to moderate or severe learning difficulty and emotional and behavioural difficulty; eight pupils have a Statement of their special educational need. Pupils' attainment on entry is well below average. A significant number of pupils have joined the school from other schools (about 28 per cent of the pupils now in Year 6 joined in Year 3 or later) and may have missed key areas of previous work. The school is part of the Sure Start programme for young children, and participates in the Primary Languages Pathfinder project, which encourages modern foreign languages in primary schools, and the Department for Education and Skills Test Bed Project for information and communication technology in schools. It promotes an extensive community education programme.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|
| 21501 | Judith Charlesworth | Lead inspector | Special educational needs, science, art and design, design and technology, personal, social and health education |
| 9224 | Mike Vineall | Lay inspector | |
| 10269 | David Figures | Team inspector | English, music, religious education |
| 25623 | Ted Cox | Team inspector | The Foundation Stage, geography, history, information and communication technology, |
| 2607 | Brian Griffiths | Team inspector | English as an additional language, mathematics, physical education |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective** school which is rapidly improving under the influence of the headteacher's very good leadership. Standards, though well below average, are improving in key subjects. The achievement of the pupils reflects their good personal qualities. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good leadership by the headteacher provides vision and sense of purpose to which staff are responding well, but some managers have as yet too little experience of their roles to make a full contribution to the leadership of the school and the management of subjects
- Pupils have very good attitudes and behave very well, though many lack confidence and find it difficult to work and learn independently
- The quality of teaching and learning is good
- Standards are well below average, though improving in English, mathematics and information and communication technology.
- Pupils achieve satisfactorily, though the achievement of some pupils is affected by a curriculum which does not sufficiently reflect their needs
- Some groups of pupils achieve well, notably those with special educational needs and those identified as having particular language needs

The improvement in the school's effectiveness is satisfactory. Standards, although continuing very low, are climbing again after a significant dip in test results. Provision in the Foundation Stage is improved and is now good. Middle managers are increasingly empowered by leadership which is even better than it was previously.

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* | E* | E* | D |
| mathematics | E* | E* | E* | D |
| science | E* | E* | E* | E |

*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' achievement is **satisfactory**: it is good in the nursery and reception classes and satisfactory by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards at the end of reception and at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are well below average. The test results at the end of Year 6 have been in the bottom five per cent nationally for several years, although the results have begun to improve and they compare more favourably with those of schools with similar Year 2 results. Nevertheless, there are strengths in information and communication technology, where standards are average and pupils achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and those with particular language needs achieve well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and the development of their personal qualities **satisfactory** overall. Their attitudes to work and school, and their behaviour are very good. Attendance is below average and punctuality unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of the education provided by the school is **good**. The quality of teaching is **good**, particularly in the foundation stage, and pupils learn at a fast rate. The school maintains very good

links with the different groups of parents, partner schools and the wider community to the benefit of the pupils in the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance, leadership and management of the school are **good**. Very good leadership by the headteacher is energising and revitalising the staff. Management is satisfactory: some middle managers have too little experience of the role to make a full contribution yet. The governors have a good appreciation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have seen to it that all its statutory obligations are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents support the school well, particularly liking the way the school keeps in touch with them and shows understanding of their circumstances. They also appreciate the community education programme. Pupils enjoy being at the school and think they have to work hard. A significant minority of junior-age pupils have reservations about the behaviour of some other pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Extend opportunities for leadership so that leadership roles are more widely dispersed in the school
- Focus management more securely on monitoring what pupils are learning
- Ensure the curriculum more accurately reflects pupils' needs and aptitudes

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve well in the nursery and reception classes, satisfactorily elsewhere, with some significant exceptions. Standards are well below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology and reach average standards
- Pupils achieve well in the nursery and reception classes, although the standards they attain are well below average
- Pupils who arrive at the school with little English achieve well in English and mathematics
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in English and mathematics
- Although standards are rising, they remain well below average in English, mathematics and science

Commentary

1. Pupils have taken to the newly installed and ubiquitous information and communication technology equipment like ducks to water. The results can be seen in their responsible enthusiasm for it, their rapid progress and the standards being achieved, which are higher than in any other subject. It works well in a number of ways. Teachers demonstrate computer operations on the inter-active whiteboard so that all can see, and pupils gain confidence in replicating them, also using the big screen. This transfers into other subjects, where pupils working, for example, on a text in literacy, can explore and develop ideas together. The ready access to other resources such as CDs and the Internet adds zest to their research: Year 6 pupils, for example, greatly added depth to their knowledge of ancient Greece as a result.

2. More generally, however, standards are well below average and achievement satisfactory, though both are rising as a result of the headteacher's determined management action and good teaching. In English, for example, pupils' work in Year 6 is consistent with about 60 per cent obtaining results appropriate to their age at the end of the year. In 2003 this proportion was 43 per cent and in the previous year 21 per cent. This improvement is now accelerating as a result of careful monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject. Nevertheless some barriers to pupils' learning continue. Prominent among them are pupils' poor listening skills and the unpredictable gaps in their existing knowledge, often due to changes of school, which can ambush the best-prepared of teachers at any time. The poor attendance of some pupils also affects their achievement.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 12 (10.5) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| writing | 10.5 (9.8) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| mathematics | 13.9 (13) | 16.3 (16.5) |

There were 45 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 | 22.3 (20.6) | 26.8 (26.7) |
| mathematics | 22.8 (20) | 26.8 (26.7) |
| science | 24.3 (23.7) | 28.6 (28.3) |

There were 51 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Just under forty per cent of pupils have special educational needs. These pupils' attainment is low for their age in English, mathematics and science, a fact which contributes significantly to the school's results in the national tests. Standards attained in the other subjects which involve a considerable amount of reading and writing are also low. Higher standards are reached in subjects such as art and design, or drama, as they do not rely on pupils' literacy skills.

4. For some groups of pupil achievement is good. This is well illustrated in the nursery and reception classes where a generous deployment of well led and properly briefed adults provides an imaginatively planned programme in a happy and stimulating environment. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also achieve well, often because work, planned by expert teachers and support staff, is carefully focused on their needs. For example, several pupils who are currently in Year 6 were identified when they were in Year 4 as in need of additional help with reading; the help was given and five of the six reached the national average reading standard or above, having been well below average. Their best achievement is in English; in other subjects they achieve as well as other pupils. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well in English and mathematics because they too receive good quality extra support. They make steady progress in the development of their skills, although the standards they attain are very low. Achievement is good in subjects that do not rely on literacy, but satisfactory in those that do. This is because much of the curriculum has not been adapted to match the pupils' particular needs and capabilities, and work is often too difficult to ensure they learn effectively.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

5. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work and school are very good. Their personal development is satisfactory overall. Pupils' moral and social development are good, their spiritual development is satisfactory and their cultural development is very good. Attendance is below average and punctuality in the mornings is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy school and are interested in their work;
- Pupils are not confident about their abilities, or about learning independently;
- Pupils' awareness of their different cultures and respect for one another creates a harmonious school community;
- The school is working hard to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality.

Commentary

6. Pupils say they enjoy school. This is evident in class and on the playground where the great majority are happy and show respect for one another, for example listening carefully to each other's explanations and playing happily in groups of mixed ethnicity and gender. Extra-curricular activities, such as the lunch time and after-school clubs are well attended as they meet pupils' interests. The

school's race relations policy is effective and no racist incidents have been reported. The curriculum provides very well for pupils' cultural development through art, religious education and the celebration of a wide range of religious festivals. The diversity of pupils' ethnicity is celebrated and built upon in lessons, so pupils have a very good awareness of each other's cultures and faiths. The very high priority given to informing, supporting and involving parents so that they can help their children at home is of great benefit to the pupils. This includes the school's considerable effort in improving parents' and pupils' understanding of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality: it is now improving as a result.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 8.6 | School data | 1.1 |
| 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.

7. Children enter the nursery with personal and social skills that are well below average for their age. They make good progress, but nevertheless, the great majority of pupils have not reached the expected goals for this area of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils know and understand the school and class rules. Through these, personal, social and health education lessons, and the school's positive ethos, they are beginning to understand how rules and moral codes underpin society. Some pupils are given particular responsibilities, for example in class or through the School Council. However, the pupils generally lack the confidence to be enterprising, or to take the initiative in their learning. Many do not easily find solutions to their own problems, find creative thinking difficult and need help in tackling new tasks. These under-developed aspects of their personal development hamper their learning and achievement. Pupils concentrate and learn best when activities are practical, interesting and based on content that is within their experience. Noise can sometimes bubble up in class, or pupils can lose interest if the lesson content or support is not entirely right. This happens, for example, when teachers' expectations of the pupils are too high, and when the lesson is too theoretical: many pupils find this difficult as they have immature language and study skills. Some have difficulty in understanding certain concepts, although they appear to have done so. For example, a pupil in Year 2 talked fluently about the fact that she believed plants needed heat to grow, but questioning revealed that she actually meant light and was muddled between the two.

Ethnic background of pupils

| Categories used in the Annual School Census |
|---|
| White – British |
| White – any other White background |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean |
| Mixed – White and Black African |
| Mixed – White and Asian |
| Mixed – any other mixed background |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian |
| Asian or Asian British – Pakistani |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi |

Exclusions in the last school year

| No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 32 | 0 | 0 |
| 7 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | 3 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 41 | 0 | 0 |
| 167 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | |
|---|----|---|---|
| Black or Black British – Caribbean | 9 | 1 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – African | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Any other ethnic group | 36 | 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

8. The quality of the education provided by the school is good. The school works particularly well to help parents support their children’s progress, and with other schools and agencies to secure a good level of overall provision.

Teaching and learning

9. The quality of teaching is very good in the nursery where pupils make very good progress; it is good in reception and in Years 1 – 6; pupils learn at a good rate in consequence. Arrangements for assessment are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching in the nursery is very good
- Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies well, but sometimes do not make sufficient allowance for pupils' poor language or insecure previous knowledge
- The skills of the learning support staff are effectively used to help pupils with additional needs, who achieve well
- Assessment is well established in English and mathematics but is weak in other subjects

Commentary

10. The very good teaching experienced by the nursery children means that they learn very fast from their very low starting points. The nursery area is imaginatively laid out and is a stimulating place to be, with many opportunities to develop language and number. The day is very well organised. There are well-planned, interesting activities in all the areas of learning which attract the children, although children tend to choose to work in the reading and writing areas less often. The adults take every opportunity to promote children’s language and number skills; they work constantly to help them develop good social skills.

11. Teachers in all parts of the school are good at deploying different strategies to help pupils learn. Good relationships and sensitive, positive handling of their behaviour develop pupils’ confidence. Pupils' misunderstandings are resolved helpfully, unobtrusive individual coaching keeps the reluctant pupil engaged and well-directed praise lifts pupils’ self esteem. Where lessons are particularly successful it is usually because they are carefully planned to build firmly on what has gone before; they are in well defined short sections which are completed as the lesson moves on so new ideas and techniques are introduced in easily managed stages. The teacher constantly restates what the pupils are learning. In this way, pupils’ attention is well focused and they make good progress as a result. Teachers’ questions are well phrased and properly pitched. Instructions and explanations are usually clear, except that, sometimes, the teacher does not sufficiently allow for pupils’ poor language or lack of vocabulary. On these occasions, pupils’ attention wanders and they are uncertain what is expected of them.

12. Children in reception benefit from plenty of purposeful talk which helps their language development, but in some other classes there is not enough discussion and pupils do not have enough opportunity to hear and use language. Sometimes pupils' learning is hampered when some necessary prior knowledge or skill is not secure, for example, because they have changed school. This is often unpredictable but sometimes, in their understandable desire to cover given content, teachers prepare lessons which are too difficult and not well focused on what the particular pupils actually need. This affects pupils of all groups, particularly those with special educational needs, because teaching is based on levels of literacy and understanding that many pupils have yet to achieve. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good, however, in English and mathematics. In these subjects each pupil's needs are well met by carefully planned work and good-quality support from teaching and support staff. The teaching they experience in practical and creative subjects, such as dance or art, is also good and meets their needs well.

13. Five of the sixteen or more of the pupils' home languages are spoken by at least one member of staff. This means that the pupils, especially those who are learning English, receive good help and that teachers are well briefed about how the characteristics of one language can affect the learning of another. The skills of the learning support staff are used well. Needs are carefully identified and met and much productive work is undertaken. Pupils respond well, usually work hard and so achieve well.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 0 (0%) | 7 (22%) | 16 (50%) | 7(22%) | 2 (6%) | 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.

14. The good arrangements to assess pupils' standards and achievement in English and mathematics are beginning to pay dividends in providing information about the progress of both individuals and groups and influence the targets set for them. In other subjects, assessment is at a very early stage, so that teachers are without the means of developing the curriculum in the light of pupils' progress, and pupils do not have accurate information about how they are getting on.

The curriculum

15. The broad range of curricular opportunities satisfactorily meets pupils' needs supported by opportunities for enrichment which are are good. The accommodation meets the needs of the curriculum well although it does not fully support the learning of children in reception.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources for information and communication technology are excellent
- The curriculum in the nursery and reception classes is good and very well resourced
- The curriculum is planned to be sensitive to the different groups of pupils, but in some subjects is insufficiently adapted to meet the needs and aptitudes of all pupils
- A good range of extra-curricular clubs, visits and visitors enriches the curriculum
- The accommodation is used very well, but reception pupils do not have ready access to outdoor areas

Commentary

16. Provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is good because teachers provide plenty of suitable activities in an interesting and stimulating learning environment. They make very good use of the spacious accommodation and resources are very good. Children in the reception classes, however, cannot make as much use of the outdoor areas as they should and so do not have the full opportunity for physical activity and other learning outdoors. They miss the associated personal and social development opportunities also.

17. The school's participation in the externally funded information and communication technology (Test Bed) project means that pupils follow a well-planned curriculum backed by excellent resources. Though the equipment is only newly installed, the results can already be seen in the enhanced confidence of pupils and staff. As a subject and in support of other subjects the information and communication technology curriculum is developing well.

18. In many respects, the curriculum is sensitive to the diverse needs of pupils. For example, there are single sex swimming lessons so that all girls can learn to swim. The structure of the religious education programme has pupils in Year 1 learning about the Hajj at the time of year when fathers and uncles might well be away on the pilgrimage themselves, so that lessons directly relate to what pupils know from their own experience. Pupils learn about non-European fruits such as mangoes and lychees and classroom labels are written in the pupils' own languages. Cross curricular links, for example the use of ICT and the focus on developing basic skills in English and mathematics support the learning and motivation of pupils with special educational needs very well. However, pupils are not always well served by the curriculum as it stands. There is a tendency to rely too much on national guidance which tempts the teachers to focus on content and be concerned about covering a predetermined amount of ground in a given time. When this happens, not enough account is taken of the pupils' particular needs, including the special educational needs of some pupils. For example, the science curriculum does not take sufficient account of pupils' limited language and the difficulties pupils have in understanding basic concepts about the different, interchangeable states of water (ice, steam, and vapour) before beginning work on condensation. The current practice of withdrawing pupils from lessons, including science and art, for small-group work in literacy means that some pupils miss work and do not always have the opportunity to cover it at another time.

19. The school makes very good - and often highly imaginative - use of the extensive accommodation. One corridor has been made to look like the inside of an Ancient Egyptian tomb; the entrance hall resembles a late Victorian street; the newer of the two computer suites, the inside of a space ship. Other rooms are dedicated to music and science; there is a library, and there are storage and lesson preparation areas. The absence of an accessible playing field limits what the school can offer in physical education and games but, despite this, pupils take part in sports activities against other schools. A 'secret garden' provides a tranquil outdoor classroom.

20. The curriculum is enriched well by a good range of visits, visitors and clubs. After-school and lunchtime clubs enable pupils to practise team games, athletics and chess. Pupils take part in modern, tap and Bhangra dance sessions and the drama club, as a contribution to their cultural development. Pupils' sense of history and culture is supported by visits to – for example – museums or Birmingham theatres. Visiting artists, musicians and theatre companies give further support to work in lessons.

Care, guidance and support

21. The welfare and guidance of the pupils is very good, built upon very good relationships throughout the school. Good support is given, based on the close personal knowledge of the pupils. The involvement of pupils in the life of the school is also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school ensures a safe, secure and healthy environment
- Very good relationships exist between all adults and all children
- Good knowledge of children by all staff ensures an individual approach to each but formal assessment information is not used well enough
- There are very good arrangements to prepare pupils each new stage of their education

Commentary

22. The school has worked very well to ensure a safe and secure environment for pupils. Detailed attention is given to health, safety and child protection issues under the close eye of the headteacher. Good procedures are in place and staff are all aware of their responsibilities. The close relationships between adults and pupils, together with teachers' knowledge of the pupils, ensures that any such issues are well handled.

23. The same warm relationships and teachers' understanding of individual pupils underpins the very good care provided in the school. Many of the pupils, not only those identified as having special educational needs, have problems or insecurities and many have to adjust to a world operated in a different language. The whole ethos of the school is well directed to helping overcome such difficulties however they are manifested in the individual.

24. Every stage of transition within the school and induction on moving to the secondary school is especially well handled. All who are entering the nursery have previous experience of the pre-nursery services in the community wing of the school, and prior to this many have been to the Mother and Toddler Groups (and for mothers, the Drop-in Groups). Very good initiatives ease the transition from nursery into reception and then on from reception to Year 1. Moving to secondary school is equally well handled. In addition to the formal procedures for acquainting pupils with their new school, its teachers and methods of working, the majority going on to the nearest secondary school have numerous experiences of contact with it through clubs (e.g. Chess), sport and information and communication technology long before the time comes for them to change schools.

25. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by school staff. They are quickly identified and strategies to support their achievement put into place. This is particularly effective in the nursery and reception classes where both in-class support and small group work help children to achieve well. In the rest of the school, pupils' achievement in basic skills in literacy and numeracy is well supported by the current strategies of in-class support and small withdrawal groups. However, support for learning in other subjects is less effective, partly because the focus remains on developing or practising literacy skills instead of subject-specific skills, and partly because there is not enough in-class support for the teachers in these lessons.

26. Support and guidance for the personal development of pupils is good. However it tends to rely too much on the teachers knowing the pupils well; there is too little assessment information, for example on pupils' personal development, which could be used to improve their experience of school or influence their learning.

27. The school works well to involve pupils in their own education and in its day to day running. Particularly successful in this respect has been the School Council, made up of pupils elected from each year from Year 2 to Year 6. This group conducts a very mature and impressive discussion of the needs for the school. A notable recent initiative has been to identify the need for 'Playground Buddies' – identified pupils to whom any child may go with a problem or if unhappy. The Council is going through an impressive process of specifying, advertising, interviewing and selecting such pupils.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

28. The school has taken very good and effective steps to create partnerships with parents, the wider community and local schools and colleges to the great benefit of the pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good links with parents, moulded well to the needs of the particular groups served
- Community Education and Parent Education programmes work very well to engage more stakeholders closely with the school
- Very good links with the main secondary school served, other local primary schools and colleges
- The use of community links to enhance the curriculum

Commentary

29. Procedures, practices and initiatives have been carefully tailored to the needs of the different groups of parent. Communications to parents have been carefully adapted. Print is used – indeed the prospectus is first class and there is an attractive Newsletter (illustrated with digital photographs) - but other material such as letters and notices are kept brief and simple. Much emphasis is put on face-to-face reporting on parents' evenings and numerous less formal occasions to keep close contact with parents. In particular, the work of the staff who themselves are from ethnic minorities and that of the assistant headteacher stands out. Staff communicate in at least five of the languages represented in the school and the assistant head is an ever-present feature at the front of the school, at the beginning and end of the day (as well as a frequent visitor to homes). As a result, a closeness between staff and parents is evident. Additionally, the parents of pupils with special educational needs are given suitable opportunities to discuss their children's difficulties and progress with school staff. Examples of these are the termly consultations for all parents; reviews of pupils' individual education plans (IEPs), and at the annual reviews of those pupils who have Statements of their special educational needs.

30. The educational and support programmes for parents held at the school make a very good contribution to parents' understanding of how to help their children at home. Thus, the September parents' evening is devoted to providing insights into work to be tackled and how they can help. This is extended by the adult education programme which includes regular workshops, for example on how the school teaches literacy, the Drop-in Group and information and communication technology training.

31. The adult education work offered in the community wing is a crucial component of the school's successful work in engaging the widest possible number of interested people and promote the work of the school. Around eighty people use its facilities in a typical week – not only parents - and for a wide range of activities such as social, keep-fit and childcare, information and communication technology courses. Classes and workshops have already shown valuable outcomes by encouraging

local women to take up jobs – some in the school. In addition, the school engages well with the local community and uses its resources well to refresh and broaden the curriculum. Several local arts groups, as well as a conservation group, give added interest to the teaching in the school.

32. The school uses its close links with secondary schools (especially the secondary school to which most pupils go) and with other primary schools to great benefit. This outward looking stance is rewarded in many ways, not least by participation in several experimental projects. Notable amongst these is the strand of the current experimental information and communication technology (Test Bed) project which places computers in pupils' homes. Many other benefits arise from such links, especially in making information and communication technology, physical education and sporting facilities available to the pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

33. The headteacher provides very good leadership. Systems for managing the school in order to make further improvements are sound and improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership of the headteacher is energising staff and governors; they are responding with enthusiasm and working hard to acquire the necessary skills for their roles
- The governing body is enthusiastic, has a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and meets all of its statutory duties
- School improvement planning is tightly focused on how it will help pupils to do better
- Too little contribution is made to leadership by staff other than the headteacher; and management does not yet focus enough on what pupils are learning
- The work of the support staff is not sufficiently well monitored to ensure that they make the best possible contribution to pupils' learning

Commentary

34. After an unsettled period at the most senior level, staff now speak of a renewed sense of vision and purpose that flows from the headteacher and a feeling of being valued as they are trusted to expand their roles and take a real part in school management. As a result, many managers of aspects of the school's work are acquiring new skills and undertaking new, rewarding and useful tasks. A good example is the assistant headteacher's developing work in improving pupils' attendance. The management of areas such as numeracy, information and communication technology and literacy is good, with effective contributions being made to provision. However, the programme of training and the prioritising of areas for development has not gone far enough beyond these subjects, so that overall management is satisfactory, but improving.

35. Governors' knowledge of the school ensures that they are enthusiastic supporters of its work and make helpful contributions to planning for further improvement. Whilst moves are being made in this direction, at present governors do not make early enough contributions to improvement planning, nor do parents participate in identifying areas for development. However, the plan itself is very good, absolutely precise about what impact the changes will have on pupils' achievement and well-being. It spells out well who will monitor progress and when tasks are to be completed. Work is on track. Financial management is secure and governors fully understand and operate the principles of best value. Provision has been considerably improved, for example that for information and communication technology, by successfully bidding for additional external funds.

36. There is a very positive team spirit amongst staff and governors, which has a powerful effect on the atmosphere for learning. This is not yet fully and systematically capitalised upon. At present the school's sense of direction comes largely from the headteacher, with all other parties making positive but informal contributions. Her determination that all connected with the school should quickly contribute to its leadership as well as to management is both appropriate and timely.

37. The co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) deploys and oversees the support staff effectively and personally provides good support in literacy and numeracy lessons for lower ability pupils. However, the systems underpinning this support and for ensuring its effectiveness are not sufficiently robust. For example, the SENCO's monitoring revealed that only 33 per cent of pupils' summer term individual education plan targets had been met, but these targets are often ambiguous and badly written. One such is "*to continue to develop the use of Jumpstart vocabulary.*" There is no point at which staff can say that this target has been achieved, so that a new one can be formulated to ensure pupils are continually challenged to progress further. In addition, the careful records kept by support staff working with the pupils to achieve these targets often relate to work covered rather than what the pupils are learning, so these do not yield suitable information. Whilst the SENCO and staff know informally how well each pupil is progressing, without suitable records, pupils' maximum achievement cannot be ensured.

38. Members of staff at all levels are properly qualified for their roles and the monitoring of the work of teachers, with subsequent feedback, is improving teaching and learning. However, monitoring has not been fully extended to the work of support staff so that there are times when they are needed in some lessons but are deployed elsewhere; there are other occasions when their skills are underused – for example when the class teacher is talking to the whole class and they have no substantial roles other than listening and helping to ensure that pupils do so.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Total income | 1015889 |
| Total expenditure | 1044468 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2950 |

| Balances (£) | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Balance from previous year | 83567 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 54998 |

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

39. There is a very strong drive for learning in the Foundation Stage which leads to children achieving well. Teaching is good in all areas of learning and it is usually very good. The good and imaginative curriculum meets all children's needs well. Relationships are very good and enable children to work in a happy environment in which they feel secure. Especially good provision is made for children with special educational needs who find it difficult to maintain their concentration. Good leadership and very good management keep the department moving forward through very good procedures in planning. Skilful and experienced teaching assistants give very good encouragement to the children. Assessment procedures are thorough and are used to plan work at the correct level for all children, including those with special educational needs. Accommodation is very good. The school has made very imaginative use of the space used for the nursery classes and all teaching areas are spacious. In the reception classes the extensive accommodation is very well arranged to provide well planned experiences for pupils. However, because these classes do not have ready access to outside areas, children cannot easily take advantage of large, wheeled play equipment or of learning in an outdoor context.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children settle in well and are happy because supportive relationships are quickly established
- Children behave very well
- Adults give children the chance to make personal choices
- Some children are possessive and do not willingly share toys, and many children play alongside other children rather than play with them
- Planning is good

Commentary

41. Given the very low standards most children show on entry to the nursery, they achieve well, although their standards at the end of reception are still very low. This is due to good, often very good, teaching, very good relationships and a well-planned and calm environment into which children settle quickly and soon feel secure. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to make their own decisions when choosing activities and most children learn to stay at an activity for a reasonable length of time. They learn to take turns for example while waiting to use the climbing frame and in playing card games. However children also often demonstrate their under-developed personal skills. For example, when children play with toys that interest them they are reluctant to share them with others; and children playing in groups tend to play alongside rather than with each other. Nevertheless, those children who do gain confidence show good social skills. For example, a group of reception children involved their teacher in a game they had made up and they gained great enjoyment out of making the rules of the game ever harder for the teacher to follow. The children take care of their classrooms, clearing away at the end of activities, and treat apparatus with respect. Their behaviour is very good.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well, from a very low base
- Good teaching helps children develop their vocabulary and communication skills

Commentary

43. Good teaching helps children achieve well, although their attainment when they start in Year 1 is well below that expected of children the same age because of their very low level of language when they start in school. Children's home language and ethnic differences are less significant to their attainment than other factors. Children from all groups do not listen well and they have poor knowledge of words. Unless directed by adults, children do not often choose to use the activities involving mark making, nor do they readily pick up books. They play as individuals and so do not need to respond to what other children say.

44. Accordingly, adults take every opportunity to help children widen their knowledge of words and extend their language skills and do so across all areas of learning. Children learn to listen to one another and to adults. Adults join in role-play and develop the children's thinking by talking to them; on one occasion, they talked about the dangers of hot liquids when children served cups of tea. Many children in the nursery are reluctant to speak at all, or if they do, they speak in very simple sentences or single words, needing much encouragement to do so. Children talk more willingly and to better effect in the reception classes. Children in the nursery classes are beginning to write their names and in the reception class they copy words, for example for their topic on transport, although their letters are often poorly formed. Individual higher attaining children have favourite books. In one instance a nursery child chose *The Rainbow Fish*, and 'read' the story accurately in her own words, turning the pages correctly and following the print.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

45. Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very low though pupils achieve satisfactorily
- The quality of teaching is good

Commentary

46. Children's achievement is satisfactory, although because of their very low starting point few children achieve the early learning goals in mathematical development by the time they start in Year 1. The quality of teaching is good because the approach is through many practical activities. Adults take every opportunity to develop the children's mathematical language in all areas of learning. For example, looking at a traditional Russian doll enabled children not only to put all the dolls into order of size but also say which were smaller and larger. In the reception class, children used the computer to display the results of a traffic survey as bar charts. Skilful questioning by the teacher enabled children to draw comparisons between different charts. Adults are constantly helping children to count, in one case drawing their attention to the number of pieces of fruit they use to make a fruit

salad and in another how many children have answered the register. Despite this, the children's understanding of number remains weak. They learn the language of number comparatively well but are not secure in the underlying concepts. Whilst some children count to fifteen and beyond, few can write the numbers accurately and some only count to five.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are well planned and link with other areas of learning
- Children achieve well as the result of well directed adult help
- Adults use questions well to develop children's knowledge of the world about them

Commentary

48. Teaching and learning are good and help to ensure that children achieve well from a low base. Despite this, the children's knowledge and understanding of the world is well below average by the time they enter Year 1. Teachers plan a good variety of interesting activities to stimulate children's curiosity. On one occasion, adults read the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, after which children learnt about how caterpillars change into butterflies. Additionally, they looked at the types of food that might be eaten by the caterpillar, tasting, touching and smelling items such as strawberries, mangoes and pickled gherkins. On another, they learned what food birds need in winter and observed how fat melted when it was heated to make bird feeders. Very good provision is made for children, especially those with special educational needs, to investigate the world around them in imaginative play, for example, booking tickets for a holiday in a travel agent's.

49. Adults encourage children to think about what they are doing and what is happening by constantly questioning them. In the reception classes, this helped children learn to move symbols about the interactive whiteboard to make graphs of traffic numbers. Children showed a good understanding of the traffic signs they see in the street. Role-play as traffic warden and pedestrians helped children learn the Green Cross Code. Very good accommodation and high quality resources strongly support this area of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Commentary

50. No sessions were observed outside (because of the snow and ice) or in the hall and so no judgements are made about teaching quality or the overall provision in this area of learning. However, other activities are appropriate to the age of the children. Learning to use a mouse to control the screen in a drawing program on the computer, or making graphs showing the amount of traffic outside the school encourages small and accurate hand movements. Children accurately use a battery-operated tool to assemble and take apart the pieces of a construction kit. Art work on display shows that children's skills in handling pencils and brushes is approaching appropriate levels for their age. Children confidently play on soft games equipment. They particularly enjoy the ball pool and the plastic tunnel. Good provision is made for children to learn to climb ladders on the climbing frame. Adults support nervous children well on this apparatus so that they begin to experiment with different ways of going down the slide. Children move sensibly around the classrooms, avoiding collisions. Resources and accommodation for physical development are good, except that children in the reception classes do not have easy access to an outdoor work area.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of activities supports children's creative development well
- Adults support children's learning well
- Children lack the imagination to make best use of the home corners

Commentary

52. Children's attainment is below the expectations for their age by the end of the reception year, although children achieve well because teaching and learning are good. Adults work hard to develop children's thinking and imagination. They show how objects the children have built from construction kits can be used imaginatively; opportunities are presented for children to take part in role-play. The more confident and imaginative children in the reception classes invent number games for their teacher to join in. Children are taught the skills needed to draw and paint self-portraits, snowmen, and poppies. They learn to use glue to make collages and create models of caterpillars from egg boxes. Children roll out play-dough and use cutters to make shapes. Good provision is made for children with special educational needs, who are included in all activities and who particularly enjoy singing and clapping games.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

53. The provision in English is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards, though well below average, are rising
- Pupils who start school with little English achieve well and achievement generally is improving
- The quality of teaching is good, supported by good management practice

Commentary

54. At first sight, standards in English are unremittingly low. National test results both at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have been in the bottom five per cent of the nation's results for most of the last four or more years. Yet there have been improvements during that time. To take one instance: in the Year 2 reading test in 1998, the year of the last inspection, less than a third of the pupils scored at a level appropriate to their age. The majority of the remainder were unable to take the test because of low standards. Work seen of the present Year 2 is consistent with about three quarters reaching the appropriate standard. Furthermore, a reasonable prediction for Year 6 is that just under two thirds will obtain results consistent with their age. The comparative figure for 2003 was 43 per cent and for 2002, 21 per cent. The small number of above-average results and the comparatively high proportion of pupils attaining at well below average means that, overall, standards remain well below average, though they are unlikely now to be in the bottom five per cent.

55. The reasons for the low standards lie to an extent in the circumstances of the pupils, though some groups do better than others: by and large, the white British and the Sikh pupils perform best in tests and the African-Caribbean and Pakistani pupils least well. The degree to which the home language (Creole or Mirpuri) and its structures affect the learning of English is part of the complex explanation for this. Many Muslim pupils are also learning Arabic as an further additional language.

56. That said, unevenly developed language generally is more significant than ethnic background in explaining differences in English standards. Poor listening skills lie at the heart of the pupils' difficulties. On one level this means that pupils have difficulty concentrating for long and absorbing teachers' explanations and instructions. On another level, pupils have difficulty distinguishing the sounds of words and the sounds that go together to make up words, a skill central not only to successful reading but also to confident speaking, good writing and accurate spelling. In one instance in Year 4, the teacher, having accurately observed that pupils were having difficulty reading the initial consonants of some words, was working to help them overcome it. In fact the pupils' difficulty was not with interpreting marks on the page, but in hearing the difference between such sounds as 'gl' 'pl' and 'bl': an auditory discrimination problem which stood behind the apparent reading difficulty.

57. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory up to Year 2 and in Years 3 – 6. It is improving under the influence of well-focused teaching supported by well-judged management action. Pupils do better in reading than in writing where, for many pupils, handwriting, spelling and presentation are not good enough. Some groups of pupil do better than others. Pupils who joined the school with very little English have, through well directed support, achieved well, albeit also better in reading than in writing. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well, supported by skilled learning-support staff.

58. The quality of the teaching is good, with some very good practice in Years 1 and 2. Pupils generally progress well as a result, though the comparative immaturity of some and their under-developed independent learning skills, together with unpredictable gaps in what they already know, sometimes stand in the way of fully effective learning. When it works well, the teaching is characterised by lessons planned in well defined, time-limited stages so that pupils are taken forward step by step. Teachers make good use of the information and communication technology equipment available to them. The purpose of the lesson is clear, frequently re-iterated, and tasks are well defined. Pupils' confidence is fostered by much praise and encouragement and they respond by behaving well and trying hard. On some occasions, though the teaching is never less than satisfactory, the language chosen by the teacher is not suited well to what the pupils need, especially those with special educational needs, and the purpose of the lesson is not clear enough or frequently enough reinforced.

59. The management of the subject is good: teaching and learning have been thoroughly monitored and issues arising are being addressed. This has resulted in a new energy and a renewal of confidence, so that pupils' achievement is beginning to improve, although it is too soon to measure the improvement in terms of better test results.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. English plays a satisfactory role in support of other subjects. Teachers encourage pupils to learn the specialist language of the different subjects. For example, in Year 5, the terms related to the mathematics topic are on display for pupils' reference. In Year 3/4 science, the relevant vocabulary was constantly discussed. In physical education, the evaluation of each other's performance through discussion contributed well to pupils' language skills. The school has yet to work out ways for the English curriculum to run alongside that of other subjects to their mutual benefit.

MATHEMATICS

61. Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average, though rising
- Pupils who arrive with little or no English achieve well
- There are gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills some of which date from earlier in their school lives. As a result many lack confidence
- Teaching is good, largely as a result of improvements made after monitoring and feedback.
- Teaching assistants make good contributions to learning in most situations
- The management of the subject is having increasingly positive effects as morale improves and skills are enhanced

Commentary

62. The standards reached by the current Years 2 and 6 are well below average but work taking place now is of better quality, so pupils' standards by the end of Year 6 are set to improve. In national tests seven-year-old pupils have reached very low standards in each of the last three years, as have eleven-year olds. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, but those who start school with little or no English achieve well. Systematic teaching, both alongside the rest of the class and in small withdrawal groups, helps them to understand the language needed for the subject and to master

mathematical skills at a good rate. As a result they reach standards similar to the rest of their year group.

63. A typical example of gaps in pupils' learning, alongside a lack of confidence was seen in a Year 2 lesson. A group of relatively high-attaining pupils worked without adult support for a short while. They worked in informal pairs on mathematical problems in words that required them to add numbers such as 24 and 38. Rather than discuss how to tackle the work, the first ones to finish (working without care) shared their answers with their partners who, without discussion, copied them down. More answers were wrong than were right. This was for a mixture of reasons: many pupils do not have a secure grasp of number bonds; they have too little experience of discussing their work and they lack the confidence to query whether another pupil might have got the answer to a question wrong. Similarly, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils who had solved a simple question involving division by seven changed their answers (again without thinking it through) when asked to explain why an answer was seven rather than eight. They thought that they were being challenged, and being unsure of the accuracy of their answers and lacking the confidence to try to explain, they took the easy way out. However, pupils enjoy their mathematics and try hard.

64. In the past few months teaching and learning have benefited from monitoring by the mathematics coordinator. She has systematically observed all of her colleagues teach and talked to them about the strengths of their lessons and about areas for improvement. Further analysis was made on a whole school basis and a well-designed programme to consolidate strengths as well as to make improvements where needed followed. This has had a positive effect and is feeding through to improvements in pupils' learning. This is one of a number of examples of good management of mathematics that flow from the ways in which the headteacher has helped the coordinator to acquire skills needed for the role, and trusted her to make a substantial contribution to the school's provision.

65. Good contributions to pupils' achievements are made equally by assistants whose role is to support pupils in general, those who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Much of this good work is done in small groups, on work that is of the same type as that being studied by others in the class. When the teacher is talking to the whole class, assistants contribute discreetly by helping pupils concentrate but very rarely do they undertake such potentially useful tasks as monitoring pupils' levels of participation or degree of understanding.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. The use of mathematics in other subjects makes good contributions to pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in both mathematics and the other subjects concerned. For example, there is effective use of graphs to display results of investigations in science and the interpretation of data in information and communication technology is supported well. On some occasions teachers use dates in history and distances in geography to illustrate large numbers and to give insights into their use.

SCIENCE

67. Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum does not meet the needs and aptitudes of all the pupils
- Teaching and pupils' achievement are satisfactory overall
- Standards attained are well below average

- A good analysis of pupils' performance has identified how their achievement can be improved, but the management systems are not yet in place to effect this

Commentary

68. Standards attained by pupils in the national tests at both age seven and eleven are lower now than at the time of the previous inspection. This is largely because, in comparison to similar schools, a very low proportion of pupils achieve levels that are above average for their age. This is explained by the considerable number of pupils with significant special educational needs, and who are at an early stage of learning English. Nevertheless, results have taken a slight upward turn in the past few years, and overall, pupils do a little better in science than they do in English and mathematics.

69. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily because teachers are doing all they can to help them understand the concepts and topics identified in the school's curriculum plan. Where lessons are highly practical, teaching is good and pupils learn well. One example was a Year 2 lesson where pupils were learning to design a fair test to show what plants need to grow. Discussions were held with the resources – soil, seeds, and a container - on the table in front of the pupils. The teacher very skilfully drew suggestions from the pupils and then physically carried them out so that they could see the logic in what they were saying, for example that buried seeds would not receive any light, even though the pupils originally thought they would. This good approach to investigative science is continued in some classes higher up the school. In a Year 5 class, pupils were learning how to record and interpret data, and recognise errors. Pupils found this difficult, but the majority succeeded, given some support. Nevertheless, this work is usually covered by pupils two or three years younger than these. Where lessons are more theoretical or too complicated, teaching is not as effective and pupils do not learn as well as they might. One such example was where pupils in Years 5 and 6 were learning about the various states of water, but the work set on condensation was too difficult for many of them to understand because it assumed knowledge which pupils had not acquired in earlier years.

70. Teachers are doing their best, but these problems arise because the subject leadership and management are under-developed, and the curriculum stems directly from national guidelines without suitable adaptation for the particular needs and aptitudes of the school's pupils. It does not yet promote maximum achievement. Science has not yet had its "turn" as a focus for development. The subject leader is well aware of what needs to be done, and has made a good start. For example careful data analysis has identified particular areas of weakness in pupils' performance, and in the performance of different ethnic groups. This has been communicated to staff to inform their teaching, but the direct links with systematic school improvement have not yet been made. It is left to individual teachers to adapt their plans and teaching, but as yet, time has not been made for teaching and learning to be monitored. As a result, differences in the quality of teaching and learning between classes and during different topics remain.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good
- Teaching and the leadership and management of the subject are good
- The school has excellent resources for ICT
- Teachers give pupils many opportunities to use ICT during lessons

- Good use is made of ICT to support other subjects

Commentary

72. Standards are typical for the pupils' ages by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This reflects the position at the time of the previous inspection. However, expectations have increased since then. Pupils now use a wider range of equipment and resources and are expected to learn to greater depth and apply their skills more widely. Pupils' current standards, therefore, represent good achievement. Teaching and learning are good.

73. Pupils thoroughly enjoy working with computers. They make good progress because teaching is good. The use of interactive whiteboards enables pupils to select and carry out functions very easily on the enlarged screen which builds their confidence. However, pupils' keyboard skills show some weaknesses. For example, when Year 6 pupils missed a letter out of a word, they deleted the whole word and re-typed it instead of inserting the missing letter. Generally, however, pupils develop a satisfactory range of skills across different kinds of operations, including word processing, spreadsheets and drawing or design. Older pupils go further, for example adding formulae to their spreadsheets to work out the cost of multiple items. By Year 6, pupils use multi-media programs to present their work in interesting ways. They write in columns and select pictures to produce a simple newspaper.

74. Teachers benefit greatly from the resources provided by the school's participation in the ICT Test Bed Project. A notable feature of the use of ICT in the school is the way teachers confidently use the technology as a teaching aid which make their teaching more effective. All classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards which take the place of traditional chalk or whiteboards. Teachers are developing good computing skills and use the versatility of the new whiteboards very well to engage pupils interest. Because the features of the normal screen are enlarged and operations can be chosen with the touch of a finger, pupils find it very easy to select the tools they want. For example, in a lesson to teach how to correct spelling mistakes, Year 2 pupils benefited from being able to work on the large screen and transferred their new skill to the keyboard.

75. The leadership and management of the subject are good, and the subject leader monitors pupils' work to check they are making progress - and passes on her knowledge to colleagues. They are gaining in confidence in teaching ICT skills and using it to support work in other lessons. Pupils skills, knowledge and application of ICT are developing well as a result.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. The use of ICT in other subjects is good. In science in Year 4, pupils used sensing equipment to measure and record the temperature of water. Mathematical skills are developed as pupils learn to use spreadsheets and create graphs, for example on the colour of pupils' eyes.; Pupils in Year 6 carried out research on the Internet for their topic on Ancient Greece. In an English lesson on note-taking, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils had difficulty understanding how to select important points in a text to record as notes for future work. Instead of working on paper, the teacher asked them to prepare a multi-media presentation instead, and pupils quickly succeeded in grasping the point, and improved their ICT skills at the same time.

HUMANITIES

77. Not enough history or geography was seen to judge the quality of provision. One lesson in each was observed. Inspectors also looked at pupils' books, and discussed work with them and their teachers.

78. By the end of Year 2, pupils know the important buildings and features in their neighbourhood. They know that Smethwick is part of Birmingham and that Birmingham and London are cities. Pupils have a sound understanding of the need to protect the environment from pollution and that items such as paper, tins and bottles can be re-cycled. Sometimes, not enough account is taken of what pupils already know, or gaps in their knowledge. In one instance, Year 3/4 pupils were unable to find the route from England to a small village in India because they did not know the word 'route'. They were confused by the maps and atlases they were given because they were looking for England but the maps referred to the United Kingdom; some did not contain the names of the countries the route would cross. Despite this, pupils made good use of the Internet to find out information about the Indian village.

79. Clearly well-taught, Year 6 pupils are enthusiastic about the historical research, on the Internet and from books, they have undertaken on life in Athens and Sparta. They have acquired many facts; and explain, for example, that Spartan women practised combat skills so that they would have stronger babies. They are less sure-footed when talking about how we know about history and the nature of historical evidence. Year 2 pupils talk knowledgeably about their most recent topic, the Great Fire of London, but are less secure about topics they have studied earlier.

Religious education

80. Provision in religious education is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject
- Achievement is satisfactory though standards are below average
- The quality of classroom teaching is good but assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory

Commentary

81. Despite much enthusiasm for the subject, pupils' standards in religious education at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6 are below those expected of pupils the same age. The principal reason for this, especially in Years 1 and 2, is the pupils' inadequate language. This is particularly the case with many Asian pupils but, to a different extent, with others, including the white British pupils. Pupils find it hard to listen, so that the information and the teacher's explanations, however carefully considered, are too difficult for some. Pupils' oral skills get in the way of the kind of discussion through which pupils explore and refine ideas. In one instance, some Year 2 pupils were eager to explain and had plenty to say, but their words came out in a jumble and their understanding was confused. Pupils find it difficult to record ideas because their writing skills are poor, though one refugee pupil effectively expressed ideas about herself, relationships and disappointment through drawings.

82. Similarly, there is little doubt about the interest of pupils in Years 3 - 6 for the subject, their willingness to learn and their satisfactory achievement. Year 6 pupils, for example, have been genuinely fired up by the comparative study of world religions, a recent topic. They accurately name six world religions (they represent three of them themselves). They are aware of some of the features of worship in each of the religions studied and accurately describe similarities and differences between them. Yet there are also significant gaps in their knowledge: they cannot name each other's holy book, for example, though they know their own.

83. The quality of the teaching in the classroom is good. Teachers adopt suitable methods and the arrangements in Year 6 whereby pupils chose a world religion to research, and subsequently to explain to a partner, clearly stimulated pupils' interest and helped them learn. The more linguistically able Year 6 pupils say they appreciate learning through discussion. In Years 1 and 2 a good knowledge both of the subject and of the pupils enables the teacher to make good use of the pupils' own background and experience. In a timely lesson on the Hajj in Year 1, for instance, pupils were helped to remember that their fathers or uncles had been, or were about to go, on the pilgrimage. However, there are no adequate arrangements for assessing what pupils have learned, so that teachers are without the essential information to develop the religious education curriculum in line with the pupils' abilities and aptitudes.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

84. Insufficient work was seen in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education to judge the overall quality of provision in the subjects. One lesson was seen in each of art and design, design and technology and physical education, and inspectors looked at work available to be seen around the school.

85. The standards of art work displayed are average for the pupils' age. This is a good achievement. Teaching and learning in the lesson observed were good. Pupils' work was vibrant, and built well on previous work on paper sculpture, associated with design and technology. They understood that the colours chosen indicated the mood of their mask, for example reds and yellows indicated hot temper, and that the eyes were an important feature. Pupils enjoy art, and this interest is well supported by exciting initiatives such as artists in residence who, for example, together with pupils, created large hanging banners for the upper part of one of the school's halls. 86. Pupils in Year 2 represented dreams in pencil, crayon and computer art programs after studying well-known artists' work. Some of these were particularly well-composed, surreal pieces of work that had clearly captured the pupils' imagination. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed more advanced skills in their attractive work in the styles of Hundertwasser and Matisse. These showed the pupils' careful observational skills, and they demonstrated a good understanding of what the artists were trying to portray based on a study of the men themselves.

87. Following the last inspection, a policy was drawn up and a scheme of work based on national guidelines was adopted. However, these have not been recently reviewed, and there is currently no subject leader. Design and technology is often successfully taught in combination with art and design. In one such lesson in Year 5, pupils designed dragon's masks ready to make them in the following lesson. Past work on display around the school shows that there is an appropriate emphasis on both the designing and making aspects of the subject. For example, pupils analysed objects for colour, texture, purpose and overall appeal before drawing up their own designs for a hat. Others designed buildings of their own after studying buildings from around the world, and some young pupils experimented with dyeing and weaving materials.

88. Although too little evidence was seen to make overall judgements about physical education, there is an appropriate curriculum and a good number of sporting activities take place, including football, hockey, netball, cricket and tennis. Pupils speak with pleasure about the subject. Swimming is provided sensitively, in ways that allow all pupils to participate (boys and girls go swimming separately). However, even though pupils go swimming each week during Years 5 and 6, rarely do more than 20 per cent successfully swim 25 metres by the age of eleven; this is well below national expectations.

89. The one lesson observed was a Year 6 dance lesson. Teaching was very good. It was sympathetic to the different dance traditions represented in the class and drew from pupils an above average standard of interpretation of the music. All pupils worked hard in pairs to plan, rehearse and perform dances to the tune of 'Cavatina' (theme from the film *The Deer Hunter*). The result was that almost all pupils produced dances of real quality and grace that clearly acknowledged the dance traditions of – at least – the UK and the Indian sub-continent. Pupils' limited English vocabulary and ways of expressing themselves prevented them from reaching such high standards when they came to discuss and analyse their work, but their attempts to do so made a good contribution to their language skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

90. PSHE has only very recently been introduced to the school. Leadership and management are as yet under-developed. Planning is based on national guidelines and includes the curriculum for citizenship. However, teaching and learning are not yet monitored to judge their effectiveness, and the systems underpinning effective provision, for example the assessment of pupils' skills and monitoring teachers' planning are not yet established. Individual members of staff decide whether to teach PSHE separately or through other subjects such as religious education. Nevertheless, PSHE is satisfactorily threaded through the school's everyday work and provision is making a good

contribution towards pupils' personal development, particularly their social, moral and cultural development. The school's ethos is supportive of pupils' cultural awareness and development, and there are many links with community organisations of all sorts, such as the Gurdwara Nanaksar and the Raglan Road Fellowship. One very good lesson for Year 3 and 4 pupils demonstrated their growing understanding of the roles, rights and responsibilities of citizens as they looked at their own roles within the school, and considered the parallels in the democratic processes within society.

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 | 2 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 4 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 4 |
| Overall standards achieved | 5 |
| Pupils' achievement | 4 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 3 |
| Attendance | 5 |
| Attitudes | 2 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 2 |
| 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 | 4 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils needs | 5 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 3 |
| Accommodation and resources | 3 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 2 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 2 |
| The leadership and management of the school | 3 |
| The governance of the school | 3 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 2 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 4 |
| The effectiveness of management | 4 |

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