

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **DELVES INFANT SCHOOL**

Walsall

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104150

Headteacher: Mrs Lynda Yates

Lead inspector: Mrs Judith Charlesworth

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> July 2004.

Inspection number: 255965

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	307
School address:	Botany Road Delves Walsall West Midlands
Postcode:	WS5 4PU
Telephone number:	01922 720754
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Pat Claye
Date of previous inspection:	24 <sup>th</sup> April 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a larger than average infant and nursery school for pupils aged from three to seven years. It serves mainly the Palfrey ward of Walsall in the West Midlands, about three miles from the town centre. Children attend the Nursery part-time, starting at the beginning of the school year in which they reach the age of four and most of them transfer to the Reception classes the following year and begin to attend full-time. There are 77 children in the Nursery and 89 in Reception. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals has risen in recent years (against the national trend) and is now slightly above average. Sixty three per cent of pupils are white British, almost 20 per cent are of Indian origin, eight per cent of Pakistani and six per cent of Bangladeshi background; small numbers of pupils come from eight other ethnic minority groups. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an addition language is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is around average; 44 are on the school's register and eight have Statements of Special Educational Needs. These needs cover a broad range and include physical impairment, hearing impairment, autism, social and emotional and general learning difficulties. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment is below average with communication, language and literacy skills being the weakest. In 2002 the school received its second 'School's Achievement Award' for improved national test scores.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21501	Judith Charlesworth	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage; science; geography; history; religious education.
8941	John Fletcher	Lay inspector	
2607	Brian Griffiths	Team inspector	English as an additional language; mathematics; information and communication technology; physical education; personal, social and health education and citizenship.
10269	David Figures	Team inspector	English; art and design; design and technology; music; special educational needs.

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>27</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school** at which pupils achieve well and reach above average standards in many subjects. Teaching is good and benefits from good leadership and teamwork that systematically spreads good practice. **The school gives good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well, have good attitudes and behave well.
- Teaching is very good in the Reception year and good in the Nursery and Years 1 and 2.
- Provision for children in the Nursery and Reception is very good.
- A good curriculum is enriched well by visiting experts, well-planned educational visits and generally good resources for learning.
- Good leadership capitalises well on the talents of staff and their willingness to work in mutually supportive teams.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) suffer from pupils' poor access to computers.
- The work of pupils with special educational needs, those in Nursery and Reception and all pupils in English and mathematics, is carefully assessed, but it is not in other subjects.
- Attendance has improved as a result of vigorous school action.

The school has improved at a good rate since the last inspection and most issues raised have been tackled well. Overall standards, both academic and personal, have improved even though many pupils arrive in Nursery less well equipped for learning than they used to be. Teaching has improved – in some places a good deal. All statutory requirements are now met. Assessment is now used effectively in some subjects but not overall. Standards have slipped in ICT.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Test results vary a little from year to year, largely because of differing proportions of pupils for whom English is an additional language or who have special educational needs. However, in general, standards of children when they start in nursery are lower than at the time of the last inspection and the school does well to, in most years, maintain standards at or above the national average by the end of Year 2.

**Pupils' achievement is good.** Because the needs of all pupils are catered for well, they all achieve well, including pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Children arrive in the Nursery at below average standards; they achieve very well and by the time that they leave the Reception year they have bettered the goals children are expected to reach in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development; standards are at

nationally expected levels in communication, language and literacy. Much of this is due to teaching that is good overall and sometimes excellent and to the school's new methods of organising work in Nursery and Reception classes. In Years 1 and 2, achievement is good in most subjects and standards reached by Year 2 pupils are above average in writing, mathematics, art and design, design and technology, history and personal, social and health education; no judgements are made in physical education, nor in music in Year 2 although music standards in Year 1 are above average. In speaking and listening, reading, science, religious education and geography standards are in line with national expectations and in ICT standards are below average. **Pupils' personal development, including their moral, social and cultural development, is good; their spiritual development is satisfactory.** Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school and to others are also good. Attendance has improved recently to become satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good quality education. Teaching is good** and so pupils learn at a good rate. Many lessons are characterised by the enthusiasm both of teachers and pupils; often this is fostered by a rich curriculum that makes good use of educational visits and visiting experts. Especially good work takes place when the interest aroused in one subject is capitalised on in others (for example, pupils wrote very effectively about the history topic that had included a visit to Tamworth Castle). There is an effective emphasis on pupils' care and welfare. In Nursery and Reception, careful assessment of children's work is used to plan well the next steps they should take. This is also the case in English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2, and for all pupils with special educational needs. In all other subjects this process is underdeveloped. Parents are well informed about the work of the school and the progress of their children; a good number of initiatives help to involve parents in the life of the school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The school is led and managed well.** The headteacher has fostered a strong team spirit that results in all members of staff making their best contributions to planning for and implementing improvements to the school's ways of working as well as to the day-to-day working of the school. Many members of the governing body are new to the role; however, sensitive and effective help from senior and experienced governors is allowing newcomers to come to terms with their responsibilities and to have increasingly positive impacts on the school. Governance is satisfactory and improving. All statutory requirements are met.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

The great majority of parents and pupils value the school and believe that all staff work hard and successfully. Pupils trust and like members of staff. A small proportion of parents would like to know more about their children's progress.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve the ways in which pupils' strengths and weaknesses are assessed, and then used to plan their future work, in all subjects in which this process is underdeveloped.
- Improve pupils' access to computers and the standards that they reach in ICT.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Pupils achieve well and reach either average or above average standards in almost all subjects. Lower attainers achieve especially well and a smaller than average proportion do not reach nationally expected levels in English, mathematics and science.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement in the Nursery and Reception classes is very good and overall standards reached are above average.
- Year 2 standards are above average in writing, mathematics, art and design, design and technology, history and personal, social and health education; Year 1 standards are above average in music.
- Pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language achieve well.
- Standards are below average in information and communication technology.

#### **Commentary**

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.3 (16.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.7 (14.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.6 (15.5)	16.3 (16.5)

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

1. Test scores in reading and writing have been consistently average or above average for the past few years, even though children's attainment on entry to the nursery has gone down since the last inspection and is now below average. This is good achievement. In mathematics, test scores have improved to average when in the past they have been below. Improvements in mathematics standards stem from changes made to pupil grouping arrangements and to more imaginative use of the national strategy for teaching the subject; as a result, improvements have continued and the current Year 2 pupils are reaching above average standards. Similarly, in writing, the school recognised that boys were not achieving as well as they should; they ensured that more topics were of real interest to boys and their writing has improved and is now as good as that of girls – bringing the school's standards to above average this year. Standards in speaking and listening and in reading are average. Standards in science are average. In both English and mathematics, pupils with special educational needs, other potentially low attainers, and pupils for whom English is an additional language benefit from additional help of various kinds and from work that is matched carefully to their needs. As a result, all three groups achieve especially well so that only small numbers of pupils fail to reach the nationally expected Level 2 by the time that they leave for the junior school. There is no identifiable difference in the standards reached by pupils from the different ethnic groups served by the school.

2. Year 2 pupils reach above average standards in art and design, design and technology, and history. All three subjects benefit considerably from two factors: the school's use of relevant educational visits motivates pupils so that they give of their best; secondly, the excitement generated in one subject is capitalised on in others, so that pupils' motivation is high in all subjects that are linked in this way. For example, a highly effective educational visit to Tamworth castle was used to



produce good art and design, design and technology and particularly good writing from boys who relished writing about one of their number who spent some time in ‘chains’ in the ‘dungeon’. Unsurprisingly, learning in history was also good. The school has not yet found ways of treating geography in the same way, so achievement there is satisfactory. Too little music was observed in Year 2 to be able to judge standards there. However, standards in Year 1 are above average. The use of a specialist musician alongside class teachers is ensuring that pupils achieve well; it is also raising the level of staff expertise, which, in turn, is helping to raise standards.

3. Standards in personal, social and health education, and in citizenship, benefit from the school’s positive and supportive ethos and from the sensitive ways in which pupils’ personal development is an additional focus of many lessons whose prime purpose is a National Curriculum subject. Pupils do not achieve well enough in ICT. Teachers have all the necessary skills to teach well, but computers are allocated so that there are no more than three in any classroom and there is no additional computer suite. As a result, teachers explain well when they are seeking to develop pupils’ ICT skills, but with one computer between ten pupils, they do not get enough practice. Some of the disadvantages of this approach are mitigated by the good use of ICT in other subjects; many subjects are supported by appropriate software and in many lessons computers are in regular use by up to six pupils at a time, on a rotating basis.

4. Very good, innovative, provision in the Nursery and, especially, the Reception classes ensures that learning is stimulating and therefore children achieve very well. When children start in the Nursery their standards are below average, particularly in communication, language and literacy. By the time that they reach the end of the Reception year, children better the nationally expected early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. Children achieve very well in communication, language and literacy, and standards are in line with national expectations when they transfer to Year 1

### **Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

5. Pupils’ attitudes and behaviour are good. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is also good. Pupils’ attendance and punctuality have improved since the last inspection and are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good and make a significant contribution to pupils’ achievement and personal development.
- Rigorous monitoring of attendance and the effective use of a range of initiatives to discourage absence have increased levels of attendance since the last inspection.
- Pupils’ behaviour and their attitudes to work are good throughout the school and very good in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The provision for pupils’ personal development is good so they become mature for their age; pupils’ social development is very good.

### **Commentary**

6. The very good relationships between children and with staff are a key feature of the school, and underpin much of its success. Children interact in a polite and articulate manner with each other and with adults; they listen carefully and are uninhibited in their questioning and discussion. The strong relationships with staff, often characterized by the positive use of humour, contribute

significantly to pupils' interest in work and their desire to learn. There are numerous examples in lessons of pupils working harmoniously together, sharing equipment, taking turns and being helpful to each other. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson, pupils worked enthusiastically and very supportively to complete a range of activities exploring and discovering which materials had magnetic properties. They shared ideas and equipment with maturity.

*Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)*

Authorised absence	
School data	6.5
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.3
National data	0.4

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

7. Attendance levels at the school have gradually increased over the last three years and continue to improve; attendance in the current year is running at 94.6 per cent (as opposed to last year's 93.2 per cent) and is roughly in line with the national average in recent years. The school has worked hard and effectively to achieve this improvement. Rigorous tracking and monitoring of individual pupil attendance has enabled the school quickly to provide support for any parents or pupils experiencing problems. The individual award and class incentive schemes to encourage attendance are highly valued by pupils. Holiday absence during term time is still too high but the school works hard to restrict the negative impact this can have on achievement.

8. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour in school are good and a positive influence on the progress they make. The school is a safe and orderly environment in which pupils respect the behaviour code and respond enthusiastically to reward schemes. In lessons pupils often become engrossed in their work and show real determination to succeed. They are always willing to discuss their work in a polite manner and confidently seek the views and support of adults when necessary. Pupils with special educational needs often concentrate well and make mature contributions to lessons – in which they are fully included both by teachers and other pupils. They relate well to other pupils, make friends and enjoy their company. There have been no exclusions of pupils in recent times.

9. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are very well behaved because their personal development is advanced for their age and they very much enjoy their work and play. In the Nursery, they share resources without squabbling, take turns without fuss both when asked and spontaneously, and are considerate towards each other almost all of the time. Children concentrate very well, for example when listening to a story in "family time", working on a given task or when playing with resources of their own choice. These qualities are extended in the Reception classes. The children are particularly mature and enthusiastic about learning, and are deeply involved in all that they do. They are very accepting of those who find learning more difficult, or get something "wrong," and do not try to take over. As a result there are very few arguments or unhappy situations, and the children's efforts are directed towards successful learning.

10. The school's ethos of care, support and nurture is strong. As a result, pupils are secure, confident, have good self-esteem and are supported to learn well and succeed. The majority are ready for and excited by the challenge of moving to their next class, or on to their next school. Findings are similar to the time of the previous inspection, although as then, pupils' spirituality is less well developed. Pupils are taught to celebrate difference, to be proud of their background and beliefs, and to respect one-another; from the earliest age, they are helped to think through the consequences of their actions. Many are aware of belonging to "mini-societies" within the larger community, such as their family, class, school and, for some, faith communities, and the different rules that govern them. As a result of the school's approach, pupils from all ethnic backgrounds are fully included in all activities. There is no evidence of racism and, for example, playtimes are characterised by the ways in which children of all backgrounds and of differing physical abilities play together very harmoniously. The school encourages the qualities prevalent in an orderly society, such

as honesty and respect, and through lessons and assemblies, pupils are beginning to understand the values, beliefs and feelings that have an impact on human lives.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides good quality education. A rich curriculum is taught well, so that pupils learn at a good rate.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The assessment of pupils' skills and work is satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are skilled, motivated and enthusiastic practitioners, so pupils learn well in most lessons.
- Teaching in Reception is very good, so children achieve very well.
- Pupils do not learn well enough in ICT lessons because they do not have enough opportunity to use computers.
- In Years 1 and 2, in subjects other than in English and mathematics and for pupils with special educational needs, pupils' developing skills are not systematically tracked.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	10 (29%)	14 (41%)	8 (24%)	1 (3%)	0	0

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

11. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and there are now several factors that are noteworthy. The great majority of staff have been at the school for many years and are happy and comfortable in their roles and relationships with the pupils. The atmosphere in classrooms is generally lively, relaxed and humorous with the pupils highly attentive and eager to take part and learn. Teachers and support staff are particularly supportive of one another, and team work is often excellent as staff seamlessly work and teach together, reinforcing each other and taking the lead as appropriate at the time. Central to the staff's work is a genuine desire to make lessons interesting, and for pupils to learn as much as possible. Visits and visitors often very successfully form the basis of lessons. For example, Year 1 pupils visited Tamworth castle and really enjoyed the work in several subjects that followed. The school has good resources, supplemented by the teachers' own, and staff use them very effectively to help pupils understand. On one occasion, for instance, a teacher brought in her own large-scale model of a Sikh Temple (Gurdwara) which revealed the various parts of the temple when the roof was lifted, much to the pupils' delight. This helped them learn about the Langar (a communal kitchen/dining room) and what takes place in this part of the building. On all occasions, the teaching of ethnic minority pupils and of those with special educational needs matches the good quality of that of all other pupils; all are fully included in all activities. Occasionally learning is slower than it could be because the content of the lesson is either too hard or too easy for many pupils; on these occasions pupils' concentration suffers and teachers have to work hard to ensure that behaviour is satisfactory.

12. Teaching in the Reception classes has all of these qualities and is underpinned by a particularly vibrant, well-resourced and creative environment. The recent organisation of the available rooms to cover the different areas of learning is highly successful and enables children to

have a great deal of choice in their activities, and the space to carry them out. The planning of what the children should learn, and through which activities, is also very good and securely based on the children's individual needs. This corresponds with the findings of the previous inspection. The staff place great emphasis on developing children's communication and personal skills in all that they do, and show exceptional enthusiasm, so that lessons are fun and enjoyable for all.

13. Each classroom throughout the school has two or three computers, but there is no other central computer resource. The teaching observed in ICT was as good as it could be, considering that pupils had very limited access to computers to practice their skills, and teachers did their very best. However, since pupils have little opportunity to put what they learn into practice, they do not learn as well as they should. This, in turn, leads to standards that are below expectations by the end of Year 2.

14. The assessment of pupils' developing skills in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good because lessons are planned with their carefully assessed needs in mind. On many occasions, teaching identifies precise, daily targets and learning is focused on these; this 'precision teaching' contributes greatly to the good achievement of pupils with special educational needs. Learning support assistants are fully aware of these needs and give effective, unobtrusive support. In Years 1 and 2, performance data gained through the national tests in English and mathematics is systematically collected. It is well used for identifying individuals' weaknesses, or groups of pupils of similar attainment in mathematics so that teaching can be planned accordingly. However, the system for assessing pupils' science skills is different in Year 1 and Year 2, and there is no whole-school system for consistently tracking the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in other subjects. Whilst staff know their pupils well, which compensates somewhat, this situation does not yield enough secure information to use as a basis for improving standards and individual pupils' performance.

## **The curriculum**

15. The school provides good opportunities for learning which meet statutory requirements. They are enriched by a good programme of well-chosen visits and visitors. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum for English and mathematics and in the Nursery and Reception classes is strong.
- Links between different subjects are good.
- Well-chosen visits and visitors enrich pupils' experience.
- Insufficient access to computers slows down pupils' learning in information and communication technology.

## **Commentary**

16. The newly reviewed English programme is closely aligned to the National Literacy Strategy and adapted well to the particular needs of pupils. It gives a high profile to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. As part of this approach, a two-week teaching programme which carefully combines speaking and listening with reading and writing, prepares pupils for a significant piece of extended writing. This approach has resulted in a big improvement in the overall standards of writing, particularly that of the higher attaining pupils, and places the school in a good position to improve reading standards. Additional reading sessions in the half-hour before school starts, based on tightly structured programmes, are helping pupils, including those with special educational needs,

who have difficulty with reading and those for whom English is an additional language. The lower-attaining pupils in particular benefit from the arrangements for teaching mathematics, where pupils are organised in smaller groups with work at an appropriate level for their needs. Work in the Nursery and Reception classes is interesting, varied and well organised; learning resources are very good, so that pupils achieve very well.

17. Provision is well planned to meet the needs of the lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs. Attainable targets are set out in the individual education plans and lessons include suitable activities designed to work towards helping the pupils achieve them. Pupils with English as an additional language are well provided for; on appropriate occasions they make special contributions to the curriculum, for example, when they explain features of their religious observances in religious education lessons.

18. Work in different subjects support each other well. Well-chosen visits capture pupils' interest and generate enthusiasm; the follow-up work is carefully and thoroughly planned to provide pupils with opportunities to make progress in both the knowledge and the skills of several subjects, preserving the integrity of each of them. The Year 1 visit to Tamworth Castle is a case in point, leading to good work in history, design and technology and in English. As a Year 1 pupil observed with satisfaction, "Your writing is better when you have been there". Year 2 fieldwork on transport similarly combines discussion, writing, geography and personal and social education to good effect. Participation in events like the Walsall dance festival plays a positive part in pupils' personal and cultural development. Visitors to the school, including musicians and theatre groups, add further depth to pupils' experience. For example, specialist teaching of music is not only helping pupils to achieve well but is also helping other teachers to gain skill and confidence, thus extending provision.

19. Resources are good for most subjects, very good for some, like English and music, but not for information and communication technology. Here, pupils are disadvantaged because, although teachers do well to provide pupils with computer experience in small groups as part of lessons in different subjects, they are not in a position to teach specific information and communication technology skills to pupils class by class. This means that pupils build up their skills in the subject more slowly than they should and standards are below average as a result.

### **Care, guidance and support**

20. Pupils' welfare, health and safety are well provided for. Good quality support and guidance is made available to all pupils as they progress through the school. Pupils' views and opinions are routinely sought and always valued.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school secures pupils' well being and safety effectively.
- Pupils enjoy very good and trusting relationships with staff.
- Through rigorous observation and tracking, staff provide consistently high levels of guidance and support to ensure pupils' personal and social development.
- Good induction arrangements ensure a smooth transition between home and school.

### **Commentary**

21. Good arrangements for child protection are in place and the school is both vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities. All staff show very high levels of care and concern and ensure that day-to-day activities are carried out safely. Arrival and departure procedures are

particularly closely followed with every care being taken to ensure that children are safe. In lessons and at breaks appropriate supervision is always provided and full risk assessments are always undertaken in relation to visits and off-site activities. Good systems ensure that identified hazards and safety concerns are quickly eliminated and the rules relating to medicines on site are strictly followed. Comprehensive records of incidents and accidents are maintained.

22. Children like attending the school. They are happy, uninhibited and respond very positively to the consistently caring approach shown by all adults. They enjoy very strong trusting relationships with staff and have no hesitation in seeking help and advice with any concerns or worries that develop.

23. The school provides very good support and guidance for pupils' personal and social development. The 'assertive discipline' system and the close day-to-day observation and discussion of pupil development ensure that staff intervene rapidly with tailored and targeted improvement programmes for any pupils experiencing difficulties. Academic progress in English and mathematics is enhanced through the provision of good advice and support based on effective monitoring and recording of individual pupil achievement. In other subject areas the guidance provided to ensure progress is less effective as systems for assessing achievement are underdeveloped. There are well-constructed individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs; these are regularly reviewed and based on detailed observation and painstaking records. Thus these pupils' progress is monitored in detail and effective plans made to help them to achieve the next steps.

24. Induction arrangements are good and ensure that pupils and parents enjoy a smooth entry to school. A series of meetings in the term before children start helps to get parents familiar with routines and expectations, and allows children to experience sessions in the school. The first few weeks of attendance are organised on a part time basis to ease the transition and to enable teachers to make first assessments. Throughout the transition period the school ensures plenty of formal and informal opportunities for discussion with parents. Parents say their induction experiences were good.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

25. The school enjoys a supportive partnership with parents. Good links with the local community enrich learning opportunities. There are satisfactory and developing links with other schools.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are supportive and respond positively to the good range of initiatives that involve them in school life and in the education and development of their children.
- The partnership with parents is enhanced by the provision of good quality information about the school and about the progress their children are making.

### **Commentary**

26. A strong partnership exists between the school and parents. Parents express high levels of satisfaction with the school and widespread pleasure at the progress they see their children making. An overwhelming majority say their children really like school and agree that teaching is good, that expectations are high and that a consistently high level of care is shown towards pupils by all staff.

27. Parents attend formal meetings and informal functions in large numbers and are clearly comfortable approaching the school with any worries or concerns. Good numbers of parents



regularly help in school and there are never enough spaces available to accommodate those offering to accompany children on school outings and visits.

28. Communication with parents is good and effectively encourages involvement in the school and in their children's education. There is daily interaction at the start and end of the day and good news messages and information are communicated through the home-school book and by telephone. The school values parents' views and opinions, is quick to involve them if there are any difficulties and ensures involvement in all decisions relating to their children. Parents of pupils with special educational needs find staff very accessible and they are kept informed about their children's progress towards the learning targets set for them. Parents have access to school staff who speak several of the home languages represented in the local community.

29. The school ensures that parents are fully informed of the topics that will be studied and arranges special evenings to explain teaching aims and methodologies, such as the 'Pause, prompt, praise' project. This helps parents to support learning at home. Termly consultation evenings provide formal opportunities to discuss pupils' progress and the school is always willing to arrange special meetings for any parents with concerns. Annual reports provide good summaries of what pupils know, understand and can do. The school is looking to improve further the reports by ensuring that advice on what pupils should do to improve is consistently provided across all subjects.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school is both **led and managed well**, with all staff contributing effectively. **Governance is sound.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher systematically and effectively encourages all staff to make good contributions to the school's provision.
- All staff work effectively in mutually supportive teams.
- Governors are strong supporters of their school. More experienced governors help newer ones to recognise their responsibilities and acquire the necessary skills of governance.

### **Commentary**

30. Almost all teachers, and many other staff, have been at this school for several years. They hold very similar views about the school and about teaching primary-aged pupils, and they have the confidence in each other to discuss the school's work openly and analytically. As a result, the school's provision is under continual review, and improvements are managed well by the mutually supportive teams in which groups of staff work, or by the entire staff. Suggestions for change come from all sources and possible improvements are thoroughly discussed and enthusiastically implemented. Changes in approaches to writing, the work of the Reception year and the grouping of pupils for mathematics using the deputy headteacher to make four groups from three classes, have all resulted in better achievement. The headteacher has systematically and very effectively fostered this approach over a number of years and has successfully encouraged many staff to develop good leadership and management skills. The deputy headteacher is relatively new but has slotted in very well. He provides exemplary teaching, ensures that special educational needs provision is good and is, rightly, now extending his role so as to make a full contribution to strategic management. Very occasionally, good work in one part of the school is not disseminated to others. For example, assessment and recording of pupils' progress in science differs between Year 1 and Year 2, and there has been too little cross-team debate for good practice to be reliably spread across teams as well as it is within teams.

31. About one-half of the members of the governing body are relatively new to the role, whilst other governors are very experienced and skilled. To the credit of the experienced governors, they rarely dominate meetings; newer governors are encouraged to share their views and they take a proper and increasing part in decision-making. As a result of this approach the governing body is placed well to become very effective, with all members having the necessary skills and a supportive but analytical approach. The governing body understands how to act as the staff's critical friend. Financial management is thoughtful and has taken the school through difficult times when staffing had to be reduced. It has ensured that learning resources are generally good, although there remain some limitations to the accommodation. For example, the hall is small and difficult to use as a whole-school meeting place. There is at present no space suitable for a suite of computers, and the absence of this limits provision in ICT.

*Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	797255	Balance from previous year	95902
Total expenditure	801838	Balance carried forward to the next	91319
Expenditure per pupil	2890		

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

32. Provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is very good and has improved since the last inspection. Although there is a wide spread in children's attainment when they first start Nursery, overall, it is below average, which is lower than at the time of the previous inspection. The Nursery is admitting increasing numbers of children with special educational needs. All children achieve well and attainment on entry to Reception is around average. By the end of their Reception year, they have exceeded most of the expected goals for this stage of their education and children's skills are above average. This represents very good achievement in the two years of the Foundation Stage.

The reasons for this success are:

- effective leadership and management overall, and in all areas of learning.
- good teaching, particularly in Reception;
- a relevant, vibrant, well-planned and very well-resourced curriculum that both addresses each area of learning separately, but also reinforces each one through the others;
- spacious accommodation, including a large and varied outside area, that is extremely well organised into areas of learning, and is very well-used;
- very effective arrangements for grouping and teaching children that are based on careful assessment of their developing skills. This means that children with difficulties, particular abilities, English as an additional language or special educational needs are quickly identified and support put into place;
- good involvement of parents;
- a well trained, committed staff who are enthusiastic about providing a high standard of education and care, and
- excellent team-work between teachers, nursery nurses and support staff, whatever the combination.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The promotion of children's personal, social and emotional development is very well threaded through the everyday work.
- Children achieve very well.

## **Commentary**

33. Children enter the Nursery with skills that are below average, and by the end of their Reception year, they are above average. The nursery atmosphere is happy, calm, encouraging and supportive, and relationships between adults and children are strong. The organisation and good quality teaching help children separate from their parents and feel secure. Each child is allocated to a small "family group" with its own adult, in which many teaching activities take place. Activities are relevant and interesting and this engages the children and teaches them to concentrate well. Children flourish and quickly make progress, most becoming independent, self-sufficient, able to concentrate well and ready for the challenges of Reception by the end of the year. The Nursery's good work is continued and extended in Reception, where, as it should be, more is expected of the children. Children are confident; they identify and express their own feelings and understand perfectly the rules that govern different situations, such as play or small group time. Most see to their own hygiene needs. Children are full of energy and curiosity, yet are very well behaved and accepting of each other and differences between them. Children with special educational needs are very well included, and achieve as well as their peers. Ethnic minority children blossom, partly because of the well-structured, caring atmosphere but also, in many cases, they benefit from help from adults who are fluent in their home language.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good; the promotion of children's language is a high priority.
- The early morning support groups in Reception for lower attaining children and those with English as an additional language are very effective.
- Writing skills are very well promoted, and children achieve particularly well in writing.

## **Commentary**

34. Children enter the Nursery with communication, language and literacy skills that are considerably below average. They are still below average on entry to Reception, but by the end of their Reception year, the majority have reached the expected goals and their skills are around average for their age. This is very good achievement. The organisation of both the Nursery and Reception classes ensures that language is consistently promoted. Staff talk through all activities carefully with the children, using warmth, humour and excitement in their own voices very well to maintain the children's interest. Because of the children's very good personal development, they quickly learn to listen to and respect one another, and staff make sure that children of all abilities have opportunities to use and practice language in a relevant way. The classrooms – particularly in Reception where teaching is very good – abound with examples of the written word, which reinforces the importance of reading and writing. Promotion of reading and writing starts right at the beginning of the Nursery year through activities such as the "letter of the week" and by copying the front cover of their

favourite book about bears (the class topic.) By the end of the year many children know letter names and sounds, and can form perfectly recognisable letters. By the end of Reception, many children read simple texts, write words on their own, and are beginning to write for different purposes. Children for whom English is an additional language benefit considerably from the well-structured approach.

35. A group of about 15 children with particular difficulties, taken from all three Reception classes, meets every morning for focused support. This is extremely effective. The three members of staff work together seamlessly and with great expertise to provide activities which the children find really enjoyable, and which promote their communication, language and literacy skills very well. These children, although attaining more modestly than their peers, nevertheless achieve very well.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well overall, and progress is particularly good in Reception.
- Mathematical development is very well enhanced by work in other areas of learning.

### **Commentary**

36. Children enter the Nursery with mathematical skills that are below average, and by the time they complete their Reception year, they have exceeded the expected goals and are above average. Most Nursery children count up to 20, and recognise many numbers. They use mathematical language readily and appropriately, such as *bigger than* and *more*, and recognise some numerals. Good planning ensures that mathematics is included in children's role-play, such as providing simple menus and money in the *Delves Nursery Café*. Children make particularly good progress in Reception where teaching is excellent at times. In these lessons, the staff integrate mathematics with other areas of learning, such as knowledge and understanding of the world, for example when teaching children about estimation and prediction. A real sense of fun and a brisk pace support learning very well, so that children are completely engaged in the activities and often desperate to have their turn. Most children can count in twos and fives to 100, and are learning to count on in fours. Higher attaining children can write many numerals – although some are reversed - and add three digits in their heads. Expert questioning by the teacher, based on a very good knowledge of each individual's skills, makes sure that children are challenged at a level at which they can succeed, although they have to think hard.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All the elements of this area of learning are promoted equally well.
- Children achieve very well due to good teaching, accommodation and resources.

### **Commentary**

37. Children enter the Nursery with skills that are below average, but by the end of their Reception year, the great majority have reached the expected goals and have above average skills. The different strands of knowledge and understanding of the world – the beginnings of history, geography, science, design and technology, and information and communication technology are all properly addressed in the Nursery and Reception’s planning, and the teaching is good overall. It is very good in Reception. Activities in the Nursery are inviting, for example an area containing minibeasts and a wide range of seeds and plants at different stages of growth encourage children to take an active interest in living things. Paper and pencils are available for them to make spontaneous observational drawings of them. Children learn about different places and the recent past in topic work, for example from stories about bears (a current topic) and have a wide range of materials from which to make their own constructions.

38. Children’ good achievement is built upon in Reception where they benefit from very enticing and well-resourced rooms, specialising in one or two areas of learning each. This gives children a wide range of resources to select from, and enables displays and *environments* to be set up and left out and built upon over time. Whilst each strand of this area of learning is individually addressed, a large part of the success in teaching and learning is that knowledge and understanding of the world is very well integrated with all other areas of learning, particularly communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have very good, varied opportunities for developing their physical skills, and they achieve very well.

### **Commentary**

39. Children enter the Nursery with physical skills that are around average for their age. Many have reached the expected goals for the end of the Reception year by the end of their nursery year – one year early. The children move freely and with confidence in a large space. They stop and start on command, walk in different ways - such as “through long grass”, jump, bunny-hop, dance alone and in pairs, and perform a simple enactment of a song. They understand that exercise warms them up, and that it is necessary to cool down at the end of an activity. Because they are so advanced, many children could, on occasions, manage extra challenge than at present in their physical development lessons in the hall. Teaching is good overall. Children continue to build upon their good progress during their time in Reception and their skills are above average by the time they move into Year 1.

40. Children in both year groups have varied opportunities to develop their physical skills. These include timetabled lessons in the hall; use of the extensive outside area, which includes climbing apparatus, large grassed lawns and a long slope for big wheeled toys; the spacious classroom accommodation, and a variety of activities for developing their manipulative skills, such as painting, building and drawing.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given a wide range of activities to build up their skills systematically so they achieve very well.

## Commentary

41. Children's creative development is taken seriously and teaching is good. In both year groups, activities are provided in art, music, and role-play which interest and motivate the children and promote their progress very well. Their art shows a clear and rapid progression in skills over the two years; for example early Nursery paintings are often simple figures with a round body incorporating the head, and two stick limbs. By the end of the Nursery year, these have progressed to a head with features and hair, body, arms with hands and fingers, and legs with feet. By the end of Reception, children paint elaborate and very well executed pictures in the style of Van Gogh's Sunflowers. Children in both classes enjoy dressing up, and playing in the *environments* set up for them. Several children enjoyed the *beach* set up in Reception, incorporating cameras, sunglasses, books and shells into their imaginative play. One small boy in the Nursery spent ages in the home corner, "cooking" food, and anxiously told the inspector not to take a real bite because "...we're only pretending." In a nursery music session, children showed that they had learned the words, tunes and actions to a wide range of songs and were also able to play untuned percussion instruments and clap to the beat.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards of writing have improved and are above average - though not matched by reading and speaking and listening standards.
- The English curriculum is good and the subject is well taught and well organised.
- English supports, and is supported by, other subjects well.

#### **Commentary**

42. Pupils' test results in writing have been steadily rising for several years in line with the national trend. They have improved more markedly since 2003, partly as a result of higher-attaining pupils doing better and partly as a result of boys doing better. In that year, the results of eight per cent of seven-year-old pupils were in line with those expected of nine-year-olds, compared with 20 per cent in 2004. This is reflected in the above average standard of the Year 2 work seen. The rising standards follow a number of changes made to the way English is taught. The curriculum is good. It remains closely aligned to the National Literacy Strategy but has been modified to reflect more closely the needs of pupils. Practice in speaking and listening has a high profile in all subjects; some of the best writing is now the end-product of a fortnight's activity in which reading and writing activities contribute to building up the skills required for a major writing task. Furthermore, writing is now often from direct experience and pupils write more non-fiction than formerly - two features that help boys do well. Effective writing in Year 2, for example followed a visit to the Black Country museum, and the visit to Tamworth Castle resulted in some lively writing in Year 1. Achievement in writing is thus good.

43. Reading standards, and those for speaking and listening, have yet to show the improvement seen in writing for reasons that are not easily determined and achievement in these aspects of English are satisfactory. For the present Year 2, test results in reading are below those of the previous year, which were above average, but had interrupted a downward trend. This is partly because of differences between the attainment of the age-group when they began the year; twice as many pupils than in the previous year started in Year 2 this year with poorer reading skills than last year. Nevertheless the measures put in place in response put the school in a good position to improve; they include:

- an increased emphasis on the use of the sounds represented by letters and groups of letters;
- early morning classes for pupils needing extra help;
- new work on language development in the Nursery and Reception classes.

44. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those for whom English is an additional language, do as well as other pupils in both reading and writing, and so they achieve well.

45. The quality of teaching is good, and there is some very good practice in both Year 1 and Year 2. In the best lessons, a very clear plan ensures the lesson moves on at a brisk pace, and varied activities in a predictable sequence help to retain pupils' attention. Plenty of challenge in the questions keeps the higher attaining pupils on their toes and the very good deployment of skilled classroom assistants ensures the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are fully part of the lesson and making progress. Sometimes, however, the teacher keeps pupils on the

carpet listening for too long and is not clear enough about what the activity is expecting of the pupils, or of the potential contribution of the additional adults available to them. On these occasions, pupils, often boys and higher attaining pupils, lose concentration and their work suffers.

46. The strong leadership of the subject places it in a good position to improve. Careful analysis of the test results systematically leads on to curriculum changes. Careful scrutiny of pupils' work, sometimes using outside help to achieve consistency with other schools, leads to modified teaching programmes and suitable staff development activities. Sessions for parents help them understand how English is taught and acquire the skills to help their children learn to read.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

47. Links between English and other subjects are good. Teachers create opportunities for speaking and listening at many points of the day, regardless of the subject at the focus of activity. Teachers also make the most of the potential for other subjects to provide material for writing, frequently using the stimulus of visits to provide motivation.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good overall and sometimes very good.
- Pupils achieve well.
- The school continually seeks new ways of helping pupils to do better.

### **Commentary**

48. Standards in tests in recent years have fluctuated between well below average and average. They were average last year and are better this year than they were in 2003. Current standards are better than when the school was last inspected. There are several reasons for the improvements, most of which stem from careful analyses of where pupils have done well and where they could do better, with subsequent changes to the way the school both organises and teaches the subject. The current provision serves pupils very well. Because it was recognised that pupils were not achieving as highly in mathematics as some other subjects, they are now taught in four groups, each being smaller than the three classes from which they are formed. Each group is composed of pupils at a similar standard, so that teaching can be, and is, well matched to their needs. The two lower groups get special attention, with two adults always supporting pupils in Group 3, and Group 4 being small. As a result of this, and of expert and stimulating teaching, there are fewer pupils working at levels below what is expected for their ages than the national average. Although the proportion of pupils reaching the highest levels is usually a little below the national average, they also achieve well. Pupils with English as an additional language benefit particularly from work in small groups and make the same good progress as all other pupils.

49. Other methods of supporting good teaching and of improving standards have included identifying new teaching materials and resources that facilitate individual work; the in-school training of staff by expert mathematics teachers; and the monitoring of teaching by senior staff and the subsequent spreading of best practice through feedback. Careful analysis of where pupils did well and poorly in tests has been used to skew teaching towards areas of weakness. With better test results this year than previously, the school did not rest on its laurels: soon after national tests were



completed, the mathematics groups were reorganised so that pupils who were capable of achieving higher levels could have 'one last push' before they left the school.

50. The school benefits from the contacts made by its Leading Mathematics Teacher and by the subject leader, and, as well as sharing their own good practice, they bring into school ideas for further improvement that have been tested and found successful in other schools. The subject is well led.

51. Teaching is characterised by a sense of both purpose and of enjoyment that almost belie the meticulous preparation and resourcing underpinning the lessons. For example, in a Year 2 lesson with lower attaining pupils, pupils smiled and some laughed aloud as they counted rapidly backwards and forwards in ones and twos. Later in the same lesson, the use of positional language was introduced. Initially pupils found this difficult. However, the teacher 'changed' pupils into 'robots' who increasingly confidently followed instructions such as 'Forward three' and 'Left four'.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

52. There is systematic and effective use of mathematics in other subjects. For example in history, dates consolidate large numbers; there are many ICT programmes that are used well by teachers in ways that consolidate both subjects; science makes use of counting and graphing skills.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is satisfactory overall, although pupils learn well in some areas.
- Investigations are exciting, but ideas do not often enough stem from the pupils themselves.
- There are different systems of assessment in Year 1 and Year 2, which means that pupils' developing skills, knowledge and understanding cannot be systematically tracked.

### **Commentary**

53. Standards in science have improved since the last inspection. Between 1999 and 2003, Year 2 assessments showed a steady improvement in the percentage of seven-year-old pupils reaching at least the average standard for their age. In 2003, this percentage was above average, with well above average numbers reaching the standard expected of nine year olds. The 2004 results, however, are likely to show a drop to around average. Currently, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

54. Analysis of the 2004 provisional results shows that pupils' performance was not uniform across the four elements of the subject; pupils did least well in the tests relating to *physical processes* and *materials and their properties*. Inspection judgements confirm this. Work was relatively limited in *physical processes*, and many pupils cannot explain why different materials are suitable for different jobs. Although both year groups carry out investigations, which the pupils very much enjoy, there was not enough evidence in past work of pupils putting forward their own ideas for solving problems, understanding what constitutes a fair test and making amendments following evaluation. Instead, the investigations tend to be somewhat pre-determined by the commercial scheme of work used to support teaching, which limits the pupils' understanding of investigation.

55. The teaching observed in class was uniformly good. Teachers chose good activities, and were clear and knowledgeable in their explanations. Their enthusiasm motivated the pupils who, in turn,

were very interested in their work and learned well. However, analysis of pupils' past work indicates that, taken overall, teaching is satisfactory. Firstly, the current curriculum organisation means that work is more usually teacher-directed, with insufficient opportunity for pupils to design investigations; and secondly, teaching is not based on a clear assessment of individual pupils' developing skills over the two years, so their strengths and weaknesses cannot be systematically supported.

56. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory. Resources are plentiful and very well organised for teachers' easy access, and support and guidance are given to the staff in various ways. However, there is not a sufficiently clear focus on identifying weaknesses in teaching and learning, and adapting the curriculum to suit. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are below average because pupils have too little time at computers practising their skills.
- Computers are used regularly in other subjects, helping to improve standards there and partly compensating for limited access in ICT lessons.

### **Commentary**

57. In lessons that are designed to extend pupils' skills with computers, teachers give clear and accurate instructions, often enthusiastically, so that pupils understand them well and are eager to practise what they have had explained. The following part of the lesson poses problems. Because computers are in classrooms in sets of three or fewer, most pupils cannot go straight to a computer and practise the skills that have just been taught. Teachers arrange related tasks for most pupils whilst a small number, usually about six, work at the computer. After a few minutes, they change places so that over a period of half-an-hour each of the 30 pupils can only operate the computer for, on average, a minute. In one lesson that was observed, many pupils did not get a turn but even then the most time that any other pupil spent at the computer was six minutes and that was shared with a partner. This is too little time for skills to be mastered. There are similar problems when working with the programmable floor robot. A group observing the robot was of a size that meant that some pupils sitting round the floor matrix on which the robot was to move, were looking at the scene upside down. This meant that they wanted to give the instruction to turn right – but when viewed, as it should be, from the front, the robot had to turn left. There was then too little time available for even one half of the pupils to help program the robot. In both of these lessons, teachers worked imaginatively to compensate for the poor access to computers, and succeeded as far as could reasonably be expected. It is clear from pupils' work that this is often the case. Teachers have the skills and enthusiasm to help pupils to achieve well at the subject, but the number of computers available at any one time is too small to allow success. Thus, pupils' learning and their achievements are unsatisfactory.

58. Some of the deficit is made up by the well-informed use of ICT to support work in other subjects. Many lessons in, for example, art, mathematics, science, design and technology and history include a computer-based activity. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson that was focused on positional language such as 'backwards', 'forwards' and 'sideways' the teacher used a computer program that required pupils to use the computer mouse in order for a ladybird to find a flower. This was prepared beforehand and pupils worked with interest, co-operating well. However, most of them moved the mouse awkwardly and, whilst they made some progress - and very much enjoyed doing so - ICT skills were below nationally expected levels for their age.

59. The subject leader is competent and is aware of the difficulties posed by poor access to computers in ICT lessons. However, the school has not yet identified a solution and standards have slipped from when the school was last inspected.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

60. ICT is used well in other subjects. In many lessons a well-organised rota system gives several pupils five-minute, sometimes longer, slots in which they develop, for example, mathematical skills,

simulate scientific experiments or produce art work of good quality. Both ICT and the other subjects benefit from these well-made links.

## HUMANITIES

61. In **history**, three lessons were observed and some of the pupils' past and current work was scrutinised. Three lessons were observed in **religious education**, a discussion held with the subject leader and some of the pupils' work analysed. No lessons were observed in **geography**, but a small amount of pupils' past work was sampled; no judgements can be made on overall provision in the subject. In none of the three subjects is there a reliable method of assessing pupils' work, in order to plan future work that matches their needs.

### Geography

62. The standard of pupils' work in both Year 1 and Year 2 is around the national expectation for their age. By the end of Year 2, pupils describe the physical and human features of places close to home and further afield, such as the 'Island of Stray', and know what it is that gives those places their character. They understand the importance of protecting our environment and the effects of pollution. There was little evidence of higher level work, such as pupils using a variety of sources of information and their own observations to ask and answer questions about places and the environment. On occasions, worksheets used are not challenging enough for higher attaining pupils.

### History

Provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- History is used well as a means of extending pupils' skills in other subjects.
- Pupils' standards are overall above expectations for their age.

### Commentary

63. Not enough lessons were observed to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching, nor can a judgement be made on the quality of leadership and management. A systematic means of tracking pupils' developing skills, knowledge and understanding to yield secure information is not yet in place, although teachers' individual knowledge of their pupils compensates for this to a degree. However, inspection observations and pupils' work show that they are enthusiastic about history because it is generally taught in an exciting way. As a result, the pupils learn well and their achievement is good.

64. The curriculum is well planned and takes good account of pupils' interests. Pupils in Year 1 were particularly motivated by a visit to Tamworth castle. Follow-up work was carried out in several subjects such as design and technology in which pupils drew and constructed castles; in English, where they wrote accounts of their visit and extended their vocabulary with historical words such as *battlements* and *drawbridge*; and through drama when pupils acted out life in the "olden days." This approach supports their achievement in other subjects very effectively, as well as maintaining the pupils' interest and motivation for history, leading to the above average standards. Through looking at aspects such as homes, kitchens and transport, pupils in Year 2 understand differences in life-styles between various time periods, such as 1900, 1950 and present day. With the help of a time-line created on the classroom wall, the pupils can place events further back in time, such as the Great Fire of London, and they know some facts about important people of past times, such as Samuel Pepys, Elizabeth I and Florence Nightingale.

65. Many pupils are beginning to understand how there may be different view points of historical events, depending on the observers' stance, and are learning to interpret sources of evidence, such as paintings, for themselves. This is more advanced than is expected for pupils' ages, and, overall, provision in history and the standards pupils attain have improved since the previous inspection.

## Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some very good teaching in Year 1 leads to pupils having more advanced knowledge and understanding than expected for their age.

### Commentary

66. The standards achieved by pupils by the end of Year 2 are as expected for their age, as they were at the time of the last inspection, and their achievement is satisfactory. Not enough lessons were observed to make judgements about the overall quality of teaching, but that seen was mainly satisfactory with some very good teaching in Year 1. Pupils learned very well in one lesson, and knew more about the topic than is nationally expected for their age. The success was due to the enthusiasm and knowledge of the teacher, who used a large-scale model of a Sikh temple (*Gurdwara*) very well to reinforce and develop pupils' understanding of the religion. In addition, she sensitively drew upon a Sikh pupil in the class who explained her own experiences to her interested class-mates. The lesson ended with the practical experience of sharing food – the most important event that takes place in the *Langar* (a communal kitchen/dining room in the *Gurdwara*.) Overall, this lesson was one that pupils are unlikely to forget. The other lessons, however, were less stimulating and teachers struggled to maintain pupils' interest and draw out their knowledge.

67. The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection, and, in both year groups, now covers a broad range of topics in line with the Walsall Agreed Syllabus. However, it is about to undergo change once again as the local body responsible brings in a revised curriculum in September 2004. This advises a closer focus on assessing the pupils' developing skills, which will be helpful as there is currently no system in place for this, which prevents a well-focused drive to improve standards.

68. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader has introduced a number of supportive measures for staff, such as topic and lesson plans, improved resources and a portfolio of pupils' work to demonstrate curriculum coverage. However, teaching and learning are not monitored, and plans for the new curriculum have not yet been introduced to staff.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

69. Too few lessons were seen in **art and design, design and technology, music and physical education** to enable overall evaluations to be made of the subjects. However, inspectors analysed pupils' work and discussed it with them and the teachers; they observed pupils at play and scrutinised policies and planning for the subjects. Work on display in both **art and design and design and technology** is of a good standard and photographic records covering a longer period confirm this. In art and design, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils work in a good range of materials and from a variety of starting points and so have systematically built up relevant skills. A project in Year 2, based on the

observation of natural objects, is a good case in point: initially, observational drawings were made and these were imaginatively extended using collage, printing, sewing, crayon and pastels. In design and technology projects pupils also systematically learn appropriate skills. They plan, design, revise, make and evaluate their work, which, as in art, links well with other subjects in ways that support learning in each of them. For example, Year 2 work on Joseph's many coloured coat brought together work in design and technology, art and design, English, information and communication technology and religious education; the teachers' approach was creative and stimulated good responses from pupils.

70. No **music** lessons were observed in Year 2. However, work in Year 1 is of a good standard as the result of good, expert teaching. Pupils enjoy music lessons; they concentrate well and play instruments accurately. They read simple notation, playing more loudly or softly as required; they achieve well. The school reports that all teachers are benefiting from working alongside a music specialist and are gaining in expertise and confidence. This puts the school in a good position to make further improvements.

71. No lessons were observed in **physical education**. Pupils were observed at play (when a good range of equipment is available for team and individual games) and on these occasions pupils run, dodge, jump, skip and throw, catch and strike balls with skills that are around those expected nationally. In these activities, pupils using wheelchairs are fully involved and develop a good range of skills.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

72. No lessons focusing on personal, social and health education were observed, although many subjects had this area as a thread running through them. This is consistent with the school's view that pupils' personal development is central to learning and it results in pupils becoming friendly, confident and mature. Health education is not only studied in, for example, science, but is also practised by healthy snacks at break times. The well-advanced plan to refine the school's policy and approach, so that skills in the subject are more readily identified and taught, puts the school in a good position to continue to improve.





## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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