

INSPECTION REPORT

GROVE VALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Great Barr

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 103972

Headteacher: Mr Andy Leivers

Lead inspector: Dr Alan Jarvis

Dates of inspection: 14th – 17th June 2004

Inspection number: 255907

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4–11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	374
School address:	Monksfield Avenue Great Barr Birmingham
Postcode:	B43 6AL
Telephone number:	0121 3574319
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Pauline Brown
Date of previous inspection:	5 th October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is much bigger than most primary schools. Around one third of pupils live locally with increasing numbers attending from outside the normal catchment area. Overall, the pupils' socio-economic backgrounds are average, although there is a spread of advantage. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is below average. The standards of pupils who enter the school in reception are declining, and this year attainment on entry is about average. However, previous reception groups, including pupils now in older year groups, were above average at entry. A higher number of pupils than normal enter or leave the school; often the higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6. Around three-fifths of pupils are from a white British background. The largest other group of pupils comes from an Asian or Asian British background, with pupils from Caribbean, Bangladeshi, and black African backgrounds also being represented. A high proportion of pupils, around one in six, do not speak English as their first language, with four being at an early stage of acquisition of English. A below average proportion of pupils have a special educational need. Their special needs include communication difficulties, some moderate or specific learning difficulties, and some hearing and multisensory impairment. In recent years the school has been awarded the School Achievement Award in 2003 and the Healthy Schools Silver Award in 2004. In addition, it has been validated as an Investor in People school, which means it values and develops its staff and adult community well.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2711	Dr Alan Jarvis	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology
11041	Marvyn Moore	Lay inspector	
31838	Martyn Williams	Team inspector	English Music Physical education
27243	Ian Tatchell	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Geography History Religious education
27242	Enid Rice	Team Inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Special educational needs English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Grove Vale Primary School is an effective and improving school where every child matters. Achievement is good because of the consistently good teaching throughout the school albeit with some variations in individual lessons. Overall, the school is well led and managed with improvements being carefully phased in. It provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher and his very able deputy have turned the school around and now that it is working well, they are focused on the next, important stages of development.
- By Year 6 standards are high in English, mathematics and science, but those in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education (RE) are not yet as high.
- The Asian and Asian British pupils do very well compared with their peers.
- Racial harmony pervades the school because excellent steps are taken to promote good relationships and nip any form of harassment in the bud.
- Pupils are extensively involved in influencing school developments, including the appointment of staff and ensuring that the school runs smoothly.
- Very good links with other schools and very strong support from parents and the local community have a very positive impact on the curriculum and on pupils' work and welfare.

There has been a good improvement in the school's effectiveness. However, progress has been uneven as just after the last inspection there was evidence of widespread underachievement. Under the leadership of the current headteacher improvement has been rapid. Standards have risen well, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Weaknesses in teaching have been rooted out and this is much improved, as are pupils' attitudes, levels of attendance and their personal development. All the key issues previously identified have been effectively addressed.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Achievement is good throughout the school and has risen from a low level in the last three years. The children in the reception classes, who are younger than normal, do well in most areas of learning and very well in their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils in the current Year 2 entered with average standards and are reaching above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Pupils in the current Year 6 entered with above average standards. They are also doing well and are reaching well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. These are the highest they have been. Standards in ICT and RE are average, but are also rising. Pupils are now doing well in these two subjects and making up for the lost ground when provision was not as good. Performance compared with similar schools has also been rising. This year it is likely to be above average, reflecting the current good achievement. Pupils with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and those from most ethnic

backgrounds do equally well. However, the girls slightly outperform the boys and the majority of pupils from Asian and Asian British backgrounds do very well.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their attitudes, behaviour and spiritual, moral social and cultural development, are very good. Attendance is good and pupils are punctual to school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is mostly good or very good. Throughout the school, teachers expect their pupils to learn and behave very well and they offer much encouragement. In a few lessons adequate rather than good subject knowledge and sound pace and challenge slowed down the otherwise brisk pace of learning seen in most learning. Children become very confident at working independently in the reception classes and these skills are a key strength in pupils' learning in all years. Pupils are assessed well, particularly in English and mathematics. Good quality marking and the recently introduced 'traffic light' system, highlighting how well written targets have been met, are working well.

The curriculum is working well in English, mathematics and science, and improvements in ICT and RE (also core subjects) are also feeding through, but these have not yet had their full impact. The curriculum in other (non-core) subjects is satisfactory, but there are firm plans to work with partner (TRIAD) schools to establish an innovative curriculum in these subjects as well as using computers as a central part of learning. The good curriculum is supported by a very good range of visits and sporting and artistic activities. Governors have worked strenuously to ensure robust health and safety, but there are still some areas of concern regarding the outdoor accommodation.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's very good leadership, supported by his very effective deputy, and good support from other key staff, are helping to provide a clear vision and sense of direction to the school's work. All pupils are included very well, helped to do their very best and, in consequence, a very good climate for learning exists. The supportive governing body performs all aspects of its role effectively. However, not all statutory requirements are met as it has not been possible to provide wheelchair access to the site for pupils or adults, despite some small improvements and the governors pursuing this matter as well as they can.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are highly satisfied with the school and know it is hard to keep their children away. Inspectors support some of the parents' concerns about the quality of the annual progress reports as the targets that are included could be better written. **Pupils** are happy at school, like the things they have to do and participate enthusiastically.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Further strengthen standards and achievement in ICT (including its use across the curriculum) and in RE to match the levels in English, mathematic and science.
- Press ahead with the next stage of curriculum development by using computers more and establishing an innovative curriculum in 'non-core' subjects.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Continue to liaise with the local education authority to assist with improving physical access to the buildings and rectify outstanding health and safety shortcomings.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The children in the reception classes, who are younger than normal, attain the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning and exceed them in personal and social education, making up more ground than is expected. By the end of Year 2 standards are above average and by the end of Year 6 they are high. Achievement has improved since the last inspection and is now good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.
- Achievement has been rising from a low level and is now good.
- Children get off to a flying start in all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage.
- Standards have been rising much faster than the national trend in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who need support because they are at an early stage of speaking English achieve well because of the effective support they receive.

Commentary

1. Pupils are doing better than at the time and just after the last inspection. For example, in Year 2000, pupils were considerably underperforming compared with their peers in similar schools. They had entered with above average standards, but by the end of Year 6 standards were 'only' average. In National Curriculum tests in 2003, the able group of pupils reached well above average standards overall, due to a very high performance in mathematics. This indicated satisfactory achievement from their performance at the end of Year 2.
2. Achievement seen in lessons and confirmed by other data shows that it is now good. The key reasons for this are that:
 - pupils' progress in learning is carefully tracked so that any underachievement that is identified can be quickly remedied and challenging work offered as a norm;
 - the very good ethos that has been established encourages high attendance and fosters very good attitudes in pupils' learning;
 - teaching is good in most subjects with much very good teaching evident, particularly in the reception classes and Years 2 and 6.
3. Children in the current reception classes are younger than normal. Consequently, if they are to meet the standards expected for their peers in other schools, who are on average slightly older, they have to make up more ground in the reception year. The children do achieve well in reaching average standards in most areas of learning, but do very well in their personal, social and emotional development where they exceed the standards

The tables shown in this section give average point scores for pupils. Each level in the National Curriculum is given a number of points. Pupils are expected to move on one point every term. So, if a school's points are one point above the national, their pupils are, typically, a term ahead.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
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Reading	17.0 (16.4)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.5 (15.2)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.7 (17.5)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 52 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Standards at the end of Year 2 were above the national average overall last year. They have been rising more slowly than the national trend. This reflects the growing numbers of pupils who join the school with average standards and a dip in mathematics where standards were average. In the last three years, standards in reading and writing have generally been above average, but were very high last year in reading, as can be seen in the point scores in the table. Pupils have generally done as well as their peers in similar schools with the girls outperforming boys in all three areas.
5. The above average standards seen in the current Year 2, which has more pupils with special educational needs than normal, show some further improvement. Both boys and girls are doing well in reading and writing because of good teaching and learning. Standards in both are above average. Standards in mathematics are higher than last year and are above average, again because of good teaching, but also because more challenging work is being set.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.9 (27.2)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.7 (28.3)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.9 (28.2)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 53 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

6. Standards have risen rapidly at the end of Year 6 since the appointment of the new headteacher and some teachers. This has been most marked in science where standards had improved from being well below the national average three years ago to above average last year. Standards have also risen quickly in mathematics and were well above the national average in 2003. Above average standards in English have been sustained. The point scores show that pupils are typically a term ahead of their peers in English and science and two terms ahead in mathematics.
7. The Asian and Asian British pupils, who form one of the largest minority groups in the school, have done particularly well. For example, the proportion of these pupils who reached the expected level for their age in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests last year in English, mathematics and science was ten per cent higher than that nationally. The proportion who reached higher levels was even more impressive. Just over two-fifths reached this standard in English and three-fifths reached it in mathematics and science. All these indicators are substantially higher than the picture nationally. Many of the white British pupils also did very well at the higher levels, again most markedly, in mathematics and science. Girls have traditionally outperformed the boys, but differences are in line with national differences.
8. Standards in the current Year 6 show further improvement and are well above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. These are the highest they have been in the school. In science a key reason for the improvement is the increased emphasis that is now given to scientific enquiry. Standards in the other core subjects of information and communication technology (ICT) are also improving because of better facilities, teaching and many

opportunities to develop and use their skills. They are now average at the end of Years 2 and 6, but rising, as they are in religious education (RE), as pupils make up the lost ground when provision was not as good as it is now. There is every indication that standards in the other (non-core) subjects are average. All groups of pupils are achieving well, but with girls and Asian and Asian British pupils continuing to have the edge. In a few cases, poor attendance is resulting in individual pupils not achieving as well as they should.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal qualities, including their attitudes, behaviour and spiritual, moral social and cultural development, are very good. Attendance is good and pupils are punctual to school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school sets very high expectations for pupils' conduct and, consequently, pupils behave very well in school both in lessons and at play.
- Pupils willingly take responsibility and demonstrate confidence, self-esteem and independence in their attitudes to work throughout the school.
- Racial harmony pervades at all times because the steps taken to promote good relationships and deal with any form of harassment are excellent.

Commentary

9. The very good action taken by the deputy headteacher and office staff to promote regular attendance and the strong support of parents in this matter has resulted in better attendance. Attendance at the school at 95.6 per cent is above the national average and continues to improve. Pupils come to school on time, even though some live quite a distance away.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.7	School data	0.0
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

10. The school is extremely successful in promoting pupils' effective learning and very good behaviour because all staff work to common principles and set clear expectations for the pupils. The tone is established very early on in the reception classes and is followed through and permeates all years. There have been no permanent exclusions during the last or the current year. This reflects the pupils' enthusiasm for the school and the very good ethos for learning that has been established. Teachers and other adults are skilled at managing pupils' behaviour and nip any bullying or harassment quickly in the bud. Pupils themselves say that if unkindness occurs it is tackled immediately. Consequently, the school is a well-balanced and contented community.
11. Many pupils willingly take on responsibilities, for example, acting as school council members, monitoring, mentoring other pupils and generally displaying a very high level of confidence and self-esteem. In lessons, the norm is that pupils are expected to show initiative and work sensibly either with their partners or individually. Pupils say that "Our teachers make us work hard, but reward us for good work, behaviour and helping others".
12. Pupils of all backgrounds integrate very well together because they are quickly made to feel part of the school community and differences are respected and celebrated. They are proud of their backgrounds and beliefs and know that in the school everyone matters. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the school rules, know what is right and wrong and very strongly promote the school's approach. At an early age pupils are encouraged to listen and support each other and the older pupils help in setting very good role models for other pupils. As a result, pupils show a very healthy respect for the feelings and opinions of others. High quality assemblies, celebration

of ethnic diversity and good debate of religious similarities and differences in religious education lessons ensure that pupils’ spiritual awareness, self-knowledge and self-worth are developed very effectively. Extensive opportunities are provided for visits to places of interest, which helps to develop pupils’ social and cultural awareness. This is supported by a range of visitors who help the pupils learn about how the world works and the contribution different people make to this.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching, learning, assessment and the curriculum are all good and have improved since the last inspection. Very good features include very effective enrichment of the curriculum and very good partnerships with parents, the community and other schools.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and, as a result, most pupils achieve well. The quality of assessment of pupils’ work is good overall, and especially so in English and mathematics.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers give much encouragement, take careful steps to engage and challenge all groups of pupils and insist on high standards of behaviour.
- Pupils become very confident in working independently in the reception classes and these skills are a key feature of good learning throughout the school.
- High numbers of teaching assistants and other adults are deployed and used well to support a wide range of pupils.
- Assessment is used well in the reception classes, English and mathematics to track how well pupils are doing to plan challenging work.
- Good quality day-to-day marking of pupils’ work ensures that they receive both encouragement and well-focused comments that help them see how to improve.

Commentary

13. Teaching is much improved because of good teaching appointments, focused training and the clear feedback given to teachers either individually or in staff meetings on their performance. Good teaching is now the norm. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, unlike at the last inspection. The satisfactory teaching seen was not located in any one particular year group, but came about where teachers’ specialist knowledge was not well developed in a particular subject or where the pace and challenge of learning was not as strong as in the good teaching seen. Pupils of all ages agree very strongly that they learn new things in lessons and have to work hard.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 51 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	10 (19%)	31 (61%)	9 (18%)	0	0	0

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

14. Lessons are planned consistently well. The aims of each lesson are shared with pupils at the start of each lesson, which ensures that the purpose of the lesson is crystal clear. Little time is wasted because teachers take very good steps to ensure that behaviour is managed very well. A very strong feature is the scope given to pupils to work independently either in groups or as individuals. The good range of pupil-initiated activities and the high proportion of practical and group-based tasks allow this to blossom later on. Best use is made of the available resources, but there is scope to use the classroom computers more often.
15. A management decision has been made to employ a higher number of teaching assistants (TAs) to support pupils who have special educational needs or who need other forms of support. This is paying off. They are well informed about the needs of individual pupils and about the teachers' expectations of their own role in particular lessons. When pupils are given appropriate support within well-planned lessons much is achieved. The teachers and TAs involved build up a good relationship with these pupils and by gentle encouragement take every opportunity to extend their knowledge and understanding. Occasionally some of the work expected of pupils was not as well matched to their abilities and was too easy. Consequently, this slowed the gains made in learning. The teaching of pupils learning to be bilingual is good overall. The teachers are able to draw on the expertise of an ethnic minority teacher who works with the four pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and whose own practice is good. A further strength of the teaching of these pupils is the quality of the additional help given to them in lessons at Years 1 to 6, to help them master and use language and ideas. As a result, there has been a marked improvement in their performance.
16. Pupils say they are motivated by the recently introduced 'traffic light' system of marking. If the target of the work has not been met and is unsatisfactory they see a comment marked with a red pen and pupils are then in no doubt that they have to do something about it. Satisfactory work is marked with 'TM' (target met) written with a yellow pen. If pupils see 'TM' green they know it is good and they eagerly seek a purple 'TM' that indicates excellent work. Teachers are gauging well how many of the different gradings are given so as to reflect accurately the quality and effort put in by individual pupils. The colour-coded indications are complemented by a careful evaluation of work and constructive comments, which often pinpoint for a pupil exactly what they need to focus on to improve standards.
17. Better quality information is being collected on how well pupils are doing. In the reception classes information is gathered regularly on all areas of learning and this is used effectively by teachers to help them focus sharply on how well pupils are doing. In English and mathematics very detailed information is recorded, which allows teachers to track the progress of all groups of pupils. Consequently, robust targets are set for classes, groups and individuals and these are regularly reviewed. Much improved systems are in place in science and ICT. Whilst these provide teachers with a very clear idea of standards, the next stage of the plan use the information to provide pupils with a target, whilst evolving well in science, has not yet been established in ICT. A range of evidence gives staff a clear idea of how well pupils are doing in other subjects.

The curriculum

There is a good curriculum overall, especially in the reception classes and in English, mathematics and science. There are very good enrichment opportunities including extra-curricular activities in sports, notably swimming, and the arts. Staffing is good; resources and accommodation are satisfactory. There is limited access for pupils with physical disabilities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- It has not proved possible to provide full access for pupils with a wide range of physical disabilities, especially wheelchair users.
- The curriculum in English, mathematics and science is well developed. Skills-based cross-curricular approaches are beginning to enhance provision in other subjects, but are not fully developed.
- The curriculum for the reception classes is well planned and well balanced.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who are in the early stages of learning English receive good support from their teachers and teaching assistants.
- A broad and varied programme of additional experiences and visits complements and enriches work in the National Curriculum very well.

Commentary

18. The good curriculum enables children to achieve well in all areas of learning in the reception classes. Key features include a good balance between teacher-initiated activities and those created by the children and effective planning that links different areas of learning. Weaknesses in the curriculum for their physical development reported at the last inspection have been addressed. There are good outdoor facilities, although some of the equipment shows signs of much use.
19. The key areas of literacy, numeracy and science are emphasised well. The approaches recommended by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been effectively implemented. This has resulted in the curriculum progressively developing pupils' skills and knowledge and making the learning relevant to all groups of pupils. In English, the promotion of reading outside the literacy hour is bearing fruit and pupils in Year 2 now achieve very well. The popular 'Book Fair' has also encouraged older pupils to buy books and read for pleasure. Mental methods of working are prominent in mathematics and there are good opportunities for investigation in mathematics and science. Pupils regularly have to explain the steps they are taking, which contributes to their good and improving achievement.
20. Very good leadership and management of the head and deputy headteacher and effective leadership of co-ordinators in the core subjects have systematically improved the curriculum, although the impact has not fully fed through in ICT and religious education. All subjects of the National Curriculum now receive appropriate time allocations whereas formerly these were insufficient. This contributes to the good range of curricular experiences on offer.
21. The school is keen to develop an innovative curriculum, building on the ideas set out in the government's 'Excellence and Enjoyment Strategy' for primary schools. Some good first steps have been made. In the non-core subjects the curriculum is generally satisfactory, and some links are being strengthened with ICT and literacy. Subjects such as history and RE feature in the literacy hour and English or history may provide the basis for an ICT lesson. The school is working with partner schools on ambitious plans to develop this pilot initiative further to encompass such links in all subjects. The ICT infrastructure is scheduled to be improved in the summer, to help the school move more towards a culture of 'e-learning'.
22. Social and educational inclusion is strongly fostered. Staff ensure that pupils with special educational needs are identified as soon as possible so that lessons can be modified to provide for their individual curricular needs. Booster sessions and some withdrawal sessions provide extra support for some pupils who need to achieve the next level, although this sometimes

means that pupils miss out on other lessons. The improved numbers of teaching assistants, working in close liaison with the teachers, use their experience and skills well to meet the varying needs of individual pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is being developed, for example, through opportunities being provided to help such pupils reach high levels in sports and instrumental music.

23. Overall, the school makes good provision for the pupils learning English as an additional language. At the Foundation Stage, when the children are at a very early stage of learning English, they get well-targeted support from an ethnic minority teacher who is very effectively deployed to support the children who need extra help. Because they get effective support early in their education, the children make good progress and are well prepared for participating in the full curriculum offered by the school in later years. The school makes sure that no pupil is discriminated against on grounds of age, gender, ability, social background, faith or ethnic origin. Where it identifies that some pupils are not benefiting as well as others from the available learning opportunities, the school takes effective action: a good example of this is a Year 2 pupil who has received regular support and has made sufficient progress in language acquisition to take an active part alongside their peers in literacy and numeracy lessons.
24. The secure site with spacious grounds is situated on a steep slope and includes numerous steps. With the support of the local education authority the school has put up handrails, but prohibitive costs restrict full wheelchair access being readily achieved. Improved access for disabled people to the extent that funding will allow is planned for next year.
25. Sports and the arts are areas where the curriculum is particularly rich. There are many clubs that enhance the PE curriculum including football (girls/boys and mixed teams), rugby and tag rugby, line dancing and cheerleaders. The choir, orchestra and wind band together with opportunities for instrumental tuition add considerably to the music provision. Drama and art clubs, computer club, cookery club and gardening club, also extend provision beyond the normal school day. There are regular residential experiences for Years 3 and 6, which also support pupils' social development. A good range of visits and visitors enhance a programme of personal development to help make provision in that area good.
26. A strength of the accommodation is a swimming pool on site. This and the services of a well-qualified and experienced instructor have enabled many pupils to reach high standards in swimming. Pupils in Year 2 regularly meet the national expectations for Year 6. Staffing levels overall are good. Resources are satisfactory. There are some limitations in more advanced resources such as sensors in ICT and the quantity of books has not fully kept pace with the increase in numbers of pupils. The library with its computerised lending system functions satisfactorily, but is too small for whole classes to use at once. There are two halls and an ICT suite, but the age of the building means that it needs continual upkeep. Staff, with the help of parental volunteers have done much to make classrooms attractive inside, but externally peeling paint and rotting woodwork are uninspiring and detract from this.

Care, guidance and support

Staff at the school offer good quality care, advice, help and support for all groups of pupils. Excellent steps are taken to take account of pupils' views and act upon them.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good procedures are in place to ensure that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment, but emergency vehicle access to the school and car parking facilities need to be improved.
- Good quality academic and personal support and advice are tailored to pupils' age and needs.
- Pupils are extensively involved in the decision making process and influencing school developments.

Commentary

27. The school provides a very caring environment where all pupils feel valued and are treated with care and respect. Pupils themselves say they have a very good and trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school. Staff are very well trained on child protection matters and these matters are rigorously, but sensitively, pursued.
28. The governors have done all that they can to ensure that health and safety is as good as it can be. Regular health and safety audits are carried out alongside very good procedures for assessing and minimising risks. Several members of staff are trained in first aid. Accidents are meticulously recorded. However, the school site has limited access for emergency services and improved vehicle access to the rear of the site and improved car parking facilities are needed. The very costly improvements needed are the responsibility of the Sandwell Local Education Authority. Governors have appropriate procedures in place to minimise this risk and all staff have been fully briefed on the action they should take.
29. Pupils' personal and educational well-being is a priority for all staff. Teachers liaise closely with TAs and regularly discuss pupils' attitudes, attendance, personal achievement and problems. They use a wide range of very useful information to help them support and guide individual pupils. This starts in both reception classes where parents and their children attend for taster sessions before the children start school. These children very quickly settle into school life because of these sensitive induction arrangements. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are carefully identified and, as a result, are effective support. In addition, pupils with special skills or talents are also identified and a planned programme of giving additional encouragement and support is underway and growing.
30. The school council is used as a most effective vehicle for seeking pupils' views and involving them in the life of the school. In addition, lessons in PHSE and class discussion at the end of the school day (circle time) give pupils the opportunity to share their views and opinions. Pupils in all years act as 'buddies' to other pupils, helping them at lunch and playtimes and assisting those who require extra care.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnerships with parents, the community and other schools and colleges are very good. These arrangements have a positive effect on pupils' attendance and support good achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very good links and close working partnerships with neighbouring primary schools who are working together innovatively to develop provision.
- Parental views are very effectively sought, valued and acted upon.
- A very active Parent Teacher Association provides a very effective link and encourages a productive partnership between staff and parents.

- Good information is provided in pupils' annual reports about achievements and progress, but the targets that are included often lack precision and focus.

Commentary

31. The school makes good provision for parents to have information and learn about pupils' standards and progress. The school brochure is an exceptionally well-produced document giving a full range of information about the school in an easy to read style about ethos and all facilities that the school provides. The headteacher produces regular newsletters giving up to date information about school events. The annual governors' report to parents provides good factual information about the school's future plans and fully complies with legislation. Information is also readily available on the school's website.
32. Parents are very satisfied with the school, but some parents are not happy with the format of the reports, issued each year, on their children's progress. In addition some parents would like more opportunities for regular discussion. These concerns were fully pursued by the inspectors. The quality of the reports is satisfactory. They provide parents with useful information, on a subject by subject basis, but the weakness is that the targets that are written do not often focus on how a pupil might do better in a subject and what they need to do to reach a higher standard. The statutory requirement is for one consultation evening to be held each year and the school already exceeds this. The inspectors, therefore, think it is unreasonable for more consultation evenings to be organised than the three already in place.
33. The school regularly seeks parents' opinions via a survey and the school ensures that parents' views are not only sought, but also acted upon. The very good arrangements to deal with any parental complaints were discussed by parents who were interviewed during the inspection week. These parents stated that they thought the school actively sought their views and valued their opinions.
34. The school has been successful in encouraging parents to help in school. They help in many ways such as hearing pupils read, help in lessons, administrative support, supervision at playtime and lunch-time and help with special events. The Parent Teacher Association is extremely successful and organises many social events during the year such as summer and Christmas fayres, family and children's discos, quiz nights and sponsored events. Last year they raised the magnificent sum of £16,000 for school funds.
35. Links with the local church are strong and local ministers of religion come into the school on a regular basis to take assemblies. Pupils raise money for local and national charities such as the annual poppy appeal and Barnardos. Year 6 pupils work in the local community to redevelop the park area. Speakers from the community come into school, including local historians, members of the police and fire brigade as well as an artist in residence.
36. The school is proud to be a member of the TRIAD initiative, which comprises three local primary schools working together to combine their expertise and disseminate good practice in subjects such as RE, ICT and PHSE, and to pool resources. A priority of all three schools is to work together on developing e-learning and the more challenging and innovative curriculum in the foundation subjects. The local authority has recognised the work of the TRIAD initiative by awarding a grant of £50,000. The school has very good arrangements with the nine comprehensive and one grammar school to which pupils transfer.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. However, the reflective and dynamic leadership of the headteacher and his able deputy is very good. Other key staff lead and manage their areas well. Governance has improved and is now good. All statutory requirements have been met with the exception of providing access for a wide range of physically disabled pupils and adults.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and very able deputy headteacher having remedied weaknesses and established a school that is working well and have a clear vision and ambitious plans for the future.
- Rigorous evaluation of the effectiveness of subjects and the performance of staff are contributing very well to improvements in standards and the quality of teaching.
- Newly qualified teachers are given high quality support and guidance, which helps them to quickly make an effective contribution to the school.
- Efficient financial management has put finances on a good footing, which are being directed at improving standards and preparing for the next stage of development for the school.

Commentary

37. Parents have noticed a marked change for the better in how well the school is run. Shortly after the last inspection the school entered a period of decline and pupils were not achieving as well as they should have done. Since his appointment, three years ago, the headteacher's very clear vision and attention to detail have been key factors in establishing a very positive climate for learning and staff focusing on continual improvement. He works extremely closely with his deputy and their complementary skills are used very well to phase in developments. The school's self-evaluation, completed before the inspection, closely matches the judgements in most areas of the inspection.
38. Overall leadership and management are having a good impact on achievement because:
 - weaknesses in the subject provision have been very clearly identified through rigorous reviews, particularly in the core subjects, leading to them being effectively remedied;
 - co-ordinators in the reception classes, National Curriculum subjects and special educational needs lead and manage their areas well;
 - care has been taken to ensure that all staff are valued and that there is effective teamwork at all levels;
 - annual reviews of the performance of teaching and non-teaching staff ensure that they are able to focus on how to best support developments and develop their own skills;
 - there is a clear and well-costed development plan that not only sharply focuses on what is to be done in the next year, but gives a clear vision for the future.
39. Governors have become true partners in providing effective support and challenge to the headteacher and other key staff. Their committee work is good and there is a good feeling of teamwork. For example, they have ensured that policies such as that for sex education are thoroughly debated, spending decisions on different contracts are evaluated and a number of sub-committees contribute to the writing of the school development plan. This would now benefit from having clearly identified outcomes that are the responsibility for the governors to monitor. They take effective steps to see work at first hand. This, together with discussions with staff, enables the governors to have a clear idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses, particularly in literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. They are keen to improve their own performance and attend appropriate training courses but, as yet, do not have their own programme of training outlined within the school development plan.

40. The governors have ensured that almost all statutory requirements are met, including that of producing and implementing a race relations policy. They have worked strenuously at improving provision for pupils with physical disabilities, within the means available to them. However, because of the extremely high costs involved it has not been possible to widen access for a wide range of abilities, particularly for those pupils in wheelchairs. Despite this the school is very inclusive. Pupils with special educational needs and those from an Asian or Asian British background, who are both significant groups, are very well integrated and provided for. This contributes to the overall good achievement and the Asian and Asian British Indian pupils doing particularly well.
41. Just under half the teaching staff have joined in the last two years mainly as newly qualified teachers. Very good induction procedures have resulted in these staff becoming quickly in tune with how the school works and seamlessly fitting into the team. Many have taken on new responsibilities such as co-ordinating a subject or developing policies. A good example is the very good developments that are taking place in RE through one such member of staff who is already making a very positive impact on how the subject is taught and managed.
42. The school manages its resources well and has moved from a position of being heavily in deficit to having a budget surplus. Currently the contingency held is just over five per cent, but is a little lower than in March 2003. Some reserves are being held to sustain future staffing levels when numbers on roll, and thus income, are expected to decline a little. In addition, money is being set aside to establish ICT as one of the key planks for learning, developing the facilities for gifted and talented pupils and implementing the next stage of developments of the foundation subjects. Principles of best value are effectively applied and the minor recommendations in the last financial audit in Year 2000 have been quickly acted upon. The school provides good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	942,938
Total expenditure	928,694
Expenditure per pupil	2,544

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	66,905
Balance carried forward to the next	81,149

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

43. Provision for children in reception classes is good overall. Children enter the reception classes from a wide area. Children enter reception with attainment that is broadly average for children of their age. This year group contains many summer born children who were quite immature when admitted. Due to consistently good teaching in all areas of learning and very good support by teacher assistants, pupils achieve well. They attain the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning and exceed them in personal and social education, making up more ground than is expected. There has been good improvement in provision since the last inspection, particularly in the area of physical development and personal, social and emotional development. Teaching is good overall and outdoor provision has improved. The curriculum has also been enriched, with stimulating activities, focused to meet all children's needs. Other good features include the effective planning and good balance between direct teaching and activities the children choose themselves.
44. The co-ordinator of early years leads and manages the provision efficiently and effectively. A good team of staff has been created who share consistently high expectations for the children. Teachers and their assistants know the children well and meet their needs successfully, including children with special educational needs and those with English as a second language. All staff are involved in regularly collecting and recording observations of children's experiences and achievements. This crucial information is used to plan for the next steps in learning and for each child's foundation profile. Children are also beginning to assess their own work. The inside accommodation is quite cramped but, nevertheless, space is used well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teamwork promotes clear procedures and high expectations for children's social and emotional development.
- Due to very good teaching, children learn and achieve very well, attaining above average standards in this area of learning.

Commentary

45. The teachers and their assistants promote children's awareness of social responsibility by choosing children to be helpers daily. For example, they fetch equipment and help to put it away. One child was responsible for 'shaking the tambourine' to tell outside groups that it was time to stop. Examples were seen where children worked unsupervised, behaving well and sharing resources. In one class, children played on a 'campsite' discussing who should lead their play. In another class, children worked independently exploring sounds, chatting about how the music made them feel. In a good literacy lesson, children tidied away efficiently and moved to the carpet ready for the next instruction.
46. Clear explanations from teachers encourage children to co-operate and work well together. Children are beginning to develop social awareness. In a good mathematics lesson, they listened well to others who reported their experiences to the class and were able to decide what they

would do in the next lesson. They walked sensibly to the hall for assembly. In class, they moved safely and had no difficulty settling to new activities. The emphasis on this area of learning where children take turns and join in together, helps them to develop very good social skills. The common approach from all adults, results in very good relationships, which develop the very positive attitudes to learning, values and behaviour in both classes.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning is good overall and many opportunities are provided for children to develop good language skills.
- The focus on conversation helps to develop speaking and listening skills, which are broadly average on entry for most children.
- Early reading and writing skills are taught systematically and well.

Commentary

47. Most children achieve well by reaching average standards. Emphasis is placed on speaking and listening from an early age and this contributes positively to the standards attained. For example, some children show a greater understanding of language, talking confidently about their work. In a very good lesson on sending messages, they were able to describe the use of postboxes, reporting their observations simply to the class. The lesson ended with a walk to the postbox near school to send their letter home. This activity stimulated the children to talk about their task and the local surroundings as they walked.
48. Children in both reception classes have ample opportunities to share books, ably supported by all staff. Literacy targets are displayed and include reading and writing about different books and writing more letter sounds. Most children recognise initial letters and talk about their favourite texts. They can sequence pictures to make a story and read simple classroom captions. The reading area contains a wide range of material, some with a multicultural flavour.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults take every opportunity to develop mathematical understanding and, as a result, children achieve well and reach average standards in mathematics.
- Adults provide a good variety of interesting, practical activities that stimulate the children and support their learning. They make good use of a range of everyday situations.

Commentary

49. Teaching and learning are good overall. Adults work diligently to develop the children's mathematical skills and particularly their mathematical language. They question children while they are working, always trying to encourage mathematical understanding. For example, children in both classes explore and investigate objects as they make 'sets'. They discuss their

findings with partners before sharing them with the class. Children are confident when they solve problems. A child in one class commented “We know!”. This collaborative approach stimulates learning, ensuring that all children are engaged in the lesson. The children are also aware of comparisons in mathematics. Words such as ‘long’ and ‘short’ were displayed in one classroom with captions written by the children.

50. They make good progress in number recognition and counting because this aspect of learning is reinforced in an incidental way throughout each day. Good self-esteem is encouraged, evident by the praise given to those who try hard.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures that children achieve well and reach average standards.
- Teachers provide a broad curriculum with a variety of practical activities to promote interest and stimulate learning.

Commentary

51. In a free activity period, children used a computer program with confidence. They worked in pairs and helped each other. One child commented, “You have to click it to move it!”. The children were challenged to work independently, but were supported well when appropriate. In a literacy lesson taken in the computer suite, children used ‘The Three Bears’ to make a caption to match the picture on the screen. When children made boats, they chose their own materials, constructed them independently and used the outside area to test them to see if they floated. This activity proved stimulating and led to good self-assessment of their efforts.
52. Classroom displays indicate that both classes experience a good variety of activities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world about them. They have studied growing things, sorted seeds using tweezers and learned about other places in the ‘travel agents’ role-play area. They observed school surroundings on their walk to post a letter and were introduced to celebrations with a class picture that they had made comparing Sikh and Christian weddings.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well and reach average standards because there are many opportunities to develop physical skills.
- Children are developing a good awareness of space.
- Children develop good confidence in the water during swimming lessons.

Commentary

53. Teaching and learning are good. Children have good opportunities inside and outside to develop their co-ordination. A wide range of equipment is available to use outdoors for climbing and

balancing. Small apparatus such as balls are used effectively to develop manipulative skills. Good cross-curricular links are made. For example, in one lesson linked to literacy, children used their bodies to make the shape of the letter that starts their name. The outside area has been developed to stimulate children to move and play. A quiet seated area in the shade of a tree is used frequently. Large toys are used outside when the weather permits. In the classroom, good opportunities are provided for children to use construction kits, make models and use equipment such as scissors, paintbrushes and pencils.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good provision for interesting role play in which children participate well.
- Good opportunities to use a range of materials.
- Children achieve well and reach average standards because teaching is good.

Commentary

54. Good organisation of role-playing areas enhances learning. At present a ‘travel agents’ in one classroom, a ‘campsite’ and a ‘beach hut’ outside are the foci for learning. The good range of resources in these areas provides exciting play experiences. These imaginative situations stimulate children to talk and play well together, forming good links with literacy and social development.
55. Children paint individual pictures, contribute to a class picture of flowers and make African patterns. They have opportunities to make models and they decorate them carefully. Links with literacy can be seen where children draw pictures to illustrate their writing. For example, children made sketches with captions following a visit to Aston Hall. Drawings of flowers are displayed in the computer suite, where children learn to use the computer to draw and copy their work. Attractive displays of work surround the children, celebrating their success.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well by the end of Years 2 and 6 because teaching is consistently good.
- Teachers develop the pupils’ language skills through a well-balanced variety of activities.
- The school has been encouraging reading and the enjoyment of books. The positive impact is now showing in very good achievement in reading in Year 2.
- The subject is well led and progress is carefully monitored through very good assessment systems.
- Literacy skills are developed well in other subjects.

Commentary

56. Standards are above average by Year 2 and well above average by Year 6, reflecting the differences in attainment on entry to the school. Standards have improved well since the last inspection largely because teachers have tracked pupils’ achievement with great care and used this information to make sure that they all have tasks to suit their needs. Junior pupils work in sets, which makes this easier and teaching assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs to help them play a full part in lessons. Girls do better than boys, following the trend in England as a whole. Analysis shows that Asian and British Asian pupils also do particularly well, although there was no marked difference in the achievement of any groups of pupils in the lessons observed.
57. A good feature of lessons seen was the way teachers shared the learning intentions at the start and reviewed them at the end. Consequently, pupils had a good idea of where they were going

and how well they were getting there. A further key feature was the way pupils were encouraged to answer challenging questions, being made to think hard both about the content and the quality of their expression. This helped them organise their contributions clearly and convey them unambiguously. Another important feature was the way in which the different skills are linked together to build up confidence and competence in communication as a whole. For example, Year 6 reading activities provided the basis for discussion. This developed into drama as pupils took on the roles of radio host and panel of critics to debate the merits of the text. Written tasks involved book reviews, note-making and scriptwriting so that language and ideas were developed and used independently. Pupils also showed that they were well aware, thanks to good models presented by teachers, of the type of language appropriate to different tasks. Their considered opinions and good vocabulary emerged in well-structured sentences when 'in character', yet left to themselves they tended to use a more colloquial style.

58. There is now increased time beyond the literacy hour set aside for reading; a good improvement since the last inspection. This allows pupils not only to read for a specific purpose such as research, but also for pleasure. Pupils read to adults in school and at home and their progress is noted so that suitably challenging texts may be chosen. The school has a satisfactory stock of good quality books. It also now organises a book fair where pupils may purchase books from a wide range. Pupils in Year 6 enjoyed finding books that suited their tastes and talked knowledgeably about them. Pupils in Year 2 speak, listen and write well. The value of the school's initiative is evident because they now read at levels well above expectations for their age.
59. The co-ordinator regularly checks teachers' planning and pupils' work, and reviews lessons. This contributes strongly to the consistently good teaching and learning. Very good assessment systems, revised since the last inspection, help teachers check pupils' reading, writing and spelling skills and this is another factor leading to good achievement. The assessments are analysed in detail and used to set the targets pupils are expected to achieve by the end of each year. Pupils have specific personal targets that they can refer to in lessons to improve their work and teachers make good constructive comments and indications in marking (now using the 'traffic light' system of different colours) to help them see what they need to do next. Good co-ordination is further illustrated by an in-depth study of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject, which is already pointing the way to higher standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. Literacy is well supported in all subjects of the curriculum, and in a number of cases work in subjects such as history and religious education provides the stimulus for literacy lessons. This two-way approach helps pupils appreciate the importance of good communication skills to underpin all their learning. Specific terminology is identified in subjects like science and mathematics. Word-processing supports drafting and a good awareness of presentation.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising and are now high by the end of Year 6.
- Good leadership and management of the subject have led to improvements in the curriculum, resources and the quality of teaching, and, as a result, achievement is good and rising.

- Target setting and matching pupils' progress to their level of attainment are helping teachers to plan challenging work for pupils to know what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

61. There are several reasons why standards have been rising and provision has improved since the last inspection. The headteacher and co-ordinator have focused on this subject and have ensured that an effective curriculum is in place. Very thorough assessment procedures are in place, which give the co-ordinator a good grasp of standards and enable pupils' progress through the school to be tracked closely and action taken should they fall behind. The information is also used well by teachers to offer challenging work that is well matched to their level of attainment. Much good quality teaching and learning is another key factor, as are the very good attitudes that pupils bring to their work.
62. Pupils' number skills are well developed in Years 1 and 2 and, as a result, pupils in Year 2 have a very good grasp of addition and subtraction. Higher attaining pupils use this knowledge to help them to convert word problems into number calculations, while pupils demonstrate good recall of 2x and 10x tables. Year 3 pupils have a good understanding of fractions such as $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{1}{6}$, using a numberline to count in halves. Higher attaining pupils are able to explain $\frac{5}{6} + \frac{1}{6} = 1$. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use technical vocabulary confidently when talking about angles, while pupils in Year 6 are highly competent in number calculations and in applying their knowledge to working out solutions to new problems. Pupils with special educational needs, or those whose English is an additional language, make good progress with additional support and so achieve well against their individual targets.
63. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teachers plan effectively using the methods promoted by the National Numeracy Strategy. Lessons start with a challenging mental mathematics session that pupils enjoy and in which they participate fully. Teachers use whiteboards very well to involve pupils and to let them show the answers to questions. This gives teachers a quick assessment of how well pupils are learning, and the pupils, an understanding of how well they are doing. Teachers ask a range of challenging questions and encourage pupils to explain the strategies. Together these help pupils to think about their level of mathematical understanding. For example, in a very good Year 2 lesson the teacher constantly challenged pupils to explain how they had worked out three numbers and how they could solve number problems expressed in words. A little teaching was satisfactory, rather than good, because it did not have the good pace and challenge seen in other lessons. However, very good teaching was seen in Year 2.
64. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work, and, as a result, pupils work very productively. Information from tests, observations in lessons and analysis of their results provide teachers with a clear picture of standards achieved. Pupils receive good feedback from the 'traffic light' marking and constructive comments made by teachers in their workbooks. Tasks are interesting and varied and well matched to pupils' ability levels, enabling them to participate fully in lessons so that they are seldom 'off task' and little time is wasted. Teachers use ICT satisfactorily, but further development is needed.
65. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and pupils' work and has analysed the outcomes of statutory and non-statutory tests well in order to gain an understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject. The subject action plan identifies areas for further development, for example, more use of ICT in the numeracy hour. However, in order to ensure that these

improvements are successful she now needs to focus on monitoring the action taken on the issues, to ensure that they raise standards further.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. Numeracy has been satisfactorily developed across the curriculum. Other subject co-ordinators are increasingly identifying areas where other subjects can contribute to learning in mathematics, such as graphs in science and symmetry in art and design.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are achieving well and standards are high by the end of Year 6 as a consequence of good teaching throughout the school and an effectively planned curriculum.
- Most pupils do well and standards are average by the end of Year 2.
- Girls and Asian and Asian British pupils do particularly well.
- A very good range of enrichment activities helps add zest and relevance to pupils' learning.
- A strong emphasis is placed on pupils carrying out a wide range of investigations, but too few of these are a result of them deciding an area of enquiry.
- The subject is jointly led and managed well with well-phased plans for development.

Commentary

67. Standards were average at the end of Years 2 and 6 at the last inspection and had been static for some years. Just after, they fell dramatically. Achievement was satisfactory throughout the school and the higher attaining pupils were not doing as well as they should.
68. Good overall improvement is evident, much of which has been made in the last three years. The key reason for this has been the training given to staff on how to plan and teach the skills of scientific enquiry, which they now do effectively. This has proved particularly beneficial for the higher attaining pupils of all ethnic groups who are doing much better.
69. A further reason why pupils do well is that teachers have a clear idea of what pupils will learn in each year and plan activities at a challenging level to suit pupils with different levels of attainment. Sufficient time is allocated to ensure that scientific investigations, mostly identified by the teachers, are broad ranging and develop practical skills systematically year by year. Science based visits, a science week, visits to other classrooms to develop skills with other teachers, a performance from the Kinetic Theatre, natural history talks and a talk from the school nurse help add extra interest and show how science works in everyday life.
70. Teaching is good and has improved in both its consistency and quality. Throughout the school tasks are given to pupils that interest and motivate them. A good example was seen in Year 5. Pupils worked in groups first planning a fair test, then looking at simulations of how the earth, sun and moon move in relation to each other, and then modeling how the apparent movement of the sun causes a shadow to change during the course of a day. Teachers make the aims of each lesson clear at the outset, provide very good encouragement and insist on high standards of behaviour. As a consequence, pupils have a secure framework for learning and they address their work with relish, working very well in groups.

71. Information from tests, observations in lessons, assessed practical tasks and other information is well collated on a spreadsheet to provide teachers with a clear picture of standards and how well pupils are progressing. This is considerably aiding the way teachers plan their work and there are firm plans to use this to set termly scientific targets to complement those already in place in English and mathematics. This should add to the already good feedback pupils get through the 'traffic light' marking. Constructive comments are made in their written work such as 'You have worked hard and have a good understanding of this topic, but need to draw one straight line through the points in your graphs.'
72. The joint co-ordinators have had a positive influence on improving resources, increasing the opportunities for scientific enquiry and improved confidence in the teaching of science by securing training for the staff. A very important strand to establishing a clear way forward and improvement achievement has been a rigorous and honest evaluation of what has worked well and what areas need to be remedied through concerted action by all staff.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective leadership and management of the subject have led to good improvements in the curriculum, resources, teaching and a very good improvement in pupils' achievement.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to extend their learning beyond ICT lessons.
- ICT resources have been considerably improved and there are ambitious and realistic plans to make ICT central to the ethos and learning of all pupils.
- An improved assessment scheme is helping target pupils who need extra support, but the information gained is not yet fully used to set challenging targets for pupils.

Commentary

73. At the last inspection standards were not as high as they should have been and pupils were underachieving, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Good improvement has been made since then.
74. All groups of pupils are now achieving well. Pupils have not done as well in the past because they have had too little access to computers and other ICT equipment, teachers lacked confidence in teaching the subject and some areas of the curriculum were insufficiently covered. Most of these have been remedied. However, there are still some shortages of equipment for pupils to control other devices such as robots or radio-controlled cars or monitor the temperature or humidity of the environment. Pupils are now reaching average standards at the end of Years 2 and 6. They are not higher as some of the improvements put in place have not had time to impact fully and some of the older classes are still making up time for the period in which provision was underdeveloped.
75. Teaching is good throughout the school and the impact of concerted staff training was clearly evident in the teaching observed in the ICT suite. In these lessons, teachers closely follow an updated scheme of work and lessons focus on the development of a key skill. Improved planning and information recorded about what each pupil 'can do' is ensuring that the right work is covered at the right time and it is interesting and varied. Pupils know what they are expected to learn because a clear objective is set out at the start. Consequently, pupils are fully

engaged on the tasks presented to them. The tasks and goals given in lessons are often quite similar, but effective questioning, good use of TAs and the pupils' very good attitudes to learning promote a good pace to learning. However, insufficient attention is given to planning how the activities and objectives in lessons might be adapted to more precisely challenge pupils of differing abilities to do even better.

76. All classes have access to a modern ICT suite once a week, where lessons systematically focus on the development of key skills. Other lessons are provided that link two subjects together so that ICT might be used as a central part of the lesson. A good example seen was a history lesson based in the suite where pupils were using the Internet to research the modern Olympic Games. The computers and software are starting to show their age, are unreliable and often limit the pace of learning. One result is that pupils have limited access to e-mail, which is limiting higher standards being reached. However, there are firm plans to bring all these computers up to best current specifications, link all the computers in the school together and upgrade the software over the course of the summer holidays. This will add a further step change towards the school establishing an 'e-learning' culture.
77. Many pupils of all ages have additional access to the ICT facilities. ICT clubs operate at least one a week for pupils to develop their skills or to access the Internet for research in other subjects. A separate club has been set up so that parents can attend with their children, which is particularly useful for those families who have no computer at home. In Year 6 pupils have additional, 'booster' access to the ICT facilities to help them support work in other subjects, and pupils with special educational needs use ICT to support their learning.
78. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable, confident and able to give effective help and support. She is clear about how the subject is to be developed and is a key driving force for improvement. Strengths and weaknesses in the subject have been rigorously evaluated. Consequently, all staff are clear about how to contribute to developments. Planning and the quality of teaching are monitored regularly. Individual teachers are given positive feedback and clear points for further development, such as the need to become more familiar with particular software programs or using interactive whiteboards. These are helping to raise the expectations of staff and improve their confidence and expertise.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. Satisfactory use is made of ICT in most other subjects. All classrooms have at least one working computer and digital cameras and tape recorders are used to enhance learning and make a record of the work produced. Classroom computers are often used for word-processing or to access software programs that aid research or help develop a key skill. Increased use of these could be made to send out the message that computers or other ICT devices should be a central part of learning.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in full and is reported below. Work in history and geography was sampled.

80. In **history** there is every indication from pupils' work, schemes of work and discussion with the history co-ordinator that standards are average. From the work seen it is evident that historical sites in the local area are well used to help pupils learn. Visits, visitors and artefacts contribute to pupils' understanding, for example, when Year 3 dressed as Tudors within the setting of Oak

House, a Tudor mansion. This provided a valuable insight into the period in history being studied. Good cross-curricular links are made with other subjects such as art and design and information and communication technology. Year 6 pupils used their ICT skills to conduct an enquiry into the history of our modern Olympic Games.

81. In **geography** the curriculum has been strengthened through the introduction of schemes of work based on national guidance. Work on display and in pupils' books shows that standards are average and developed systematically year by year, drawing well on local resources.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Subject leadership provides good support for all teachers.
- Developing links with local places of worship reinforces pupils' understanding of different faiths.
- Assessment and recording of pupils' achievements need further development.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to enhance pupils' learning.

Commentary

82. Standards were in line with those expected by the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Years 2 and 6 at the last inspection. Achievement was satisfactory across the school and pupils with special educational needs made sound progress. Pupils are now achieving well because of good teaching and a much improved curriculum.
83. Good overall improvement is evident. Much of this has been made in the last year. The key reason for this is the appointment of a new co-ordinator with enthusiasm and a very good knowledge of the subject. She has worked with staff to produce a new scheme of work in line with the locally agreed syllabus ensuring continuity and progression. This includes opportunities for pupils in all year groups to visit a place of worship. These improvements have given all pupils better opportunities to learn about, and from, different religions.
84. In Year 1 pupils are taught the beliefs and practices of the Christian faith, and that different faiths share some common features such as festivals and caring for each other. Pupils visit the local church, meet the vicar and ask questions about her job and the church. By Year 2 they understand the importance of the Bible to Christians. They are aware of some of the special people of the Christian faith, such as Jesus, and they know, for example, that He told stories with a special meaning, such as the parables of the sower and the blind man. They visit a synagogue and write about aspects of Judaism and the importance of the sacred book, the Torah, and know that it is important to Jewish people.
85. By Year 6 pupils have an increasing understanding of Christianity and stories from the Bible. They have a sound knowledge of the customs and beliefs of other faiths including Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism, reflecting the major faiths connected to the pupil population. Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter are celebrated as is Divali. Special assemblies, visits and religious leaders underline similarities and differences in the beliefs of these religions. The new scheme of work includes annual visits to different places of worship, for all ages are encouraged

to learn from different religions studied. Year 5 explore what helped them to make decisions – including their religious beliefs.

86. Teaching is good overall and has improved in both its consistency and quality. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and, as a result, pupils work well and enjoy the opportunities to use role play in their lessons. An analysis of work reveals that pupils take a pride in presentation, but the work set rarely differed in relation to pupils' abilities. Opportunities to use information and communication technology to extend their learning of different religions were limited. A little teaching was satisfactory rather than good because it did not have the challenge and high expectations seen in other lessons. Pupils' very good attitudes, relationships and commitment often contribute to the good pace of learning.
87. The recently appointed co-ordinator has had a positive influence on improving the quality of teaching and learning by revising the schemes of work, improving resources and increasing opportunities for pupils to visit places of worship. She has a clear vision of further subject development and is working closely with colleagues to ensure that the areas identified for improvement are used to raise standards further.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education were sampled.

88. In **art and design** there is every indication that standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are average. Work on display shows how pupils develop skills using a wide range of subject matter and resources. In a good Year 2 lesson pupils made observational drawings of leaves. They worked well together leading to independent learning. Good subject knowledge and clear explanations from the teacher led them to work confidently. ICT was used as an extension to drawing activities. Links were made with history in a good Year 6 lesson where pupils designed pots in a Greek style. Lesson targets were available to focus pupils closely on their task. Enthusiastic teaching stimulated pupils to express opinions on the process from design to making and evaluating. The co-ordinator has a good overview of this subject. A review has been made with action plans for future development throughout the school.
89. In **design and technology** there is every indication that standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are average. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good sketches of what they plan to make, choosing suitable materials to make wheeled vehicles, which they decorate and finally evaluate. Pupils in Year 3 make good pneumatic monsters from junk materials. Year 6 pupils design and make slippers from a variety of materials. Their designs are detailed and paper templates are used as part of the process. However, the use of ICT to evaluate items made needs further development. Weaknesses described in the previous inspection have been addressed by implementing an improved scheme of work. The joint co-ordinators work well together and have recently reviewed the subject policy and scheme of work.
90. In **music**, standards observed in one singing lesson seen in Year 6 were average. In this lesson teaching and learning were good with the teacher's good subject knowledge having a positive impact. He explained appropriate terms and made good use of a pupil's expertise to introduce a round, accompanying her on the guitar. The attention given to detail helped improve the quality of singing by the end of the lesson, but standards were average because that was the extent of the challenge. In a lesson for Year 4 on pentatonic scales standards of performance were average because the teacher's subject knowledge was not sufficient to explore the full extent of what pupils could do. Music has not been a priority in recent years and opportunities to develop

the subject have been limited. However, pupils are offered a good range of opportunities to develop musical skills outside the curriculum. There are regular performances in which as many pupils as possible participate and a choir is open to all. Pupils can have strings, woodwind and brass lessons with external music teachers.

91. In **physical education** standards in games observed in a Year 1 lesson were above average. Teaching and learning were very good. As in all lessons the teacher made sure that pupils warmed up properly. Her subject knowledge was very good as she demonstrated skills and asked probing questions to make pupils think hard about what they were doing. This ensured that they achieved very well. Questioning was also good in an athletics lesson for Year 3 and helped pupils see how they should improve upon their average standards, although there was no opportunity taken for assessment to support more detailed feedback. This was also the case in a Year 5 lesson so pupils did not all refine their skills as well as they could. Plans and photographs show that pupils undertake a good range of activities. Swimming records show that standards in this strand are well above average and pupils throughout the school achieve very well. The good provision of a pool on site means that pupils start lessons in the reception class so that by Year 2 they generally meet the national expectations for Year 6, with pupils in Year 6 being far beyond them.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education and citizenship were sampled.

92. This area is well planned and co-ordinated. Much development has taken place since the last inspection. Further work is being done, especially with partner schools, to revise and improve the curriculum further ready for the new term. Time is regularly allocated in class to provide a challenging programme of topics relevant to the age and maturity of the pupils.
93. Only two lessons were seen. In a good Year 4 lesson pupils suggested activities for the school Summer Fete which their representatives would convey to the school council. Thanks to the teacher's high expectations and example, pupils discussed ideas politely and fairly, showing respect for each other's views and ending up with a balanced submission. In a Year 2 lesson the teacher's perceptive questions meant that pupils learned a lot about handling negative feelings and gained confidence in expressing themselves.
94. Care is taken to ensure that all pupils feel they matter individually. They are encouraged to take part in assemblies and help around the school, cultivating a spirit of co-operation and mutual care. These and the very good role models and high expectations set by all staff help promote very good social skills and maturity.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	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).