

INSPECTION REPORT

FREDERICK BIRD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Coventry

LEA area: Coventry

Unique reference number: 103695

Headteacher: Mrs C Lockwood

Lead inspector: Mr J Earish

Dates of inspection: 28th June - 1st July

Inspection number: 256170

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Primary
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	544
School address:	Swan Lane Coventry West Midlands
Postcode:	CV2 4QQ
Telephone number:	02476221920
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Williams
Date of previous inspection:	18 th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Frederick Bird Primary School serves a diverse and most disadvantaged inner city community. It is situated in the St Michael's Ward near to the centre of Coventry, and is much larger than most other primary schools. There are 544 boys and girls on roll aged three to 11 years. Most pupils live in rented accommodation, comprising of small houses and high-rise flats. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, at 48 per cent, is well above the national average. The school community reflects the racial characteristics of this area. Thirty-four per cent of pupils are white, 11.5 per cent are Indian, 17.3 per cent are Bangladeshi, 3.6 per cent are Black Caribbean, 8.9 per cent are Pakistani and the remainder come from other minority ethnic backgrounds. There are 55 refugees and asylum seekers. There is a high degree of mobility in pupil numbers. Just under 37 per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs (SEN). This proportion is above the national average. The range of pupils' needs includes speech, emotional, behavioural or communication difficulties and moderate learning disabilities. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs, at 1.1 per cent, is broadly in line with national figures. The percentage of pupils whose first language is believed not to be English, at 55.9 per cent, is very high. Attainment on entry to the school is well below average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23216	J Earish	Lead inspector	Physical Education.
9176	G Barker	Lay inspector	
14991	A Hardwicke	Team inspector	Science; Information and Communication Technology; Religious Education.
10782	H Moreton	Team inspector	Mathematics; Geography; History; Special Education Needs.
25509	J Clarke	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Curriculum; Music; Design and Technology.
15023	A Haouas	Team inspector	English; English as an additional language; Art and design.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Although the school is increasingly effective, it is still underachieving. The school is **underachieving** because standards are not high enough, and the quality of teaching and learning is too variable. In addition, the previous lack of clear educational direction has been a barrier to raising achievement for all groups of pupils. The headteacher and leadership team in partnership with the local education authority (LEA) are assiduously addressing these concerns through a very good action plan. The school is increasingly effective, but much of the work is very recent and has yet to make a significant impact on standards and achievement. The school has been successful, in a very short time, at improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. The leadership team and staff work well together, and this has helped to raise self-esteem amongst the pupils. The school currently provides **satisfactory** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards and achievement are not good enough.
- The quality of teaching and learning is too variable.
- Assessment is not sufficiently well targeted to individual needs.
- Children in the Foundation Stage receive a good start to their education and achieve well.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She has secured the future of the school and improved staff morale. Teamwork is now a significant strength.
- The school is committed to educational inclusion and to the promotion of equality in all that it does.
- Pupils are cared for very well in a warm and friendly environment.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Progress since the last inspection has been **unsatisfactory**. The new headteacher, working in very close partnership with the LEA and supported by the governors, has rigorously monitored the school and correctly identified that standards remain unsatisfactory and that pupils are underachieving. However, the school has improved standards in information and communication technology. Over recent years, the numbers of pupils from Eastern Europe and refugees from a wide range of origins has increased. Although many of these pupils have underachieved on a par with most of their peers in the last three years, the many recent initiatives initiated by the LEA and the new headteacher are now having a positive impact on achievement, particularly in reading.

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	E
mathematics	E	E	E*	E*
science	E*	E*	E*	E*

Achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 6. However, children in the Foundation Stage are achieving well. The school has been through a period of instability, with 11 teachers leaving over the past two years. This has had a negative effect on the rate at which pupils achieve, and standards have steadily declined. Standards attained by pupils in Year 6 in the national tests were well below average in English and very low¹ in mathematics and science in 2003. When compared with those of similar schools, standards remain equally low. Standards have been well below average or very low in all three subjects for the last three years. Children's attainment when they start school is well below average overall. Children in the Foundation Stage are achieving well because of the consistently good teaching they receive, but most do not reach the early learning

¹ This means the results in mathematics were within the range of the lowest five per cent of schools across the country.

goals² by the time they start in Year 1. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in Year 2 are well below average in reading and writing, and below average in mathematics and science. In Year 6, standards are below average in English, mathematics and science. These pupils do not make enough progress and are underachieving. Standards in information and communication technology [ICT] are satisfactory overall, but ICT is not yet being used to enhance learning in all subjects. However, the school has recently put considerable effort into improving language skills for those pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), including refugees. The majority of these pupils are now achieving satisfactorily against their prior attainment in reading, especially when specialist teachers teach them in small groups.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral and social development are good overall, and opportunities for understanding their own cultural diversity are well developed. Pupils get on well with one another and their behaviour is satisfactory, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn, but would have a better understanding of what they need to do to improve if teachers made greater use of target setting for individuals as well as for groups. Attendance and punctuality are improving, but are still currently unsatisfactory. Many children are taken on holiday during term time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is now satisfactory. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall, but teachers could make better use of assessment data to set precise targets for individual pupils. During the inspection good or better teaching was observed in many classes, but this was not consistent across the school. Three lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 6. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good, with no unsatisfactory teaching being observed. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach, and work well with the teaching assistants to ensure that lessons are interesting and capture pupils' imaginations. Achievement is best when teaching takes account of the full range of abilities, including those children with special educational needs, and those with EAL. However, this is not consistent across the school. The quality of support for pupils with EAL is improving and is now good overall. This is because assessment is being used effectively to analyse these pupils' needs and build carefully on their prior learning. The school makes very good use of educational visits, visitors and the community to enrich the curriculum. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. The open plan design does not support good quality teaching and learning. However, work has already started on an extensive rebuilding project to create new classrooms for pupils in Year 1 to 6.

Care and welfare are **very good**. Teachers and teaching assistants care for pupils very well in a warm and friendly environment. Provision to support pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is satisfactory. The school maintains satisfactory relationships with parents. Links with the community are **good**

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The school has been through a period of turbulent change. However, the new headteacher, teachers and governors have built an inclusive school where all are equally involved. The school is effectively managed, and is now very good at identifying areas for improvement and at seeking ways to overcome weaknesses and address disadvantage. Governors are supportive of the school and have a clear understanding of what the school does very well and how they can help improve things further. The quality of their work is good. Statutory requirements are met.

² Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents express very positive views about all aspects of the school. They believe that children are treated fairly, are expected to work hard, and are involved in running of the school. The inspection team fully agrees with them. Pupils say they feel safe and have an adult they can go to if they were worried at school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science
- increase the amount of good and very good teaching
- make better use of assessment data to set individual targets for improvement so that work is appropriately matched to the widely-varying learning needs of pupils
- improve the accommodation.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils are underachieving because standards are not high enough yet, and the quality of teaching and learning is still too variable. In addition, the previous lack of clear educational direction has been a barrier to raising achievement for all groups of pupils. Over the last three years, the trend in the school's results has been downwards. The headteacher and senior management team in partnership with the local education authority (LEA) are assiduously addressing these concerns through a very good action plan. The school is increasingly effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children receive a very good start to their education in the Foundation Stage.
- Standards are not high enough in English, mathematics and science.
- Significant improvements have been made to the climate for learning across the school.
- There is not enough good or very good teaching.
- Standards in information and communication technology have improved and are now satisfactory.
- The school is addressing concerns about pupils' underachievement through a very good action plan.

Commentary

1. The school's new leadership team is committed to educational inclusion and to promoting equality in all that it does. This is a key factor in addressing pupils' underachievement. The school now caters for all pupils whatever their backgrounds, gender or ethnicity. However, many of these improvements are very recent and have yet to make a significant impact on standards and achievement. The new leadership team has successfully increased the amount of good teaching, but there are still inconsistencies. The best teaching now identifies precise learning objectives, grouping children and pupils carefully, varying the activities, and choosing the best methods. Lessons are now planned so that work is matched to the wide range of pupils' differing abilities. These features, together with the teachers' enthusiasm and pupils' good attitudes to learning and improved behaviour, are making a significant contribution to improving achievement.

2. When the children start in the nursery class, their attainment is well below the levels expected for their age. In particular, the children's English language skills, their personal and social development and their communication skills are low. Bi lingual teaching assistants and a specialist teacher give particular attention to these children, and as a result their achievement is good. All the children achieve well in the nursery class. Very good induction procedures serve to ease the children's transition from home to school. Teaching is consistently good, and children benefit from a well-planned curriculum and from very effective support from all the adults involved. There is a very good balance between self-selected and adult-directed activities, with a strong emphasis on the development of literacy skills.

3. When the children start the reception classes, their skills are still well below the levels expected for the age range. Again, teaching and learning are good in the reception classes. This results in good achievement. Even so, by the end of the Foundation Stage, the majority of the children will not achieve the Early Learning Goals³ in all the areas of learning.

³ Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with communication language and literacy, mathematical development, personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning. In language and literacy, for example, pupils should be able to write their own names and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

4. The table below shows the average point scores attained in the Year 2 tests in 2003. One point represents about one term's progress, so the table shows, for example, that last year's pupils were on average around three terms behind all pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13 (12.6)	15.7(15.8)
writing	10.9 (11.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	13.7 (13.9)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 69 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. Standards achieved in the national tests in 2003 for pupils aged seven were well below the national average in reading and mathematics, and in the bottom five per cent of all schools nationally in writing. When compared with schools in a similar context, standards were well below average in all three subjects. An analysis of trends over the past four years shows a decline in standards in all three subjects. Previously, the lack of clear educational direction has been a barrier to raising achievement for all groups of pupils. Teachers did not have a clear understanding of the standards achieved by those with special educational needs, gifted and talented and English as an additional language (EAL). The new leadership team has undertaken a rigorous evaluation of teaching and learning, and has identified some aspects of ineffective teaching and learning. Positive actions have been taken to ensure all teachers have a clearer understanding of the standards achieved by all groups of pupils, and of the strategies needed to ensure pupils make good progress. However, much of the work is very recent and has yet to make a significant impact on standards and achievement. Inspectors judge attainment to be well below average in English and below average in mathematics and science. Although this represents an improvement on recent years, pupils' achievement remains unsatisfactory.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.6 (22.5)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	21.6 (23.7)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	23.6 (24.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 69 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

6. Standards achieved in the national tests in 2003 for pupils aged 11 were well below average in English and in the bottom five per cent of all schools nationally in mathematics and science. When compared with pupils' prior attainment at the end of Year 2, standards are broadly similar. However, when the results for refugee pupils are excluded from the analysis, standards in English are below the national average. Standards in mathematics and science remain well below average. Again, the school has taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Inspectors judge attainment to be well below average in English, mathematics and science. Again, this represents an improvement on recent years, but pupils' achievement remains unsatisfactory.

7. Over recent years the variety of languages of pupils with EAL has become more diverse, with the arrival of high numbers of pupils from Eastern Europe and refugees from a wide range of origins. Many of these pupils have underachieved like their peers. However, the new management team has carefully monitored these groups and introduced a very good action plan to address underachievement. The school is rising to this challenge and has invested effectively in staff development to ensure pupils' needs are met. The majority of pupils with EAL, including refugees

and Roma travellers are now achieving satisfactorily against their prior attainment in reading. However, achievement in writing, mathematics and science remains unsatisfactory.

8. The school's procedures for target setting are much improved. Pupils' progress is now tracked throughout the school, and the system provides a much more secure basis for setting statutory targets at the end of Year 6. The school has set very challenging targets for 2004, which represent the school's high aspirations for all its pupils. Recent unvalidated results show some improvements have been made in English and science.

9. One of the key features of the plan to raise standards and achievement is improvement to the quality of teaching and learning. There is some good and very good practice. However, there is some unsatisfactory teaching, which is having an impact on pupils' learning and progress. The school has recognised that there is not enough good teaching and is addressing this concern through a programme of staff development. Teachers are now more confident at tracking pupils' progress and taking effective action to address underachievement. However, better use could be made of assessment data to set individual targets for improvement so that work is appropriately matched to the widely-varying learning needs of pupils.

10. Evidence shows that standards in ICT are now satisfactory across the school. This finding reflects good progress since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory for pupils aged 11. The new ICT suite has significantly increased the time available for individual pupils to practise new skills, but it is not yet used consistently to support learning in all areas of the curriculum. The use of ICT across the curriculum is therefore underdeveloped. The school is aware of this and has drawn up a detailed plan to address this issue.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES

Attendance and punctuality are **unsatisfactory**, but they are improving. Pupils' attitudes to learning are **good**. Behaviour is **satisfactory**. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are keen to learn and involve themselves in extra-curricular activities.
- Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.
- The level of exclusions is high, although this is being reduced.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons are effective in promoting moral and social development.

Commentary

11. Attitudes are good. Pupils are polite and considerate to visitors, and the majority say they like school and are encouraged to work hard. They are generally enthusiastic about their work and are keen to learn. Pupils usually settle quickly to their lessons, listen attentively and concentrate on their tasks. Many take part in extra clubs and activities, especially those run during the lunch break, in addition to the nurture groups and the breakfast club. Most pupils are expected to take on responsibilities to support the smooth running of the school, which they do responsibly and without fuss. However, opportunities for independent study are less well developed. Pupils with EAL mix well with their peers, whatever their background, and are very keen to participate in activities and school events. They are highly motivated and keen to learn.

12. Attendance is unsatisfactory. The school has very good procedures for promoting good attendance and systematically analyses any trends and patterns of absence that may occur. It has exceeded its target for attendance by achieving 92.5 per cent by the end of May 2004, but is still below the national average. In reception, where attendance was reported as low at the last inspection, no class is below 90 per cent and one is at 98 per cent. The school works very closely

with outside agencies and is doing everything it can to improve performance. This includes writing to parents to explain the importance of good attendance, visiting parents at home, working very closely with the Educational Welfare Service, and telephoning parents or carers on the pupil's first day of absence. However, a number of parents do not support the school well enough in this aspect of its work. For example, 22 families took children on extended holidays during term time. Action is being taken to curb this practice by talking with parents, and explaining the effects of their actions. Some pupils are regularly late for school, but these are monitored by the learning mentors and then followed up with the families concerned.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.8	School data	1.0
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.

13. Parents and pupils report there has been a noticeable improvement in behaviour since the beginning of the current school year. The inspection team confirms that the behaviour of pupils is now satisfactory overall. In lessons, pupils get on with their work and there are few interruptions from bad behaviour. Pupils are now eager to learn. The School Council is very pleased that it has been able to promote better behaviour by providing play equipment from the profits of the tuck shop, which is supervised by the learning mentors.

14. During the previous year there were sixty fixed term exclusions. Pupils and parents confirm that since the beginning of the current school year there has been a significant reduction in the incidence of bullying, and there have been no permanent exclusions. However, there are still a number of short fixed term exclusions arising from aggressive behaviour, disobedience and rudeness. Effective use of behaviour management, nurture groups and lunchtime exclusion is reducing the number and length of these exclusions. During this academic year there have been two racial incidents. These were dealt with appropriately. The school makes it very clear that all types of bullying are totally unacceptable. Parents and pupils feel reassured that adults now quickly sort out any misbehaviour or bullying. Pupils are confident that their concerns will be listened to and they will be treated fairly.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	176	38	0
White – any other White background	12	2	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	15	2	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	2	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	63	3	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	49	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	94	2	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	19	1	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	20	9	0
Black or Black British – African	49	1	0

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

15. Pupils now have a very good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The scheme of work for personal, social and health education emphasises the need to tell the truth and be fair in all dealings. There is a strong commitment to sharing, and children develop respect for themselves and others. The school is successful in fostering in pupils a sense of dignity, value and worth, and an appreciation of achievement in themselves and others. Assemblies give space for reflection and celebration: drawing on pupils' work and reaching out to families. Circle time, counselling, nurture clubs and personal, social and health education help pupils develop a sense of their own identity and a respect for that of their peers. There is a wide range of heritage represented within the school. In addition, teachers and support staff are drawn from different heritages and provide very good role models, which helps develop pupils' self-esteem. Pupils successfully learn how other cultures may be valued and respected while learning about the culture of the country in which they live.

16. According to the responses made to the inspectors' questionnaire, the pupils say they are expected to work hard, teachers show them how to make their work better, and they have an adult they can go to if they are worried at school. This is helped by the way the school is organised so that each year group has access to a team of adults. The appointment of a team of three mentors makes it possible to provide additional help and support to those who need it.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is now satisfactory. The previous lack of clear educational direction has been a barrier to raising achievement for all groups of pupils. The new headteacher and leadership team in partnership with the local education authority (LEA) are assiduously addressing these concerns through a **very good** action plan.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- While overall it is satisfactory, the quality of teaching and learning is too variable.
- Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage.
- Refugees and pupils in the early stages of acquiring English benefit from intensive small group teaching by the Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) team.
- The management of pupils' behaviour is positive and effective.
- Pupils are beginning to have a better understanding of how well they are doing and how they can improve.
- Although satisfactory overall, assessment is not sufficiently well targeted to individual needs.

Commentary

17. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. During the inspection, good teaching or better was observed in many classes, but this was not consistent across the school. In addition, the proportion of lessons seen that were of good or better quality in Year 1 to 6 was broadly in line with the national norm. This was supported by the scrutiny of work, which indicated that teaching was satisfactory overall. Three lessons were judged to be of unsatisfactory quality. However, the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good, with no unsatisfactory teaching being observed.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 62 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1(2%)	7 (11%)	34(55 %)	17(27%)	3(5%)	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.

18. Teachers have fully embraced the principles of educational inclusion and ensure that all pupils have equality of opportunity. They usually plan activities that are well matched to the pupils' age, ability, background, gender or ethnicity. However, the school has been through a long period of instability, with 11 teachers leaving over the past two years. With so many staff changes it has been difficult to maintain consistency in teaching and learning. Standards have steadily declined, and pupils have underachieved because the quality of teaching and learning is too variable. However, since the appointment of the new headteacher, staffing has stabilised, morale has improved, and there is a new positive climate for learning because pupils' behaviour has improved significantly. The school recognises that there is not enough teaching which is good or better. The leadership team, in partnership with the local education authority, are rigorously monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in order to address this concern. An analysis of their monitoring shows the quality of teaching is rapidly improving, but still reveals some inconsistencies across the school. This analysis is supported by inspection evidence.

19. In the best lessons, pupils benefit significantly from challenging tasks that capture their attention and focus well on previous learning. Pupils are challenged to do well through interesting tasks, they concentrate well, and the relationships between teachers and pupils make learning a very positive experience. However, this quality is not always present. In some classes, pupils learn less well where they are not enthused by the activities and the work set. In these lessons, teachers are not planning well enough to meet the specific learning needs of individuals or groups of individuals. This means that the progress slows and achievement is unsatisfactory.

20. However, there was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching and learning observed during the inspection. Here, teachers failed to manage the behaviour of some of the pupils for the entire lesson. This resulted in all the pupils being distracted from their tasks, and they all made insufficient progress. This is similar to the results of the recent monitoring carried out by the school and the LEA, and is being addressed through a rigorous programme of support and monitoring.

21. Teaching is particularly strong for children in the Foundation Stage, where all lessons observed were good or very good. A particular strength of the teaching is the detailed planning, which provides clear learning objectives for individual tasks. The staff provide particularly well for the majority of the children who have little or no English when they start school. Bilingual teaching assistants and a specialist teacher give focused attention to these children and as a result their achievement is good. Adults are skilled at encouraging the children to develop their independence, communication and social skills, all of which has a positive effect upon the way they learn. The teacher and teaching assistants have high expectations in regard to both work and behaviour, as well as a good understanding of the curriculum and of how children of this age learn. Adult interventions give high priority to encouraging language development, when managing group work, which results in good learning. There are satisfactory systems in reception for keeping track of each child's progress, and the information is well used when planning future work.

22. Refugees and pupils in the early stages of acquiring English benefit from intensive small group teaching by the EMA team. Here, teachers carefully identify opportunities for developing pupils' language skills and put special emphasis on developing their vocabulary. In addition, by including the newly arrived pupils and those in the early stages of acquiring English in their focus group, class teachers enable these pupils to benefit from working in small groups where they develop and consolidate their verbal responses. Some particularly good examples were seen during Year 2 mathematics lesson and an English lesson in Year 6. However, this is not constant across the school. Where teaching and learning are less effective, strategies for supporting these pupils are not being clearly identified within the lesson planning, and work in withdrawal groups

does not identify clear learning outcomes. This means that the achievement of these pupils is not consistent across the school. The school's own monitoring has identified this, and strategies to improve consistency have been put in place. Although many of these pupils have underachieved on a par with most of their peers in the last three years, the many recent initiatives to provide consistently good quality teaching and learning, initiated by the LEA and the new headteacher, are now having a positive impact on their achievement particularly in reading.

23. The school has recently implemented a new assessment policy. Teachers record the National Curriculum Levels each pupil is expected to reach each year. National test data is carefully analysed, shared with governors and teachers, and used to develop the curriculum and a programme for staff training. However, the school could make better use of assessment data to set individual targets for improvement so that work is appropriately matched to the widely varying learning needs of pupils, and are 'child friendly'. Targets for improvements are usually set for groups of pupils, and are not adequately focussed on their individual needs so they each understand what they need to do to improve. In addition, target booklets and guidelines for parents to help their children in Year 2 and Year 6 are very similar and are not sufficiently well adapted to the different age ranges.

24. Pupils with special educational needs are supported in lessons by teaching assistants and others. Staff have good access to professional development, which is enabling them to be more focussed and more effective in their support of identified pupils with special educational needs. The school has access to very good levels of support from various agencies and support services, and this is beginning to impact positively on raising these pupils' achievement.

The curriculum

The curriculum provides a **satisfactorily** broad range of curricular opportunities that cater for the pupils' interests. There are **very good** opportunities for enrichment both within and beyond the school day. The accommodation is **unsatisfactory** overall. Resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is being reviewed.
- The school makes very good use of educational visits, visitors and the community to enrich the curriculum.
- The school is very inclusive and works hard to reflect the community it serves.
- The provision for the children in the nursery and reception classes is good.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

25. The curriculum is being reviewed to provide greater coherence and links between different subjects and to identify opportunities for pupils to become independent learners. The leadership team are rightly concerned that some subjects are under-represented. For example, there is not enough time allocated for teaching mathematics, and teachers do not use information and communication technology consistently to aid teaching in all subjects. Considerable time is spent monitoring the quality of curriculum planning so that lessons provide appropriate challenge for all groups of pupils. The school is consolidating the recent good progress in this area of its work so that pupils make the best possible progress as their needs change. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects.

26. It is clear that the school has put a great deal of emphasis on the improvement of English skills, as many of the pupils come from backgrounds where English is not the first language spoken at home. Much of this is very recent, and it is too soon to measure the impact on raising standards and achievement overall. However, inspection evidence shows that changes are having a positive impact on achievement in reading across the school. In addition, the school now identifies more

able pupils in Year 5 and 6, and provides additional teaching and support. Again, this is very recent and it is too soon to measure the effect on achievement overall.

27. Educational visits are used effectively to enrich the curriculum. For example, the pupils regularly visit places of interest in the locality and the wider community to support work in history and geography. Older pupils take part in residential visits, which help develop both their personal and their academic skills. There is a very good range of clubs and activities, including steel drum tuition, the performing arts and many different sporting activities, which are open to pupils whatever their background or ability.

28. The school has fully embraced the principles of educational inclusion and ensures that all pupils have full access to all subjects and activities irrespective of their background, ability, gender or ethnicity. Opportunities are carefully planned to celebrate and enhance cultural and linguistic diversity. The bilingual support staff enable pupils to develop a better understanding of their home language as well as improving their English skills. In addition, assemblies are occasions where pupils are able to celebrate their own and other cultures. Pupils now have pride in their own multicultural identities and are willing to explore other cultures openly and spontaneously. Resources and displays strongly reflect pupils' diverse backgrounds and create a positive learning environment. However, the school could make better use of assessment data to set individual targets for improvement so that lessons are more appropriately matched to the widely varying learning needs of the pupils. At present, targets for improvement known to the pupils are insufficiently precise to be helpful.

29. The curriculum for the children in the nursery and reception classes is good. It is firmly based on the recommended areas of learning for young children. There is a good emphasis on independence, with the children planning and carrying out their own learning. The outdoor environment is used well to promote learning, with many activities provided for the children to interest and intrigue them.

30. Although the accommodation is spacious, for example there is a hall, a drama studio with a mirrored wall and a separate dining room, the arrangement of the teaching space is unsatisfactory. The open plan design does not support good quality teaching and learning. For example, the teaching 'spaces' are small and overcrowded, and it is necessary to walk through classrooms to reach other classrooms and practical areas. In addition, the working noise from one activity intrudes into other teaching spaces and distracts pupils from their work. The school and the LEA are improving the accommodation and have started an extensive rebuilding project to create separate classrooms with interconnecting corridors. Resources for teaching are good overall. There has been a recent significant improvement in the resources for reading, which has had a very positive impact within the school.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are **very well** cared for. Provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is **satisfactory**. Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are cared for very well.
- Pupils feel safe, valued and supported because of the way they are treated.
- Health education is well provided for.
- There are good arrangements for the induction of pupils, including those arriving during the school year.
- The school council is effective.
- Targets, though known to pupils, are insufficiently precise to be helpful.

Commentary

31. The senior management team works closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils are very well cared for. Supervision is well organised and lunch time supervisors are undergoing training to develop their knowledge and expertise. Audits for health and safety have been completed, and have resulted in improvements to the toilets and the flooring. The school is clean and well maintained.

32. Health education is considered a high priority, and a special week is set aside each year to study health related issues. Specialist personnel come to school and work alongside teachers on projects such as hygiene and personal safety. Pupils say they found this interesting, enjoyable and informative. The school nurse works with teachers to deliver lessons on sex and relationships, and drugs. The lunchtime supervisors also encourage healthy eating by awarding points for healthy choices leading to weekly awards.

33. Advice and guidance for personal development take place during personal, social and health education lessons, where issues such as understanding personal feelings are discussed and concepts like “body language” are recognised. In addition, the school provides further opportunities through personal or group counselling and behaviour ‘therapy’ groups, in partnership with the local authority and health service agencies.

34. According to the responses in the pupils’ questionnaire, the vast majority of pupils are happy that there is someone to whom they can go if they have a problem. The appointment of a team of three mentors makes it possible to offer help to individual pupils who need additional support and guidance. Learning support is well organised for those pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties and those whose mother tongue is not English. Groups of gifted and talented pupils are now identified in Years 5 and 6, and they receive additional separate teaching.

35. Group targets are set and regular half-termly progress reviews are held. The school’s survey of pupils’ opinions, and conversations with pupils during the inspection, show that these targets are known but they are too broadly based to be helpful. A pupil development profile is being produced which will be shared with pupil and parent, but is not yet in place. However, pupils do contribute to their annual reports as part of their record of achievement.

36. Parents said how pleased they are with the way their children had been introduced into the school, both in reception and at later stages. Inspectors support this view. Pupils who arrived during the school year said they were helped to settle quickly and make friends. Those who join the school without knowledge of English are well cared for and supported in small groups to develop their linguistic skills. In addition, a breakfast club not only offers a nutritious start to the day, but also encourages good punctuality and attendance and helps pupils forge new friendships.

37. The school council is an effective way for pupils to discuss their views about school life and to share ideas about how it can be improved. Pupils are proud that their ideas on ways to improve behaviour in the playground were followed up and put into effect. Surveys are used to test pupils’ opinion on, for example, the effect of changes in the teaching of English and Mathematics, but as yet there is no pattern of regular consultation.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **satisfactory**. Links with the community and other schools and colleges are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school’s good open-door approach to communication with parents.
- Parents feel happy to approach the school and know they will be listened to.
- The annual reports for parents are not precise enough.
- Target booklets do not distinguish between the needs of pupils sufficiently well.
- The good use of the school’s premises for drop-in services and adult education classes.

Commentary

38. Relationships between the school and parents are being enhanced by the availability of senior staff and class teachers in the playground at both the beginning and the end of the school day. The majority of parents who filled in the pre-inspection questionnaire said they were very satisfied with the way their children are helped to settle in the school. They felt their children liked school, and were satisfied with the information they received on their child's progress. They liked the way the school was dealing with behaviour management and were pleased that it was possible to access the senior staff and class teacher informally. However, some of those who attended the pre-school meeting thought that previously there had been insufficient consultation. They did, however, feel that the situation had improved since the start of the current school year, and the school now deals promptly with complaints and concerns.

39. The quality of documentation provided for parents is satisfactory. The school communicates with parents through regular newsletters, parents' meetings and informal discussions. Newsletters are clearly written and contain helpful and pertinent information; for example, the results of consultations about school uniform. Letters about exclusions emphasise the importance of partnership between home and school and explain the school's concern for individuals and others in the school community. Annual reports to parents are detailed and encouraging but are not precise enough, nor sufficiently individual to be helpful. The presentation is somewhat daunting, with a good deal of script, including a section detailing the course followed in very small print. Reception reports are set out in a similar way. Target booklets and guidelines for parents to help their children in Year 2 and Year 6 are very similar and are not sufficiently well adapted to the different age ranges.

40. There are good links with the community. The Citizens Advice Bureau and the Adult Education Service use the premises and provide parents with easy access to advice and to language classes. The local police, voluntary organisations and health professionals help organise activities during the Health Week. The headteacher makes good use of the gardening skills of personal friends to brighten the attractive open quadrangles, which are enjoyed by all.

41. The school has good links with its partner schools, which benefit pupils and staff alike. Educational services are working closely with the school to provide training and expertise, particularly with the mentoring development service. Links with the secondary school are well organised and enable pupils to make a smooth transition at the end of Year 6. This includes careful liaison with the learning support unit to prepare vulnerable pupils for this transition. In addition, Education Access Staff work with the school to provide a similar service for pupils looked after by the local authority. The school's links with local nurseries and playgroups ensure that children are well prepared for the next stages in their education.

42. There is no 'Friends of Frederick Bird School' or parents' association, but parents always support events and help out with visits. They support the school by attending family assemblies, meetings and festivals. They make good use of initiatives such as the regular coffee morning in Nursery and Reception and the Nursery's Toddler Group. Some parents help in school, for example in implementing the 'Kerbcraft' course for Year 1 pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Governance is **good**. The new headteacher provides **very good** leadership, and has worked very hard in a short time to secure the future of the school. The school is managed effectively. Key staff share in the leadership of the school well.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The headteacher provides very good leadership.

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior management team have worked very hard in a short time to secure the future of the school.
- All staff share a very clear vision for improvement.
- Co-ordinators are effectively monitoring and improving provision within their subjects.
- The Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) is well used.

Commentary

43. Previously, the lack of clear educational direction has been a barrier to raising achievement for all groups of pupils. The headteacher and senior management team in partnership with the local education authority (LEA) have worked very closely together to address these concerns through a very detailed action plan. However, much of the work is very recent and has yet to make a significant impact on standards and achievement. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, there has been a significant change in the way the governing body relate to the management of the school. They are now much more aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and recognise that attainment and achievement of all groups of pupils must be raised. They fully support the initiatives implemented by the LEA and headteacher. They are now systematic and rigorous at holding the school to account for what it does.

44. Working in close partnership with the LEA, the headteacher is successfully addressing concerns to do with the quality of leadership and management, teaching and learning, standards and achievement. She has established a new leadership team, and has clarified the roles and responsibilities of middle managers. She has introduced new development priorities, has examined the budget to ensure that all available resources are being used effectively, and introduced new systems for self-evaluation. Most importantly of all, she has gained the confidence of parents, the community, staff and pupils.

45. One of the significant strengths of the leadership of the headteacher is the degree to which all staff now share her very clear vision for improvement. The headteacher and leadership team have achieved this in a short time by promoting an ethos in which all who work in the school feel valued. They are placing great value on communication and consultation. A very good example of this is the way in which they have enabled all adults to work together to improve the behaviour of all pupils, which is now satisfactory. At the time of the headteacher’s appointment, there were many concerns about the behaviour of some pupils, and there were significant numbers of exclusions. With the support of the whole community, and with the help of adults and pupils, the leadership team have reviewed the school’s behaviour strategy. This has resulted in a new climate in which pupils and teachers have a better understanding of their rights and responsibilities. The school celebrates the achievement of all pupils, whilst seeking to provide them with new skills to manage their own behaviour.

46. Previously, self-evaluation has been unsatisfactory. The headteacher has now introduced coherent systems for monitoring the progress of classes and different groups of pupils. In addition, the school now records value added information and accounts for factors such as staff turbulence, the numbers of pupils who have SEN or EAL and significant changes to pupils’ circumstances. The governors are now monitoring these areas to ensure the school is providing value for money. However, much of the data collection is at an early stage of development.

47. The governors have a good understanding of long-term financial planning, and finances are carefully managed. Accounts are regularly scrutinised to ensure that spending limits are followed, and funds for specific purposes, such as the additional money for special educational needs and for English as additional language, are used well. Governors ensure that budgets are set to take account of educational priorities and that expenditure is planned to meet these.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	1882442
Total expenditure	1882589
Expenditure per pupil	3326

Balance from previous year	75180
Balance carried forward to the next	88456

48. The school had a carry forward figure of just over 4.5 per cent for the year April 2003 to March 2004, which is well within national guidelines. There is no projected carry-forward figure for the current financial year. This is due to expenditure already committed to refurbish and replace equipment as part of the 1.4 million pound redevelopment of the school buildings. However, the school has an agreement with the LEA to support, protect and underwrite the school budget during a three-year period so that it does not go into deficit.

49. The Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant and other resources are effectively targeted to provide good quality specialist support. The Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) team is effectively led, and the coordinator contributes successfully to whole school developments. The school has very thorough and detailed procedures for monitoring and analysing pupils' progress, and the information is used to determine the deployment of resources and the nature of the support. The headteacher and other senior managers are fully committed to improving the provision further. Recent monitoring by the headteacher has resulted in more effective deployment of staff, whose success

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is **good**.

50. The staff in the nursery and reception classes work in teams, and this is effective. The leadership and management of the reception team and the nursery team are good, and this has secured a good quality curriculum for the children. All areas of the curriculum are well led and managed. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection report. Assessment is sound and is clearly linked to the areas of learning for young children. Teaching and learning are consistently good and often very good in the nursery and reception classes. The children start in the nursery classes in the year they are four, and they attend part time either in the morning or in the afternoon. The children who attend the nursery class transfer to the reception class, with approximately a third more children joining them from other nursery settings. The children start in the reception class in the September of the year in which they are five.

51. When the children start in the nursery class their attainment is well below the levels expected. This is lower than at the time of the previous inspection, when it was judged to be 'lower than that usually found for children of this age'. All the children achieve well in the nursery class. This is the result of patient supportive teaching. When the children start the reception classes, their skills are still well below the levels expected. Teaching and learning are good in the reception classes and as a result achievement is good. Even so, by the end of the reception year, the majority of the children are not likely to achieve the goals they are expected to reach in all the areas of learning. At the time of the previous report, the majority of children attained the learning goals in all areas of the curriculum, except in physical development which they exceeded. However, the profile of the children entering the school has also changed, and records supplied by the school show children start well below the level expected nationally. In particular, the children's English language skills, their personal and social development and their communication skills are low. In some year groups, the numbers of children with special educational needs and behavioural problems is higher than in others. This also has an impact on the attainment of these groups. A significant number of children join part way through the nursery year or the reception year and need time to settle to a new environment and to learn new routines. This adversely affects the rate of achievement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and learning enables the children to feel happy and secure.
- Staff encourage the children to be polite and share.
- Good class routines enable the children to become independent in their work.

Commentary

52. Children enter the Foundation Stage with poor social skills. However, children are well taught and achieve well. Clear routines are quickly established so that the children feel confident and happy. The children in the nursery cheerfully separate from their parent or carer at the start of sessions and dutifully register themselves by wearing a name card. Children in reception move about the classrooms and outdoors with confidence. They are clear about the teachers' expectations and respond well when they are reminded that they must look carefully, listen to what the teacher has to say and put up their hand if they wish to contribute. All children learn well.

53. Snack times in both the nursery and reception classes are happy and sociable occasions. The children happily tidy up at the end of sessions, putting away the equipment they have used. In this way, the children learn to develop their social responsibility. The children work confidently together. The older children in the reception classes share their equipment well and work contentedly alongside each other. In the nursery class, the staff encourage the children to share and work with each other to become effective learners. A good balance is struck in the time children spend working on their own, in small groups or with an adult, and there are good opportunities for them to choose their own activities and become independent. However, most children will not achieve all their learning goals in these aspects of their development by the end of the year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well focused teaching allows good learning and achievement. The children have many opportunities to develop their speaking skills.
- Children whose mother tongue is not English are well supported in their learning.
- The children work hard with their reading and writing.

Commentary

54. Children enter the Foundation Stage with poor speech and language skills. Teaching is of good quality, and there is considerable support for those children whose first language is not English. Bilingual support staff help the children by translating and helping them with their work. Children have the opportunity to have stories read to them in their mother tongue by the bilingual support staff. This supports and enhances their linguistic abilities. The skilled support teacher takes small groups of children for intensive support. This too has a beneficial effect on the pupils' English language skills. All the children are fully included into the work of the nursery and reception classes, and work is carefully tailored to their individual needs. While most will not achieve all their learning goals in these aspects of their development by the end of the year, all groups achieve well.

55. Staff in the nursery and reception employ a wide range of strategies to develop the children's vocabularies and confidence in speaking. Nursery children's speaking skills are not well developed; some have little or no English whilst others' speech is indistinct. Older children in reception use a puppet to improve their speech and diction. They help the puppet to explore new words and sounds and ensure that 'he' can pronounce them correctly. This develops their confidence at chatting about their work, and there is a lively buzz of conversation throughout the classrooms.

56. The children in the reception classes are grouped by aptitude for work based on phonics. This means their learning is well matched to their individual needs and is having a positive impact upon both the children's reading and writing skills. Children enjoy listening to stories, and adults use these opportunities well to develop vocabulary and early reading skills. Books are displayed throughout the reception classes so that children learn that they contain information as well as well-loved stories. They happily take their reading books home to share with their parents or carers, and the higher attaining children are beginning to read competently. Writing skills are taught carefully and systematically. Nursery children enjoy 'writing' and make books and notes using a range of marks, which they show proudly to the staff. By the end of reception, some are able to write sentences that are phonetically accurate. Others can usually write words using the correct initial sounds.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good because teaching and learning develop children's mathematical skills well through a practical curriculum.
- Work is well planned, so that children of all abilities are fully included in the lessons.

Commentary

57. Children enter school with a limited experience in using and applying mathematical knowledge. This aspect of the Foundation Stage curriculum is well taught because exciting practical activities are used to promote mathematical understanding. Nursery children enjoy working with the nursery nurses at practical activities that develop their mathematical understanding. For example, they worked enthusiastically to match socks of the same size and colour to form pairs. Older children worked with the teaching assistant to estimate how many cupfuls of 'tea' the teapot would hold and then worked out the exact measurement as they poured out the 'tea'. They were continually reminded about the use of the correct mathematical language such as 'full' and 'empty'. Others learnt how to make a programmable toy turn and move according to their commands. Adults make good use of a wide range of practical activities to promote the children's learning. Careful planning ensures the work is well matched to children's varying abilities, whatever their background. However, most children will not achieve all their learning goals in these aspects of their development by the end of the year.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A busy and stimulating environment promotes good learning.
- Educational visits are used well to support the children's' learning.

Commentary

58. The children have many opportunities to widen their horizons and extend their learning in the immediate locality and beyond. These experiences help the children to become confident investigators. They stimulate the children's curiosity about the world around them. For example, they have recently been for a ride on a canal boat and have visited a zoo. The oldest children in reception used these experiences to develop their knowledge of wild animals. In the nursery class, the children have been learning about the weather and water. They have been playing with the umbrellas and recognise they can be used to shelter from both the rain and the sun! In addition, they have been testing objects to predict which would float or sink. The quality of teaching is good. For example, the specialist support teacher for those children who need help with their English speaking skills helped the children to draw what they might take for their packed lunch when visiting the zoo. She also showed them what she thought she might take with her on the visit. Teachers and support staff are effective in teaching children that some families within the community have similar beliefs to theirs, but that others do not. They do this by celebrating festivals, by reading stories and by discussion. However, most children will not achieve all their learning goals in these aspects of their development by the end of the year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outdoor area is used well by the staff to develop the children's physical skills.

Commentary

59. The children in the nursery have many opportunities to use the outdoor area to work with a wide range of play resources. Both the nursery and the reception classes have very good outdoor accommodation and a good range of resources to support learning. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and pupils achieve well. Many of the youngest children in the nursery enjoy just running in the large area and then quickly settle to a specific task. They use large equipment such as the car and the slide enthusiastically. In the reception class, the children enjoy fixing the large pipes together and then watching the water travelling along the pipes as they use the equipment. The children clearly enjoy working in the outdoor area and are beginning to develop co-operative play as well as their skills of independence. However, most children will not achieve all their learning goals in these aspects of their development by the end of the year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of experiences is used to stimulate the children's imaginations.

Commentary

60. Children enter reception with limited creative skills and responses that are well below the standards expected for their age. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and children achieve well. Staff are skilful at enabling children to respond sensitively and creatively to what they see, hear, feel and imagine. This is done through a good range of interesting topics and imaginative play. In the nursery, the children learn what would happen when they mix two different colours together when painting rainbows. These skills are developed well in the reception classes, where the children mix paint to complete pictures of wild animals in the style of Jackson Pollock. The role-play area provides very good opportunities for children to play co-operatively and develop their imagination. They extend their language skills, for example, by re-enacting familiar situations when cooking meals and looking after babies. Such experiences make a good contribution to children's spiritual, social and cultural development.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

English

Overall provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although pupils' achievements were often good in lessons during the week of the inspection, a significant number are underachieving.
- The subject is well led and managed.

- Teachers' planning is good and includes clear and specific learning objectives, which are clearly explained to pupils and used to evaluate their achievement.
- Speaking skills are well promoted in lessons and in other subjects.
- Provision for guided reading has improved and is having a positive impact on the development of reading skills.
- Although there are some good examples of literacy skills being promoted across the curriculum, opportunities for developing them are not systematic enough.
- ICT is not sufficiently harnessed to enhance learning in the subject.

Commentary

61. Standards in English are well below those found nationally in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. Standards in speaking, listening and reading are better than writing. Although achievement in the lessons seen during the week of inspection was often good and correlated well with the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory overall. However, developments in English have been substantial since the appointment of the new headteacher, and the improvements in the quality of teaching and learning are now beginning to have a positive impact on learning.

62. Standards have fallen since the last inspection, when they were in line with the national averages at the end of Year 2. Standards achieved in the national tests in 2003 for pupils aged seven were well below the national average in reading and in the bottom five per cent of all schools nationally in writing. When compared with schools in a similar context, standards were well below average in both subjects. For pupils at the end of Year 6, standards in the national tests were well below the national average. However, this represents an improvement on the previous two years when they were in the bottom 5 per cent of all schools nationally.

63. Over recent years, the numbers of pupils from Eastern Europe and refugees from a wide range of origins joining the school have increased. The quality of support for these pupils is good overall. This is because assessment is used effectively to analyse these pupils' needs and build carefully on their prior learning. Pupils in the early stages of acquiring English are effectively targeted and often benefit from intensive small group support by the Ethnic Minority Achievement [EMA] team. In the best lessons seen, teachers carefully identify opportunities for developing pupils' language skills and put special emphasis on developing their vocabulary. In these lessons, whole class teaching is used judiciously to model the skills that pupils are going to practise and then apply when working in groups. In addition, by including the newly arrived pupils and those in the early stages of acquiring English in their focus group, teachers enable these pupils to benefit from working in small groups. This helps to consolidate their verbal skills.

64. Pupils listen well in lessons, and many are willing to respond verbally in spite of the high number of pupils who are in the early stages of acquiring English. This is because the majority of teachers use questioning effectively to elicit information, and use techniques like prompting and rephrasing questions to involve pupils. Although many pupils have limited vocabulary, they draw on their previous learning well. In the best lessons, teachers enable pupils to consolidate previous learning, make good use of visual cues and model responses. Speaking is regularly promoted through partner talk, and pupils routinely get into 'talking pairs' where they brainstorm ideas or answer questions. The development of speaking skills is further enhanced through the use of drama.

65. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in their reading because of recent improvements to provision for guided reading. Most pupils develop strategies for reading unfamiliar words and use the context to guess meaning. More able pupils express clear preferences and comment cogently on the content of what they read. The emphasis given to teaching non-fiction from the earliest stages of learning is reflected in well-developed retrieval skills and the use of the contents page and index in books to find information. Older pupils are familiar with a wide range of authors and apply their knowledge well when they discuss texts. Reading is effectively managed, with pupils routinely producing book

reviews. Teachers' assessment of reading is effective and includes useful diagnostic comments to identify targets for improvement.

66. Achievement in writing is unsatisfactory. Whilst a few high attainers write at length and for a variety of purposes, many who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) and new arrivals, take longer to develop their skills. Progress in handwriting is barely satisfactory, because there is no consistent policy or practice for teaching writing from Year 1 onwards. However, pupils' spelling improves over time because this is taught effectively and is regularly practised.

67. Good quality teaching and learning was seen during the inspection, but this was not consistent across all classes. However, the proportion of lessons seen that were good or better in Year 1 to 6 was broadly in line with the national norm. Considerable effort has recently been put into improving the quality of teaching and learning in English, and this is at the heart of the school's action plan to improve standards overall. Teachers use questioning and prompting well to encourage those who are less confident. In the best teaching, planning is judiciously focussed on enabling pupils to build on what they have experienced before and rehearsing the skills they need when they move on to independent work. Teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour, which are shared with pupils. However, in some lessons, teachers do not do this explicitly. Marking of pupils' written work is used well to inform pupils about what they are doing well and to guide them as to how they might improve their work. However, targets for improvements are not sufficiently precise to meet individual pupils' needs and are not used enough in lessons to inform learning. However, the open plan design of many classrooms does not support good quality teaching and learning.

68. The subject is well led and managed. There has been a continuing focus on improving attainment in the subject, which is rigorously monitored by the Local Education Authority (LEA) and senior management team. The subject leader, in post since January, brings a wealth of experience as a literacy consultant and has a clear vision of how to develop the subject and improve pupils' learning.

Literacy across the curriculum

69. Teachers develop pupils' literacy skills satisfactorily in other subjects. They create opportunities for pupils to use spoken language in most lessons, and this process helps pupils to develop their ideas and to share them with others. Good use is made of 'talking partners' to support those who are in the early stages of acquiring English. Pupils' writing skills are used frequently to extend learning in subjects such as history, geography, and science. However there has been insufficient monitoring to ensure that opportunities are planned systematically and evaluated to gauge effectiveness.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average by the age of seven and 11.
- Achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Provision overall is improving.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with several good features.

Commentary

70. The standard of pupils' work in Year 2 and Year 6 is below average. Standards have fallen since the last inspection when they were in line with the national averages at the end of Year 2. In 2003, results in the national assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 were well below both the national averages and those of similar schools. For pupils at the end of Year 6, standards in the

national tests were the lowest for several years. The school failed to meet its own targets by significant margins.

71. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory overall. Assessment and test results show that, in relation to their prior attainment, pupils make poor progress from the end of Key Stage 1. However, lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work show that, although unsatisfactory progress is being made, as a result of the recent impetus given to teaching and learning, progress is currently better than the formal assessment and test results indicate. In lessons, girls make better progress than boys, who tend to show less interest in the subject. Some boys become distracted when they find the work uninteresting. Pupils in the early stages of acquiring English and refugees are effectively targeted and often benefit from intensive small group support by classroom assistants or the Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) team. However, teachers do not spend enough time developing pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects.

72. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in all years. There are some good features, but there are a few weaknesses too. The atmosphere in most lessons across all years is well ordered. Relationships are mostly positive and respectful. Lessons are usually well planned, and the activities provide a good structure for pupils' learning. Marking is regular. It is usually accurate and sometimes gives a clear indication as to how pupils can improve. Assessment records are detailed, and pupils are encouraged, in the best lessons, to become independent learners, although not always successfully. Targets set for pupils are not specific enough to the individual pupil and are not 'child friendly'. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory.

73. Pupils learn less well in lessons where they – especially the boys – are not enthused by the activities and the work set, and where the teachers fail to manage their behaviour rigorously enough. Some pupils become bored when sitting too long during the 'whole class' activity and, because their listening skills are poor, they easily become distracted. In these lessons teachers are not planning well enough to meet the specific learning needs of individuals or groups of individuals. This means that the progress that these pupils make is too slow. The work in their books shows that too little is done and too much is unfinished and uncorrected, even after marking. Literacy skills are poor.

74. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a positive drive to raise standards. Effective use is made of assessment information to broadly group pupils into classes by ability. Effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning have identified some aspects of ineffective teaching and learning, and positive actions have been taken, such as developing the subject knowledge and understanding of staff. The time devoted to mathematics, given the low standards, is insufficient, especially for the youngest pupils. Resources are good. However, the open plan design does not support good quality teaching and learning. For example, the teaching 'spaces' are small and overcrowded, and it is necessary to walk through classrooms to reach other classrooms and practical areas.

75. Overall, unsatisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. Previously, the lack of clear educational direction has been a barrier to raising achievement for all groups of pupils. The headteacher and senior management team have worked very closely together to address these concerns through a detailed action plan. This is having a positive effect, and crucially, the knowledge and understanding of the subject amongst teachers has improved as a result of comprehensive training and support, and the expectations of teachers are rising sharply. The weaknesses in provision have mostly been identified and are being addressed expeditiously, including the emphasis on developing pupils' number work. Because of the commitment and hard work of staff the subject is now in a good position from which to move forward.

Mathematics across the curriculum

76. The management team has identified the need to ensure mathematical skills are developed well in other subjects. This includes greater use of ICT, for example, to analyse data and represent it graphically. Charts, graphs and tables are used in science to record and analyse data. Pupils practise measuring carefully and accurately in practical activities during design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is unsatisfactory and standards are too low.
- Scientific enquiry is well developed.
- Well chosen practical activities.
- There is very good inclusion of all groups of pupils.
- The use of information and communication technology to support learning is inconsistent.
- In some lessons, teachers' explanations take up too much time.

Commentary

77. The achievement of all groups is unsatisfactory overall, because standards at the ends of both key stages are still too low. Standards in science have been well below those found nationally over the last few years. National test results and teacher assessments have shown a downward trend. In addition, standards were judged to be below the national average at age 7, and well below average at age 11 at the time of the last inspection report. However, the latest unvalidated results for pupils in Year 6 show welcome improvements, reversing the downward trend, but results are still below average overall. No significant differences were found in the achievement of boys and girls, pupils with different home languages or pupils with special educational needs.

78. During the inspection, the teaching and learning observed was generally of good quality and in line with the national norm. However, wider evidence, including the scrutiny of work, showed that teaching was variable across year groups and is judged to be satisfactory overall.

Strengths of teaching include:

- good use of scientific enquiry,
- generally good subject knowledge,
- good management of pupils' behaviour,
- very good inclusion of all groups through the good use of teaching assistants,
- the promotion of equality of opportunity.

Weaknesses in teaching included:

- computers not used enough to support learning,
- teachers sometimes take up too much of the lesson in talking to the class, rather than moving on to practical tasks more promptly.

79. In most lessons, teachers plan interesting practical investigations which pupils of all abilities find fascinating and enjoyable. They encourage pupils to think about what might happen and to work out how to carry out a fair test. Good emphasis is given to the use of correct language, so that pupils fully understand scientific terms. In recording their findings, pupils are encouraged to discuss ideas together and write about what they have discovered in their own words. Opportunities to share, discuss and take turns in activities make a good contribution to pupils' social and language development. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils investigated the amount of air trapped inside different kinds of chocolate. The teacher used very good teaching strategies. All pupils were fully included in the work, were well motivated and were given good opportunities to

develop their language skills. There was a very good working atmosphere and a sense of purpose and enjoyment. The class included pupils with nine different home languages, as well as a wide range of abilities. The teacher and support assistant ensured that all pupils were fully included, giving individuals and groups the encouragement they needed.

80. There is a positive drive to raise standards. Pupils are underachieving because previously the scheme of work did not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in investigational and experimental science. This has been addressed, and there is now a detailed scheme of work which includes opportunities for investigation and experimentation. However, much of the work is very recent and has yet to make a significant impact on standards and achievement. Assessment procedures have been improved, but the resulting information is not yet used consistently to set targets and plan the next steps in individual learning. Effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning have identified some aspects of ineffective teaching and learning, and positive actions have been taken.

81. The management of the subject is satisfactory overall. There have been some changes and breaks in the management of the subject due to ill health, but documentation shows that all aspects of the administration of the subject are in place and up to date. Resources for the subject are satisfactory, and the school grounds have a good range of facilities to support the teaching of science. The open plan design of many classrooms does not support good quality teaching and learning. Teaching 'spaces' are often small and overcrowded, and it is necessary to walk through classrooms to reach other classrooms and practical areas.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good progress has been made since the last inspection.
- There is now a good new ICT suite, with good quality hardware and software.
- The use of information and communication technology to support work in other subjects is not consistent.
- A thorough and detailed action plan is in place to improve the school's provision for ICT.

Commentary

82. At the time of the last inspection, standards were judged to be satisfactory at aged 7, but unsatisfactory for pupils aged 11 years. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils achieve standards that are in line with those found nationally. The teaching of ICT develops the pupils' skills well as they move through the school, so that younger pupils learn the basic skills of using the mouse and keyboard to control the computer. In these classes they use a variety of appropriate software such as a word processor. They learn to find and save their own work and to carry out tasks such as combining text and graphics. Some pupils have difficulty in remembering techniques such as logging on, but teachers and support assistants are good at providing appropriate help. Achievement is satisfactory overall.

83. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have successfully developed their understanding and skills. They can now produce their own multimedia presentations, using Microsoft PowerPoint, and can organise, refine and present the information bearing in mind the audience.

84. While the lessons taught in the ICT suite are good, the use of ICT in other lessons is inconsistent. In many lessons seen during the inspection, the computers available in classrooms were unused. Teachers' planning indicates that some links are made between ICT lessons and lessons in other subjects, for example work in literacy. However, ICT is not yet used as an effective tool to facilitate learning in all areas of the curriculum

85. Discussions with the subject co-ordinator and scrutiny of books and documentation show that the curriculum for information and communication technology is appropriately broad and balanced, with all areas given appropriate attention. The control aspect is given good attention through the teaching of the 'Logo' control language. In the Key Stage 1 classes, pupils use the 'Turtle' to follow instructions for routes on the classroom floor. This develops into more complex work in the Key Stage 2 classes, such as ways of giving repeat instructions. These enjoyable practical activities ensure that all pupils are well motivated and work well.

86. The subject manager is good. However as yet, there have not been opportunities to monitor teaching and learning, and assessment procedures are satisfactory. The new suite has good facilities, including computers and interactive whiteboard, and the overall ratio of pupils to computers is good. Staff expertise has developed well, since the last inspection, although some in-service training activities did not meet the school's needs. 'Drop-in' sessions to help staff try out new software are being tried.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

87. The use of ICT across the curriculum is underdeveloped. The school is aware of this and has drawn up a detailed plan to address this issue. Opportunities for ICT are now being identified in English, mathematics and science, as well as in the foundation subjects⁴. The school has already introduced projects to support work in history and geography.

HUMANITIES

Geography and History

88. These subjects were not a focus of this inspection. Some pupils' work was examined, but it was only possible to observe one lesson. As a result, it is not possible to make judgements about standards or the quality of provision, including teaching and learning. In the single history lesson seen, Year 6 pupils were studying the Second World War, having previously visited Coventry Cathedral and a local transport museum. Pupils were using their research skills to distinguish between fact and opinion when examining historical evidence. This activity was linked to work in ICT, where pupils were using the Internet to find out about Coventry Cathedral and presenting their findings using a range of multimedia. In this one lesson, teaching and learning were satisfactory and standards were satisfactory. However, pupils were underachieving.

Religious Education

The school's provision in religious education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good links made between different faiths
- Good work on festivals.

Commentary

89. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection. Other evidence, including previous work and discussions with pupils, indicates that standards attained by pupils at the ages of seven and 11 are in line with those expected. This is the same as found in the last inspection, and the school has therefore maintained satisfactory standards.

90. As only two lessons were observed, it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. However, in the lessons seen, the pupils gained a sound understanding of Christian stories, from the parables of Jesus. The teacher drew careful

⁴ These are subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

comparisons between the Christian teaching and those of other religions and faiths. Pupils of all faiths were able to draw on their own cultural traditions, and discussions were well handled. Positive attitudes were promoted. The teacher showed great sensitivity to the contributions made by pupils. This illustrated how well this school is working to break down prejudices. Religious education makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

91. Pupils in Year 2 have learned about festivals such as Pancake Day (Shrove Tuesday), Palm Sunday, Hanukkah and Diwali. Those in Year 6 have done work on Old Testament stories, including the Ten Commandments. Such activities promote good understanding between Christianity and other faiths, and help pupils to identify common ideas and traditions, as well as the differences between them.

92. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, particularly when pupils learn about different religions, visit places of worship and work together in classes sharing ideas and thoughts. Visits to religious buildings, such as the Gurdwara, promote social and cultural development well and an understanding of different faiths.

93. Subject management is satisfactory, and the curriculum is appropriately organised so that pupils are given a succession of activities, which build their understanding in a structured manner.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

94. It is not possible to make a secure overall judgement about provision, including teaching and learning, in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. In addition to observing three lessons, inspectors talked to teachers about their work, spoke to pupils about what they had learned and examined pupils' work.

95. In **music** the pupils experience an appropriate range of musical activities. The coordinator has introduced a new scheme of work, which gives good support to non-specialist teachers. The pupils enjoy their music lessons and singing is generally enthusiastic during assemblies. During one of the assemblies, the pupils listened to music by Bob Dylan whilst learning about his life and work. This enabled the pupils to develop a good historical understanding of the times when his music was regarded as innovative and popular. The school has a good number of groups who are learning to play the steel drums. These instruments make a very positive contribution to the music making in the school. The older pupils are at present working on a production of 'Oliver' with members of the Local Education Authority's Performing Arts Service. The pupils are involved in an appropriate number of enrichment activities, with the choir taking part in a performance with other schools at the Warwick Arts Centre.

96. In **design and technology**, there is a clear emphasis throughout the school on the design, making and evaluation process. The pupils are encouraged to make plausible designs for their products, choose appropriate materials and work out how they are best made. They consider a range of techniques and decide which are the most suitable for the product they are making. For example, in Year 3 the pupils are working on how to make stable structures so that when they make photograph frames they will be sturdy enough to stand unaided. The pupils experimented with card and came up with good suggestions to ensure their end products were robust. Older pupils have designed and made chairs, money containers, biscuits and breads. Some of the pupils in Year 4 helped each other to improve their work by evaluating each other's designs. They then made supportive and critical comments on how the end products could be improved. These evaluations enabled the pupils to reflect upon the materials and equipment they had used.

97. Pupils experience a varied **physical education** curriculum including aspects of movement, gymnastics, dance, swimming, athletics and team games. There are good opportunities for competitive sports with local schools and a range of after-school clubs to develop games skills further. In the two lessons seen, the teachers provided pupils with good opportunities to evaluate each other's games, which they did sensitively.

98. The pupils experience an interesting **art and design** curriculum. This is evident from the pupils' work and displays around school. No lessons were seen in art and design during the inspection, and it was not possible to make a judgment about standards. Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work indicated that sketchbooks are used well, and these are appropriately annotated and assessed by teachers.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils are learning to play an active role as citizens.
- Pupils' views are valued.

Commentary

99. The programme for personal, social and health education is good and includes work on diet, sex and relationships education, drugs and safety. Pupils are successfully learning to play active roles as citizens. They are well informed about the need for rules in school and the community. They are able to make decisions and discuss their ideas on issues relevant to their own lives. The School Council has been involved in improving the school playgrounds and has started a school tuck shop. The council members are using the profits to buy more play equipment.

100. They have also been consulted about changes in the teaching of English and mathematics. Pupils have a good grasp of the consequences of anti-social behaviour and understand they must set a good example to others. They are also aware of a variety of religious and ethnic groups and the need for tolerance.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	5
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	5
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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