

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **HILL AVENUE JUNIOR AND INFANT SCHOOL**

Wolverhampton

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104326

Headteacher: Mr D Bird

Lead inspector: Miss M A Warner

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> December 2003

Inspection number: 256431

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	289
School address:	Hill Avenue Lanesfield Wolverhampton
Postcode:	WV4 6PY
Telephone number:	01902 558750
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Barnett
Date of previous inspection:	27 <sup>th</sup> - 30 <sup>th</sup> March 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Hill Avenue Infant and Junior school is a primary school with a Nursery class, serving the immediate community in the Lanesfield district of Wolverhampton. The area is one of mainly privately owned housing, although this has changed slightly since the last inspection with some houses now used by the local authority for temporary accommodation. Generally, the population is stable and there is a strong sense of community. There is little mobility of pupils to and from the school during the year. The school has grown since the last inspection and is slightly larger than most schools nationally, with 289 pupils aged 4 to 11 on roll. There are 50 part-time places in the Nursery. Most children begin school at the nationally expected levels in all areas of learning. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly in line with the national average, at 11.9 per cent. The number of pupils whose first language is believed not to be English has grown and is high, at 8.5 per cent. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below the national average at 12.5 per cent, and 0.3 per cent of pupils have statements of special educational need, which is low. The school received the Schools Achievement Award in 2001.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17288	M A Warner	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Foundation Stage, Art and design, Design and technology, Music, Personal, health, social and citizenship education, English as an additional language.
9736	J Brasier	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
31742	J Marsden	<i>Team inspector</i>	English, Information and communication technology, Geography, History, Religious education.
10782	H Moreton	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics, Science, Physical education, Special educational needs.

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# PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

## OVERALL EVALUATION

**Hill Avenue Infant and Junior School provides an effective education** and good value for money. Pupils in Year 6 achieve satisfactorily, reaching average standards, overall. They achieve well and reach above average standards in mathematics, science, music and physical education. During the inspection the quality of teaching and learning across the school was good or better in over two-thirds of lessons and very good or excellent in one-fifth. The overall leadership, governance and management of the school are good.

### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The good leadership, senior management and governance of the school result in a very positive ethos for learning.
- Specialist teaching in science, music and physical education is very effective and provision for the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Standards in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2 are below average.
- The curriculum for pupils in mixed age classes is not always suitable for both ages.
- Assessment data is not always used by class teachers to plan lessons.
- Subjects are co-ordinated rather than led and managed and this results in lower achievement than is possible in some subjects.
- No member of staff has been trained to teach English as an additional language.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum.
- The pastoral care of pupils is very good and support staff make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.

Improvement since the last inspection (when the school was judged to give sound value for money) has been satisfactory. The school has grown since then and this expansion has generally been managed well. There has been satisfactory improvement on all of the key issues. Those relating to the quality of the development plan and to the staffing structure have been fully dealt with. Some work remains to be done on provision for information and communication technology (ICT), on curriculum planning and assessment, and on the co-ordination of subjects. Statutory requirements mentioned in the previous report are now met. Standards are lower than before in English, and higher than before in mathematics and ICT, and the quality of teaching has improved in physical education. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development have all improved from good to very good, and they are sometimes excellent. The curriculum is not quite as good as at the last inspection because it does not fully meet the needs of pupils in mixed age classes.

## STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A\* - very high; A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

**Pupils achieve satisfactorily.** In the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6 pupils reach standards that are, overall, in line with national expectations. Foundation Stage children are already reaching above average standards in their knowledge and understanding of the world and their physical development (at the end of the autumn term). Given the current rate of progress it is likely that many

will exceed expectations in the other areas of learning by the end of the year. By Year 6, pupils reach above average standards in mathematics, science, music and physical education. In these subjects pupils achieve well. Their achievement in English is satisfactory, and they reach satisfactory standards. However, in Years 1 and 2, standards in reading and writing are below average, overall, as pupils who are capable of attaining standards in line with national expectations are reaching standards below them. Whilst the majority achieve satisfactorily, this minority group underachieves and lowers overall standards.

Pupils' personal qualities are very good. **Their spiritual, moral and social development is very good and their cultural development is good.** Their attitudes and behaviour are very good across the school and excellent by Year 6. Their attendance is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good.** The quality of **teaching and learning is good** overall, and very good in the Foundation Stage. Assessment is used well by the senior management team but could be better used diagnostically by class teachers, particularly in mixed age classes. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities. The school takes good care of its pupils and provides very good support, advice and guidance for them. Links with the community and other schools are good. Those with parents are satisfactory, but some of the information sent to them does not fully meet statutory requirements.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The overall leadership and management of the school are good.** The leadership of the headteacher is effective and results in a well-ordered community and a very positive ethos. His deputy, whose work on assessment is particularly valuable, supports him very well. The third member of the senior management team was absent during the inspection. Management is good overall. However, although they co-ordinate their subjects well, the leadership and management roles of the co-ordinators are not fully effective. Governors know the school well and provide good support for senior managers. **The governance of the school is good overall.** However, the school fails to comply with two aspects of its statutory duties.

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

Parents have very high opinions of the school and are very supportive, although a small minority has one or two concerns. The inspection team agree with parents that the change from Reception to Year 1 is too great and that there should be a greater difference between the curriculum for Year 1 and 2 pupils. This would help to smooth the transfer and provide better for the wide range in age and ability in these mixed age classes. Pupils are proud of their school. Whilst the school does not have a school council, the views of pupils are often channelled through the house captains.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2.
- Provide an appropriate curriculum for classes where there are two different year groups.
- Use assessment data more accurately to plan lessons.
- Develop the leadership and management role of subject co-ordinators.
- Ensure that a member of staff has expertise in teaching English as an additional language.

**and meet statutory requirements in:**

- Pupils' annual reports.
- The governors' annual report to parents.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

**Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage and satisfactorily, overall, in Years 1 to 6.** They **achieve well** in mathematics, science, music and physical education across the school, and reach **above average standards** in these subjects. **Standards are average overall.** Standards in reading, writing and handwriting are below average in Years 1 and 2 but pupils reach average standards again by Year 6. Their attainment in English by Year 6 is satisfactory. Standards, overall, are similar to the last inspection and in mathematics and ICT they have improved. Although the trend in the school's national test results is below the national trend, it is evident from the standards table in the summary that this has been influenced by a particularly able group of pupils in 2001, who reached well above the national average standards.

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

- Children in the Foundation Stage are already attaining above average standards in their knowledge and understanding of the world and their physical development.
- Higher attainers achieve well in Years 1 and 2, but those just below average underachieve.
- Pupils do not write confidently with a joined hand in Years 3 to 6 because teaching of handwriting has been unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2.
- Assessment data is not used by class teachers sufficiently to identify pupils who are underachieving.
- Across the school, reading books are often too easy for pupils.
- Pupils achieve well and standards are above average in mathematics, science and aspects of music and physical education.
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) achieve well.

#### **Commentary**

1. Pupils start school with standards that are in line with national expectations. By the time they begin Year 1, almost all children are expected to reach the Early Learning Goals. Some will exceed them, especially in their knowledge and understanding of the world and their physical development. Teaching in both of these areas of learning was excellent as was the progress children made in their knowledge and understanding of science and their skills in dance.

2. In the Year 2 National Curriculum tests in 2003, standards were in line with the national average in mathematics but below the national average in reading and writing. Since the introduction of mixed age classes and changes to the intake, standards have been lower. Much thought has gone into the best way to provide for pupils in these new circumstances. However, there are still some areas that need attention, such as provision for Year 1 pupils in a mixed age class with Year 2, and provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language. When compared with similar schools, results in 2003 were below average in writing and mathematics and well below average in reading. Nevertheless, higher attaining pupils attained well with the percentage reaching the higher, Level 3 being above those of similar schools in reading and science and in line with them in writing and mathematics. It is the pupils who are just below average who are underachieving.

3. Senior management has identified from assessment data that the progress made by pupils from the base line on entry to Year 2 has been good for the past two years. However, this gradual progress was not evident during the inspection for the current Years 1 and 2. The good progress is



made in the Foundation Stage but slows down in Years 1 and 2 where teaching and learning are not as good. The senior management team also found that boys have tended to make more progress than girls. This was confirmed during the inspection, with boys being more outgoing and confident than girls in these age groups.

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

<b>Standards in:</b>	<b>School results</b>	<b>National results</b>
reading	15.1 (14.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.3 (13.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.1 (16.5)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 44 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. In the Year 6 National Curriculum tests in 2003, standards in English were below the national average but standards in mathematics and science were above it. Whilst standards in mathematics rose to those found in the past and science only dropped slightly, standards in English for the past two years have been lower than previously. The school is addressing this issue in the present Year 6 with specialist teaching, and standards seen during the inspection were average. When compared with similar schools the same pattern is reflected: standards in mathematics and science are above average while those in English are below. Senior management have identified that the progress made by pupils with SEN is good: those who did not attain the expected Level 4, in Year 6, had specific difficulties. Their progress in reading however, had often been very good. Inspection evidence confirms this.

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

<b>Standards in:</b>	<b>School results</b>	<b>National results</b>
English	26.1 (24.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.9 (26.1)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.6 (29.7)	29.6 (28.3)

*There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

5. Standards during the inspection mainly reflect the test results. Standards in expressive writing, handwriting and in reading are aspects that need particular attention in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' attainment in these areas is unsatisfactory given that they leave the Foundation Stage in line with national expectations. This year the school has grouped pupils in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4 so that the majority are taught with others of their own age group for numeracy and literacy. This is successful for most of the pupils but the just-below-average pupils are still taught in mixed age groups. In these groups, expectations are often too demanding for the younger pupils (for example in handwriting), or too low for the older pupils (for example in literacy lessons.) Too often, pupils who are performing at just below average standards are working at the level appropriate for lower attaining pupils rather than pupils who are potentially of average attainment. Pupils with SEN, however, make good progress as they move through the school.

6. The school has begun to analyse pupil data on different groups more carefully and has correctly identified the relative shyness of girls, in comparison with boys, when speaking, mainly at the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 6, there is no noticeable difference between the attainment of boys and girls because of the way in which the school nurtures the confidence of all pupils. The school has identified a number of gifted and talented pupils but, in some classes, they are not consistently given more challenging activities. This sometimes prevents them from achieving at the very highest level. Almost all the pupils who read to inspectors were reading books that they could read easily. The books lacked challenge and pupils were capable of reading at a higher level. Where the reading level was correct for lower attaining, older pupils, the content was too young. Senior management has a considerable amount of data from assessment, which needs to be used more widely across the school by teachers to help them plan: in this way, particular pupils could be targeted and underachieving pupils could be identified and provided for.

Pupils who speak English as an additional language generally reach the same levels as their peers. However, those who come to the school speaking no English make slower progress than is possible and underachieve. Pupils with SEN reach standards in line with their capabilities and achieve well with good support.

7. Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection, with improved resources. However, whilst standards are now satisfactory, ICT is not used sufficiently across the whole curriculum. The creative subjects were only sampled during the inspection, but standards are at least in line with the national expectations across the school in art and design, design and technology and in music and physical education, where some pupils reach above average standards. Standards in singing and in dance are well above average and pupils achieve very well in these elements. Standards in the humanities are average in all three subjects (geography, history and religious education) and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

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

By the time they reach Years 5 and 6 pupils are extremely mature and have **excellent** attitudes. For other years behaviour is **good** and attitudes are **very good**. Attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory** and personal development is **very good** in Years 1 to 4 and **excellent** in Years 5 and 6. There has been no exclusion in the last year.

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

- Pupils' enthusiasm and their interest in lessons provide a very good foundation for learning. They are excellent in Years 5 and 6.
- The school has high expectations of conduct, and behaviour is very good.
- Racism is unknown and bullying a minor problem.
- Pupils are aware of the cultural traditions of some other communities, both in this country and the rest of the world.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good.

### **Commentary**

8. Pupils are very keen to answer questions and contribute their own ideas to lessons. They listen with respect to others' viewpoints and show pleasure in their achievements. Pupils say that nearly everyone works hard. For instance in a mathematics lesson on metric measurement, pupils collaborated very well when asked, and their enthusiasm contributed to the success of the lesson.

9. Pupils exhibit mature behaviour, particularly in Years 5 and 6. They approached one inspector on the playground and very enthusiastically and spontaneously gave him a guided tour of what they thought were the best parts of the school. Pupils appreciate what is expected of them and are keen to comply. There is little challenging behaviour and what there is, is managed well. Younger pupils are aware of some unsatisfactory behaviour in their classrooms, largely confined to pupils who have not yet learnt self-control. While parents have very few concerns about bullying, pupils reported a few problems. Some of these went unreported because the pupils chose to do so, and some of the other examples quoted were more like rough play. Where detected, bullying is well handled. Behaviour around the school, at lunch and elsewhere is very good.

10. The school provides a very good spiritual, moral and social grounding for its pupils and provides good opportunities for appreciating the richness of the world we live in. Older pupils are aware of the multicultural nature of our own society.

11. Attendance has improved from 92.3 per cent in 2002 - 2003 to 93.7 per cent overall for the autumn term 2003.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	0.6
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good quality of education**. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. The range of the curriculum is good and meets the needs of most pupils satisfactorily. There is a good range of additional activities to enrich the curriculum. Accommodation is good and the support given to pupils is very good. Links with parents are satisfactory, and with the community and other schools they are good.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is **good overall**. The quality of each is very good in the Foundation Stage, satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Strengths in teaching are in the very effective methods and involvement of support staff in the Foundation stage. Weaknesses in teaching are in the planning and expectations of teachers in Years 1 and 2 - which results in lower standards for some pupils in this age group – and lack of expertise in teaching those for whom English is not a first language.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Specialist teaching in English, science, music and physical education is particularly successful.
- Support staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning across the school.
- Staff lack the skill to teach well to those pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- Pupils apply themselves to tasks very well and work very productively.
- Planning and the use of assessment data for mixed age classes are not always successful.
- Too little use is made of 'peer evaluation' - to help pupils assess their own and each other's work and find ways to improve it.

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3 (8%)	9 (23 %)	15 (38%)	11 (28%)	1 (3%)	0	0

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

12. A considerable strength in teaching lies in the development of teachers as specialists. Excellent teaching and learning were seen in the Foundation Stage and in dance. Specialist teaching takes place in English, science, music and physical education and this results in very good quality teaching and learning. For example, in science the questioning of pupils is very good and is used to assess what pupils know and where further guidance is needed. The presentation of pupils' work is particularly good in this subject and homework is of a good quality. The teaching of dance is excellent, both when taught by a specialist and a class teacher. The main reason for the high standards is the very good use of demonstration to set standards. Teachers successfully manage the long sessions in science and dance. As a result, the progress that pupils make is

noticeable. There is also specialist teaching of ICT in Year 6 and this results in the pupils working enthusiastically and learning very well. In English in Years 5 and 6, pupils also make good progress. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, young children are expected to listen for too long before being actively engaged in tasks.

13. Pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively in mathematics and science, and they do so productively. However, more opportunities could be given for partner and group work in English to develop pupils' critical and listening skills. Teachers mark pupils' work particularly well in mathematics and science, but it is not always as helpful as it could be in English. As a result, pupils are not sure what they need to do to improve their work. Evaluation is not built into the ethos of teaching and learning across subjects. Targets to help pupils improve in reading are not clearly identified and shared with them. The promotion of literacy, numeracy and ICT across subjects is also an area for development. Planning for different ages in lower ability mixed age groups is not yet fully effective. Nor is the teaching of skills progressively across year groups, for example in handwriting and in art and design. Teachers do not sufficiently meet the needs of the pupils who are reaching slightly below average standards.

14. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are very well integrated into the school and almost all receive the support necessary to achieve satisfactorily. However, no member of staff has been trained to teach those who speak English as an additional language and pupils who speak no English on entry to the school are not given sufficient support. The subject specific vocabulary needed - in, for example, mathematics - also poses difficulties for a small number of these pupils.

15. When pupils are given the right amount of challenge, for example in some religious education lessons, they achieve well. However, expectations are not always high enough and there is insufficient challenge in the tasks for pupils in mixed age classes in English. For example, planning does not sufficiently match the termly expectations of the National Literacy Strategy, and in art and design, skills are not built on from year to year. The teaching of handwriting is unsatisfactory with pupils confusing capital and lower case letters to a greater degree than is usually seen in Years 1 and 2. Because handwriting is not taught well in the lower part of the school, time has to be put aside to continue to teach the skill in Years 3 to 6 when pupils should be concentrating on the content of what they write rather than on the skill of writing with a joined hand.

16. The use of worksheets varies. They are overused for average and more able pupils in Years 1 to 4. As a result pupils do not develop their literacy skills sufficiently. However, they often provide good support for the lower attaining pupils. Across the school support staff make a considerable contribution to pupils' learning. They take a full part in lessons and because of this are able to step in confidently when a teacher is away, for example, in a dance lesson. In class they work with groups and in ICT lessons, where teaching is good, they ensure that help is given quickly so that pupils do not waste time. Pupils of below average ability have suitably differentiated activities in most subjects and are very well supported. This enables them to achieve as well as they can. Targets for pupils with SEN are identified in individual education plans (IEPs) and these are shared with pupils and their parents.

## The curriculum

The school provides a **good range** of learning opportunities. **Many opportunities** are provided which enrich the curriculum. Accommodation is **good** and resources are **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Opportunities for enrichment through sport and the creative arts are good.
- The school provides a curriculum that enables pupils to develop as communicators and performers.
- Residential visits for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 provide challenging and interesting opportunities for their personal development.
- Pupils in mixed age classes do not always have a suitably separate curriculum for each age group.
- There are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their literacy, numeracy or ICT skills in all subjects.

### Commentary

17. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of most different groups of pupils: boys, girls and those with SEN. The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils of above average ability to achieve well. The school has recognised that pupils in mixed classes need a curriculum specifically designed for the separate needs of the different age groups in order to raise standards. At present this is an inclusion issue, as not all pupils have full access to a curriculum relevant to their age. The school uses national guidance as the basis for its subject plans and this ensures that statutory requirements are met. However, it does not fully implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and prefers to adapt some elements of both into its curriculum planning. This leads to some inconsistency of approach in different year groups and results in uneven progress from the Foundation Stage.

18. When planning the curriculum, most subject leaders do not clearly identify where teachers can address literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 and 4 are given too few opportunities to practise their writing skills across a range of subjects. This is reflected in the standards of writing in the Year 2 National Curriculum tests. In the same way, pupils in most classes across the school are given too few opportunities to practise the skills learnt in their ICT lessons when studying other subjects.

19. The school provides a very good range of learning opportunities for children under five and a good range for pupils in Years 1 to 6. The school also provides many learning opportunities in personal, social, health and citizenship education. A number of clubs and out-of-school activities enrich pupils' learning and they also benefit from visiting other places. Visitors regularly talk to them, help with projects and share their expertise. Residential visits are arranged for Year 2 pupils for one night. Year 6 pupils stay in Normandy. This benefits their personal and social development in addition to providing good learning experiences.

20. Accommodation is good and the quantity and quality of learning resources are satisfactory. Science is taught in a room separate from the main school and this aids organisation and makes the subject special to pupils. There is an adequate library with a computer scanning system so that pupils can select their own books and register that they have borrowed them. The school is well maintained and attractively decorated to provide a very pleasant learning environment. There is a good amount of outdoor play space including a grassed area.

21. Teachers are appropriately qualified and use their expertise well through specialist teaching. The access of pupils with SEN to the curriculum is good, because support is provided by teachers and teaching assistants within the classroom, and they are given additional help when required. There are a good number of experienced classroom assistants who provide very effective support

for pupils and also make a strong contribution to teaching and the general life of the school. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also have full access to the curriculum and their cultures and religions are acknowledged and appreciated. Whilst most are able to access the curriculum satisfactorily, those who come to the school speaking no English do not gain access to the curriculum soon enough. Specialist vocabulary in subjects is taught for all pupils but is not always sufficiently explained for pupils who are learning the language. In some way, the lack of expertise of the staff in teaching pupils for whom English is an additional language accounts for this.

## Care, guidance and support

Pastoral care is **good**, with **very good** and well-informed support advice and guidance. There is a **good** range of opportunities for pupils to put forward their ideas and concerns.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Trusting and caring relationships with teachers and teaching assistants create a climate for very good support and guidance.
- Very good data on academic progress enhance this support and guidance.
- There are good arrangements for the induction of pupils.
- There are good welfare arrangements.
- Pupils are listened to and account taken of their views.

## Commentary

22. Pupils told inspectors how happy they were in the school and parents confirmed this. This is clearly a very good foundation for their work in school and demonstrates the quality of the support and guidance received. The pupils find the lunchtime staff helpful and think they do a good job. They award raffle opportunities for good behaviour and pupils respect their authority and hope to win prizes.

23. Welfare is well provided for, with several staff trained in handling critical medical conditions. There is a medical room and pupils with severe medical conditions are known well. The nursery nurses, in strictly controlled conditions, administer medicines. Pupils told inspectors how pleased they are with the way they had been introduced into the school, both in the Nursery and at later stages. There is no school council but house captains are useful channels for information about how pupils feel, and the general high self-esteem and confidence of pupils ensure that they can make their views known. All pupils spoken to felt that their ideas on school issues were taken seriously.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with the community and other educational institutions are **good** and with parents they are **satisfactory**. Parents support the school well, but the school's information to parents fails to meet statutory requirements.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The information provided for parents is unsatisfactory.
- Parents provide good practical support to the school.
- There are good transfer arrangements to the senior school.
- There is good support from the community for the annual visit to France and other activities.
- There are good links with other educational institutions.

## Commentary

24. Parents have very high opinions of the school, as shown by their answers to the questionnaire. However, those at the meeting with parents, while still supportive, raised a number of issues that the team has investigated. The school provides some good information to parents, but this is negated by the poor quality of end of year reports. These only report on progress in English, mathematics and science, and this does not meet statutory requirements. There are no targets for improvement and levels of attainment are only reported on in Years 2 and 6. The prospectus is good, but the Governors' Annual Report to parents is unsatisfactory because it reports inadequately on key stage test results and has no financial information at all, just a brief reference to the budget. Parents are supportive in many ways, raising funds through the parent teacher association, helping in class, helping to put on the school's shows (for which the school is well known), coaching sports and helping with homework and reading. Parents are welcome in school and the school is inclusive in that it provides information to separated parents. Joint plans are made to tackle attendance or behaviour problems. There are three consultation evenings each year.

25. Local businesses help to fund the school's trips to France and a local supermarket welcomes pupils in to see behind the scenes. Churches contribute well to the life of the school. Harvest Festival produce goes to the homes of local pensioners, taken by pupils. The younger children perform specifically for the older members of the community. Brownies and Guides meet in the school buildings.

26. There are good links with the local playgroup. The local high school assists with science, art, modern foreign languages and athletics, and there are regular after-school meetings between headteachers and heads of Years 6 and 7. After a gap of some years, trainee teachers are again being welcomed into the school. Together with other local primary schools, they link together to provide joint training days and have had joint sessions when writing standards were compared and agreed.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management of the school are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. Management and governance are **good**.

### The main strengths and weaknesses:

- Each pupil is a valued member of the school community.
- Teachers are very good role models.
- The management of staffing is very good.
- The school is managing the new issues related to mixed age classes well.
- The co-ordination of subjects is not focused sharply enough on raising standards.

## Commentary

27. As a result of the effective leadership and management of the school by the headteacher, ably supported by key staff, the school is a well-ordered learning community. The priorities of the school, which are to raise standards while maintaining a caring ethos, are successfully met with the crucial exception of the standards attained by pupils in English in Years 1 and 2.

28. This is a stable school. New initiatives are taken on board in a sensitive way so that pupils feel confident in the well-established routines. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Many teachers have taught here for several years. The school uses their skills effectively. For example, a 'specialist' science teacher is deployed to teach all pupils in Years 3 to 6, whilst the skilled deputy headteacher teaches literacy in both Year 5 and Year 6.

The pupils' confidence and self-esteem are also high as a result of the attention given to promoting the performing arts and sport, managed and often taught by a specialist. Subject specialisation is something that the headteacher is considering developing even further when opportunities arise. The appointment of staff with particular expertise is one of his strengths. For example, a teacher with expertise in the performing arts, a deputy headteacher with a particular interest in assessment (who, while delegating, has kept a good overview of the school's results) and more recently, a teacher with strengths in French, give potential to broadening the curriculum further academically.

29. Very good relationships and a team spirit exist within the school. This promotes a sense of community and is something that the headteacher has built up over many years and rightly takes pride in. The leadership of the school by the headteacher is very good.

30. Because of staff illness two temporary teachers were observed teaching during the inspection. These teachers, who hold the position of deputy headteachers in their home schools, both made very good contributions. It is significant that they were so easily able to assimilate into the life of the school. The pupils reacted as if they had been with them far longer, which is a tribute to them and to the very well established school routines.

31. Systems for the management of teachers' performance are securely in place. Development planning is now effective and the staffing structure is more appropriate, with subjects co-ordinated by different teachers. Teachers now work within year teams but the role of co-ordinators does not focus enough on the leadership and management of their subjects with a view to raising standards, for example, through direct observation of colleagues' teaching and by ensuring that all teachers are confident in assessing pupils' work accurately. Individual education plans (IEPs) for pupils with SEN match these pupils' needs, and the management and deployment of resources under the guidance of the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) are good.

32. Standards were higher before the mixed age classes were introduced, in order to meet the needs of an increase in the standard pupil intake of 45. The school is addressing these not inconsiderable challenges well. It has responded flexibly by, for example, making specialist provision in science and grouping pupils by ability or age in different subjects in Years 1 and 2. The school continues to refine its systems to improve performance, for example, through modifying the two-year rolling programmes of work in different subjects, such as mathematics and science, so that pupils' development of knowledge, understanding and skills is assured. The school is aware, however, that this is inconsistent, as yet, across all subjects and year groups. The school has considered various ways of managing the numbers in Years 1 and 2 and has gone some way to resolving problems through setting. However, with all Year 1 pupils taught with Year 2 pupils for most subjects, work and methods are not always adapted satisfactorily to their different needs and, as a result, pupils in Year 1 do not make the steady progress that they should.

33. The school routines run smoothly, with office staff making a good contribution by providing timely and accurate information to managers and governors.

34. Governors know the school well and provide good support to senior managers. They regularly observe lessons, contribute to lessons from their own expertise, such as during personal, social and health education (PSHE), and often take part in workshops. Governors are linked to particular subjects and meet regularly with subject co-ordinators. They are well informed about the curriculum. Like many of the staff, several governors have been in post for some time, enabling continuity of policy. Financial procedures are prudent and effective, enabling the school to meet its educational priorities, such as the new Foundation Stage extension.



## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	718,421.00
Total expenditure	694,998.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,404.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	20,277.00
Balance carried forward to the next	23,423.00

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

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

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

35. Since the last inspection a new extension to the school has been built, which includes a self-contained Foundation Stage wing and the school office. The three large classrooms, separate toilets and well-designed outdoor play area all contribute to the now excellent accommodation for children in the Nursery and Reception classes. During the inspection, the Nursery classroom and one Reception classroom were in use. The experienced and able Reception class teacher leads the Foundation Stage and, with the Nursery teacher, has introduced the new national Foundation Stage Profile for recording the children's progress. They are now in the process of implementing the Wolverhampton version of this, which they find more helpful, as it gives greater clarity to the small steps that children make at this age. The Foundation Stage is led very well and teaching is very good, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Planning is very good, with both classes planning similar activities together at different levels of expectation. Children enter school with standards that are in line with national expectations. Standards seen during the inspection were similar to those found at the last inspection in most aspects except their knowledge and understanding of the world and their physical development, which have improved.

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

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

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

- Routines and clear expectations enable children to feel secure in the Foundation Stage environment.
- Children play happily together.
- Children have the confidence to choose from a wide range of activities.
- By the end of Reception children are very independent.

#### **Commentary**

36. Children in the Nursery come into school at the level expected of children of this age and are interested in all that is provided in the classroom and outside. They enjoy trying new activities. They grow in self-confidence and are able to attend to their own personal needs such as going to the toilet. They show considerable concentration when involved in activities: for example, when making Christmas wreaths. The inspection took place at the end of the autumn term and routines and standards of behaviour were known and accepted. The quality of teaching and learning in this area of learning is good. Children start part-time in the Nursery. On arrival, at the start of the session, a system of self-registration is successful and children then chose activities themselves, chatting to one another. They enjoyed playing together, working in Santa's workshop and moving from one activity to another happily, reading in the book corner or playing with farm animals or a pirate ship. The majority take turns without conflict. They are confident in this environment and relate well to their peers during activities and class sessions. In Reception almost all the children undress and dress themselves for physical education lessons. They continue to enjoy choosing their own activities, sometimes working on their own - such as at a numeracy task - or with others: for example, dressed as Father Christmas and delivering parcels to people. They are sensitive to the needs of others and are beginning to learn about their own and other cultures. Almost all children reach the Early Learning Goals set nationally for children at the end of the Reception year and a substantial number exceed them.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children are given time to speak at length but girls sometimes are not given as much time as boys.
- Children enjoy books but could share them with a partner more often.
- Children 'write' with confidence but use capital letters at too early an age.

### Commentary

37. Children in the Nursery are given many opportunities to speak to a group and share their experiences. For example, one boy spoke at length about the video he had watched the previous evening, whilst the class listened attentively. In Reception, children also have ample opportunities to speak and listen to each other, and they do so confidently. During the inspection the girls, who are often more timid, were not always given as much time to speak as boys, who are particularly self-assured. A particularly imaginative activity organised to develop speaking and listening was in learning to give a weather forecast.

38. In both classes children enjoy the book corner and go to it by choice during free activities, usually looking at books on their own. Regularly sharing and talking about a book with a friend was not seen during the inspection and, if developed, could lead to a greater interest in books at an early age. The children in both classes enjoy the shared time with teachers when they look at a Big Book together. In Reception, one child talked about the pictures in a book with the inspector and another read a complete book with confidence. Children learn about different cultures, such as through the story of Ganesha.

39. In both classes writing areas have been set up where children enjoy writing letters to Santa. Children are also given opportunities to write in more formal situations and by the end of the autumn term many children in Reception are forming letters, and occasionally words, that are recognisable. Almost all can write their own name correctly. They 'write' with confidence and enjoyment. They use capital letters at an early stage. However, this causes incorrect writing of words not only in Reception but also later in Years 1 and 2. The majority of children are on track to reach the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning by the end of their Reception year, and some to exceed them.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

40. Only a short time was spent observing children's mathematical development and in this session the quality of teaching and learning was very good. In the Nursery, children use graphs to record their favourite foods; they sing number games and order numbers to 5 on a washing line with the nursery nurse. With their teacher they learn to give the correct amount of money when 'buying' a toy. Teaching is very good and they make good progress.

41. In Reception the majority order number to 10 and lower attainers to 5. They can order numbers starting at zero or a higher number. They can also identify a missing number within 10 and can say which number comes before and after a given one. They are beginning to solve numerical problems. Less confident children have been identified and extra support is given. Children are interested, achieve well and are on track to at least attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very imaginative ways of teaching about science and geography are used in both classes.
- The teaching of this area of learning is often excellent.
- Children make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in the vocabulary needed to talk about what they have learned.

### Commentary

42. Children achieve well in this area of learning by the time they leave the Reception class and standards are above those expected. In the Nursery, children know the Christmas nativity story and discuss what they would like for Christmas. They learn about the weather and what the symbols mean that are used in weather forecasting on the television. They practise being a weather forecaster themselves and are videoed placing the sign for the weather in the centre of a map of Britain, while describing the weather where they live. This gives all children, including those with English as an additional language, an opportunity to speak to an audience at a young age. Children also learn about their own bodies and describe themselves. Through various technological activities, children have investigated many aspects of their different senses.

43. Children in Reception also make good progress and investigate magnets, shadows, pets and plants. They show real curiosity when looking through a large magnifying glass and enjoy constructing things with Lego and wooden bricks. A particularly successful activity was an investigation of ice. Three different aspects of ice were investigated. Round balls of ice, placed on a black background and covered in white shaving cream gave pupils much delight and through careful questioning by the teacher they increased their knowledge of melting and widened their vocabulary. Flat 'slices' of ice gave them a different perspective when working on a second table and with the nursery nurse they watched coloured ice dissolve in warm water. The increase in scientific knowledge and vocabulary in this session was considerable and teaching was excellent. Many opportunities are also given to the children to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world through visits, such as to a farm, and from visitors such as from the police on dog handling. Children are on course to reach well above the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for children's physical development is **very good** overall and at times excellent.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children are confident and self-controlled when moving on equipment in the playground.
- Standards of dance in Reception are high.

### Commentary

44. Both Nursery and Reception children show considerable confidence and self-control when using the bicycles and vehicles in the playground. They move freely in spite of travelling at quite a speed. They adjust their speed where necessary and skilfully avoid collisions and other people well. They climb with dexterity and balance on the outside apparatus and enjoy initiating games with their friends. They climb the steps to play in the outside 'Wendy' house and enjoy the role-play that this provides. The playground is very well supervised and children achieve very well. When in the hall they learn to use a larger space, acting out the story of 'Santa bringing presents to children'.

In Reception this is developed further and, in the dance lesson observed, teaching, learning, standards and the children's achievement were all excellent. Children's ability to listen carefully and follow instructions, the use of demonstration by the teacher and nursery nurse and a long lesson, which gave the children time to develop and improve a theme, were all contributory factors to this outstanding result. Children develop physically in the class in a range of ways, for example through the use of scissors, malleable materials and dressing up clothes. Children are on track to reach well above the national expectations by the time they leave Reception.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

45. Only a short time was spent observing creative activities during the inspection but children in the Nursery and Reception classes have many opportunities in their daily activities to develop their creative skills and **provision in this area of learning is at least satisfactory**. Children make sweets for Diwali, pancakes for Shrove Tuesday and enjoy interpreting music in their dance lessons. They paint with confidence and some attain above average standards in painting. They learn a number of different artistic techniques, such as marbling, potato printing and the use of chalk and fabric for collages. They enjoy threading beads and different materials to make Christmas decorations. Children in both classes achieve satisfactorily and are on track to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception Year.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **unsatisfactory** in Years 1 and 2 and is **satisfactory** overall in Years 3 to 6. Overall, it is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils are confident communicators and performers.
- Reading books for pupils of average and above average ability are often too easy for them.
- Joined handwriting is not taught early enough and is not modelled by teachers.
- Work is not sufficiently matched to the national expectations for different year groups.
- Data from assessments and tests is not used effectively to plan challenging work for different groups.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not know their own personal targets for English and what they need to do to improve.
- Specialist teaching of English in Year 5 and Year 6 is good and often very good.
- Most pupils with SEN achieve as well as they can.
- Literacy skills are very well promoted in the foundation subjects in Years 5 and 6.

#### Commentary

46. The 2003 test results show that standards in English have fallen at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. In Year 2 an average percentage of pupils reach Level 3 but there are too few pupils attaining the higher Level 2 grades (2b and 2a), and too many pupils are attaining at Level 1. In Year 6 too few pupils attain Level 4 and 5 in national tests. Standards have declined since the last inspection but the intake has changed and the numbers of pupils in the school have increased during this period. To accommodate the numbers of pupils now in a year group, Year 1 and Year 2 are taught in three separate mixed age classes, as are Year 3 and Year 4. Year 5 and Year 6 are taught in separate year groups. Pupils in the mixed age classes are grouped according to ability for most literacy lessons but the pupils of below average attainment in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4 are taught in mixed class groups. Too few pupils in the current Year 2 classes are achieving the expected National Curriculum levels to reverse the trend. This is because the data from tests is not used effectively to plan challenging targets for these pupils. Pupils in Year 6, however, are on course to reach standards in reading and writing in line with national expectations by the end of the year because of the success of the teaching strategies and targets currently being employed in Years 5 and 6.

47. Standards in speaking and listening are above average throughout the school. Pupils achieve well and become confident speakers from the Nursery onwards. This is because the adults throughout the school listen to children and encourage them to listen to each other. All pupils, including those that are less confident and those pupils with SEN, are encouraged to perform in front of an audience. There is no evidence to suggest that girls achieve less well than boys in any year group. Teachers have noted the relative shyness of girls in speaking, when compared with boys. This is addressed in the Year 1/2 classes, where teachers ensure that they encourage both boys and girls to make a full contribution when answering questions. By Year 6, pupils of all abilities converse with adults with maturity and self-confidence. Specialist teaching in Years 5 and 6 is very good and results in a rapid development in the ability of older pupils' ability to discuss literary styles and the work of particular authors.

48. Standards in reading are below the level expected nationally in Year 2 and in line with national expectation in Year 6. There is no obvious difference in the standards between boys and girls. Progress in reading is slow in Years 1 and 2 for pupils of average and slightly below average attainment. The situation is similar in Years 3 and 4. In Years 5 and 6, pupils make more rapid progress due to specialist teaching and the development of literacy skills through work in other

subjects. For example, in these classes pupils read texts to search for information in history and in religious education. Across the school, where pupils of average ability make insufficient progress in reading and attain less well than expected in national tests, it is because reading books are too easy for them and do not provide them with sufficiently challenging vocabulary. Older pupils with SEN do not always read books that have both a story appropriate for their age and suitably adapted vocabulary; the school is addressing this issue. Pupils are much less clear about their progress in reading than they are in their writing. This is because targets in reading are not clearly identified and shared with them.

49. Standards of writing are below national expectations in Year 2 and in line with national expectations in Year 6. Pupils, particularly those of average and slightly below average attainment, taught in mixed age classes in Years 1 and 2 do not make sufficient progress because expectations are not high enough and there is insufficient challenge in the tasks they are given. Although pupils of above average attainment achieve well in Year 2, too few pupils of average ability reach the higher Level 2 grades. The situation is similar in Years 3 and 4 for pupils that achieve just below national expectations. In some classes where teachers are good practitioners of the National Literacy Strategy they carefully match activities to pupils' different levels of attainment and plan separate tasks for mixed age classes. In these lessons pupils make good progress. Where teaching is satisfactory, it is because the skills that need to be taught for the separate age groups are not clearly defined in teachers' planning.

50. In Years 5 and 6 where the curriculum is well matched to both the attainment and age group of the pupils, and teaching is challenging, most pupils make good or very good progress. In Year 6, pupils study 'Twelfth Night' and assess the actions of characters. They pose and answer questions related to what they have read, give pros and cons and use persuasive language.

51. Formal teaching of handwriting is not well established in the school. In lessons many pupils print and younger pupils use capital letters in the middle of words. There is no whole-school policy for teaching handwriting that begins in the Foundation Stage. Neither is there any expectation that adults in all classes will consistently model correctly joined letters, from Year 3, for pupils to copy.

52. Assessment of pupils' writing is well developed in Years 3 to 6. Pupils know what their targets are and that they will help them improve their writing. These are displayed in their books and pupils underline them as they achieve them. The school is aware that the good practice seen in sharing writing targets needs to be extended to Years 1 and 2 and to other subject areas.

53. The deputy headteacher was interviewed on behalf of the subject leader, who was absent during the inspection. The deputy head provides a good role model for other staff. However, there are weaknesses in the long-term co-ordination and management of the subject. The good progress made in the Foundation Stage is not maintained because planning between phases is underdeveloped: there is inconsistency in the implementation of a literacy strategy for each age group, and there is no whole-school policy for teaching handwriting.

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

54. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their oral language skills through class discussion. There are too few opportunities for partner and small group work. Reading skills are also developed through other subjects. Where this was done well, as in one Year 2 lesson, good teaching linked the reading of large texts to searching for information about Muslim festivals. This strategy was designed to improve pupils' reading techniques and the use of a contents page as well as their knowledge of other religions.

55. The opportunities pupils are given to develop writing skills across the curriculum is less consistent. In some classes and year groups this is done more effectively. For example, in Years 5 and 6, literacy is seen as an integral part of work in foundation subjects such as history and religious education and this clearly has an effect on standards.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

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

- Pupils achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and work hard.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT.

### **Commentary**

56. Standards measured by the national tests over the last five years have been variable, but overall they have been at least in line with the national averages. The results of the most recent tests show that standards in Year 2 were average. Standards in Year 6 were above average. Given pupils' standards on entry to the school and the standards they reached by the end of Year 2, the Year 6 pupils who were tested in 2003 made good progress and achieved well. This was the same for pupils of all abilities. Evidence from the inspection shows that pupils at least attain the standards expected nationally, and the current Year 6 pupils are attaining well.

57. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils work hard and enjoy learning mathematics. They do not waste time. Pupils of all abilities take pride in the quality of their written work. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and thoroughly.

58. In the lessons observed, the teachers had a secure command of the subject content. They were very well supported by the teaching assistants, who made a significant contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in the mixed Year 1/2 classes. Pupils were encouraged to work collaboratively and they responded to this challenge very well. The tasks that pupils were set interested them and maintained their attention. The Year 6 lesson seen was taught by a temporary teacher who had only known the pupils for a very short while. It is to the pupils' credit, and to his, that so much was achieved in the lesson. All the evidence suggests that this level of application to their work is typical of this Year 6 class.

59. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards were much the same then. Test results are carefully analysed to identify weaknesses, to track the progress of individuals and to set targets for them. The subject manager monitors planning and pupils' completed work, and provides good support for colleagues. Little direct observation of other colleagues' teaching is carried out. The subject's development planning does not sharply focus on how the school might raise standards. Not enough use is made of ICT in mathematics. It is for these reasons that leadership and management are satisfactory rather than good.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory.**

60. Pupils use their mathematical skills satisfactorily to support learning in other subjects, such as in science where they construct graphs and tables. The school has yet to actually plan the use of mathematics to link with other subjects in a structured way.



## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

### The main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards, by the end of Year 6, are above average and pupils achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Pupils enjoy science and apply themselves well to their work.
- The use of a room set aside for the subject makes a positive impact on standards.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT.

### Commentary

61. Evidence from the inspection shows that the standards attained throughout the school are above those expected nationally. Pupils of all abilities achieve well. This is especially true for the older pupils. Standards measured by the national tests for pupils in Year 6 over the last five years have consistently been above the national averages.

62. The quality of learning is very good overall. Very effective use is made of opportunities to use the subject expertise of a 'specialist' teacher. He teaches all pupils in Years 3 to 6, and oversees the learning in Years 1 and 2. Three of the four lessons taught by this teacher were judged to be very good. Time is used well, with pupils benefiting from long sessions where they are given many opportunities to initiate and shape their work when carrying out tests and experiments. One classroom is set aside exclusively to teaching science, which means that resources are readily available and pupils get a feeling that doing science is a little different, and rather special. As a result of these arrangements pupils of all abilities enjoy their science lessons. This particularly applies to pupils in Years 5 and 6, who are inquisitive about science and are very eager to learn.

63. Teachers have established clear routines and expectations, leading to very good standards of behaviour. The contribution made by teaching assistants is significant, especially in the mixed age Year 1/2 classes, where they work very effectively with small groups of pupils. Pupils work well together. Teachers' questioning is strong and engages pupils, making them think hard about the issues raised. Pupils of all abilities listen well in lessons. Their written work is well organised and presented. It is thoroughly marked, with the teacher commenting on pupils' literacy skills and their contribution to the class activities. Older pupils complete homework to a good standard. The key teacher plans very well, uses stimulating and challenging examples, and manages digressions from the subject content very well. In a lesson with Year 5, he questioned particular pupils carefully, assessing their knowledge and understanding. In the lesson with Year 6, the more able girls were achieving particularly well, taking great pride in their work. Pupils' independent writing is good: they set out their predictions, results and conclusions clearly.

64. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Although the high standards seen during the inspection were also seen at the last inspection, the judgement reflects the ongoing focus on raising standards, especially for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Insufficient use is made of ICT, but effective use is made of the local environmental area.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory** overall, and in Year 6 where specialist teaching occurs it is **good**.

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

- Year 6 pupils achieve very well in small groups and with specialist teaching.
- The resources now available for the subject are good.
- Pupils are enthusiastic in lessons and have very positive attitudes to the subject.
- Information and communication technology is not well used to support learning in other subjects.
- Pupils do not frequently use the computers in classrooms when studying other subjects.
- Assessment of pupils' knowledge and skills is underdeveloped.

### **Commentary**

65. The school has improved the provision of ICT since the last inspection. There has been major investment in hardware and software and there is now a well-equipped ICT suite with 14 computers. Staff have undergone training but there have been issues regarding its quality that have resulted in considerable loss of confidence amongst some staff. More recently, training has begun to remedy this and the school has a good quality plan for the development of the subject.

66. Standards in ICT in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils make good, and sometimes very good, progress in Year 6. Progress throughout the school overall is satisfactory: uneven in some classes and year groups. This is particularly evident where classroom computers are not used often enough for pupils to practise what they have learnt in the computer suite. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory, pupils make inadequate progress because some teaching staff lack confidence in the subject and do not have adequate support to help pupils achieve their tasks.

67. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good in Years 1 and 2. Where teaching is good, Year 2 pupils make good progress and use the Internet to locate pictures and import them into a Word document. In Years 3 to 6 teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good. Specialist teaching in Year 6 is very good and because of this the pupils make rapid progress. This results in standards that are securely in line with national expectation and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is stimulating and challenging and pupils work enthusiastically and learn very well. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory insufficient use is made of support staff and pupils wait too long for assistance. Where planning and teaching are very good, pupils naturally develop their numeracy skills through ICT and perceive the links between the subjects. The pupils in Year 6 use logic to work out a sensible control program for traffic lights. They work out the most suitable delay times and enter inputs and outputs.

68. The school is well placed to further improve standards as a result of the positive attitude of pupils to ICT, specialist teaching and the developments identified in strategic planning. There are subject plans for the purchase of new resources, such as interactive whiteboards, and for further training for staff. This, combined with the results of a survey to identify and assess pupils' home experiences with computers in order to make any necessary changes to the curriculum, should help to raise standards.

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

69. The integration of ICT across the curriculum is not adequately planned. In many classrooms computers are not switched on and pupils do not use them regularly enough in other subjects. Teachers are beginning to use laptop computers for planning their own work as they gain confidence in the use of them. This helps them not only to work more effectively in their administrative tasks but further develops their understanding of the technology.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

70. Geography was sampled during the inspection. From the information gathered, it can be seen that the programme of study covers all National Curriculum requirements. Overall, the pupils' work in geography is of a satisfactory standard and meets National Curriculum expectations. Geography was not being taught at the time of the inspection but scrutiny of pupils' work suggests that teaching is at least satisfactory. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a fairly good idea of how they can improve their work as a result of teachers' comments and suggestions, but in most other classes teachers do not consistently inform pupils of their progress. In Years 5 and 6 work is very well presented, although much of the handwriting is not joined.

71. There are good resources, which are used well to support learning. Pupils go on residential visits in Years 2 and 6, which also contributes much to the curriculum and to pupils' understanding and interest in the subject.

### History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- History is well taught in Years 5 and 6.
- There is a good range of good quality resources.
- There is too much reliance on worksheets in Years 1 to 4.
- There are too few opportunities given for pupils to express their ideas freely through writing.

### Commentary

72. Teaching is satisfactory overall in history and in some classes it is good. As a result, standards are broadly in line with those nationally expected at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In Year 5, standards are above national expectations and pupils achieve well. There is no difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

73. Where teaching is good, work in history also promotes learning in literacy. In one lesson on Ancient Egyptians pupils made very good progress in searching a text for information. Teachers ensure that most pupils make satisfactory progress. Worksheets are of good quality and are effectively used for lower ability pupils to reduce the amount these pupils need to write. There is too much reliance on them in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 and 4 for pupils of average and above average ability. Pupils are given too few opportunities to develop their writing skills through the subject.

74. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 know how to improve their work as a result of teachers' comments and suggestions but in most other classes teachers do not consistently inform pupils of their progress. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils present their work very well, although much of the handwriting is not joined.

75. Resources are good and, when these are used effectively to stimulate pupils' imagination, pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge of a period. For example, Year 2 pupils dressed in clothes similar to those worn in 1666 and this helped them to understand how different life would have been then.

76. Cross-curricular links between history and geography are used effectively when pupils compare Ancient and modern Greece and compare modern Greece with Wolverhampton. However, the use of computers to extend pupils' learning in both subjects is insufficiently well established in all classes. Some pupils are beginning to use the Internet to search for information on historical figures and in geography they find information on climate. However, this practice is not consistent.

77. The leadership of both history and geography is satisfactory. The content of the courses matches the requirements of the National Curriculum. Although there has been no formal monitoring of teaching and assessment of the subjects to ensure quality or raise standards, a number of assessment methods are currently being trialled in Years 3 to 6.

## **Religious education**

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

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

- Pupils know a good range of stories from the Bible and from other faiths.
- There is very good support from the link governor.
- Pupils have good opportunities to visit places of worship.
- Pupils do not always develop their literacy skills through religious education.
- Assessment in the subject is underdeveloped.

## **Commentary**

78. The subject has a suitable scheme of work that meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The subject is well resourced with suitable multi-faith artefacts and this helps pupils understand the way in which people worship. The link governor is knowledgeable in the subject and supports the subject very well by visiting the school regularly to discuss any issues and look at pupils' work. The subject is taught over a two-year cycle to avoid repetition, but different tasks or skills are not clearly identified for mixed age classes in order to ensure progression.

79. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected nationally and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils learn about the faiths represented in the school as well as Christianity and this results in good inclusion of Hindu pupils. The pupils are knowledgeable and accepting of the beliefs of others. Stories from a range of faiths told in the daily act of collective worship combined with the strong spiritual ethos of the school makes a very good contribution to the religious education of pupils. During discussion, Year 2 pupils clearly demonstrated their good knowledge of Christianity and other systems of belief. They named and described festivals, explained the temptation and fall of Adam and Eve and confidently talked about 'Chinese believing'. Where teaching was good, pupils in Years 1 and Year 2 achieved well because they worked at the correct level of challenge. This was seen when pupils thought carefully about the reasons for gift giving at Christmas. They explained that giving is more important than receiving and linked this to the visit to the stable from the Wise Men. Occasionally, however, pupils of different ages in mixed age classes are not given separate tasks to ensure adequate challenge and progression. There is also an over emphasis on completing worksheets particularly in Year 3 and Year 4 and pupils have insufficient opportunity to write for themselves. Where good cross-curricular planning occurs, pupils use their literacy lesson to find information, for example, about the Muslim Festival of Id-ul-Fitr. However, teachers in some classes do not consistently develop pupils' literacy skills through this subject.

80. The pupils make a number of visits to local places of worship and visit a Hindu temple. The pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 also attend a multi-faith and inter-denominational service at the local Methodist Church and this contributes well to their understanding of and respect for the beliefs of others, as well as developing their awareness of cultural diversity.

81. The co-ordinator, who has been in post for many years, is very committed to the subject. The locally Agreed Syllabus is currently being renewed and there have been some delays to its publication. The co-ordinator has attended network meetings in the past but has not recently received any advice on interim arrangement. There has been no training for staff or co-ordinator monitoring of pupils' work this year, as the subject has not been a school priority. The school is aware that when the subject is reviewed, more strategic planning for monitoring and assessment will need to be undertaken and a separate skills curriculum developed for each age group in mixed age classes.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

### Art and design, design and technology and music

82. These subjects were not a focus of the inspection and were only sampled. Standards in **art and design** are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. The school has introduced sketchbooks, which are mainly used for drawing: an aspect which the school has identified as an area for development. However, there is little evidence in these books of the progressive teaching of skills, which pupils can then use in their pictures. From the evidence on display it can be seen that pupils are introduced to a good range of artists and they have learned about their techniques. The progressive development of skills is not apparent overall and this is an area for development. Through art the pupils learn about different cultures, for example Rangoli patterns and they link their work to projects such as the Ancient Greeks. However, not enough care is taken, when art is linked to topics, to develop art and design skills at the same time as illustrating a topic. There was a small amount of evidence of three-dimensional work but not of drafting and redrafting work. These are further areas for development. No lesson in art was observed.

83. From the work displayed in **design and technology** standards are judged to be average and the subject is taught well. Pupils plan, design and, when their work is finished, evaluate it. They have made a number of products by Year 6. Clay pots, purses and a model fairground ride have all been completed and the sewing of the purses is sometimes better than usually seen. The standard of these products, overall, is satisfactory but with a greater emphasis placed on evaluation at an earlier stage, both with the teacher and with their peers, higher standards could be reached. For example, one pupil commented on how she would like to have improved her product but no longer had time once it was finished. Potential higher attainers in this subject are not achieving as well as they could do, but the majority achieve satisfactorily. The school has gone some way to addressing the needs of the more able and pupils have taken part in a workshop on structures, where they worked with one another to build bridges. Pupils are also given opportunities to make food and to study the health and safety aspects of food technology.

84. No lesson was seen in **music** but the performing arts are strong in the school and pupils achieve well. Singing in assembly was well above average with the whole school able to sing tunefully, obviously having learned to hold the notes at the end of lines. This created a professional touch to a hymn practice. Pupils sing a range of different hymns showing how they could interpret different moods: for example, 'Peace, perfect peace' and 'Jubilee everyone'. The school brass band accompanies Monday assemblies and the 'resident school band' consisting of percussion accompanies daily. The school has recently started up an orchestra of violins, clarinets, flutes, recorders and tuned percussion. Pupils are beginning to take examinations and some have reached grade 2 in violin and grade 1 clarinet. The specialist co-ordinator assesses pupils' abilities well and opportunities to develop further musically are given as a result of this assessment. No class music lessons were observed during the inspection, but a rehearsal for the infant production provided an opportunity for a Year 2 boy to sing a solo confidently to an audience and all pupils performed well, with considerable confidence.

85. **Physical education** was also sampled during the inspection. Two full lessons were observed, one in dance in Year 6 and one in gymnastics with large apparatus in Years 1 and 2. Part of another gymnastics lesson in Years 1 and 2 was also observed. Teaching and learning in these lessons ranged from good to excellent. Standards ranged from above average to high. Overall they were above average and pupils achieved very well. This is an improvement on the last inspection. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 took a pride in their work and were keen to follow the teacher's demonstrations, starting and finishing their sequences on the apparatus well. In the Year 6 lesson, the pupils danced with energy and enthusiasm. The warm-up was led very well by the support assistant, in the class teacher's absence, and the main part of the lesson was led well by the temporary teacher. Pupils worked well in mixed gender groups, preparing and improving on a group dance. Boys and girls were equally uninhibited and keen to interpret the music and develop their dance. From the lessons observed and an examination of teachers' planning, the above average standards reached at the last inspection have been maintained. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, with the appointment of a specialist.

86. Provision in physical education is good. The profile of the subject is raised by the very effective use of a subject specialist who focuses on athletics in the summer, and gymnastics and dance in the autumn and spring. The skills of the subject specialist are used well to develop the expertise of teachers and teaching assistants, who take part in all lessons. The school makes good use of its links with other schools to enable pupils to participate in a wide range of competitive events including rounders, football, athletics and cross-country running. The local secondary school hosts the annual sports day for older pupils. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 benefit from opportunities to swim at the local baths. The majority are able to swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school. An outside agency is engaged to run the football club.

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

### **Personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE)**

87. The subject was sampled during the inspection. Provision for PSHE is **good** and meets statutory requirements. There is a good scheme of work, used by all teachers for their weekly lessons. There are two special weeks every year on PSHCE topics and good use is made of outside speakers. However, there is little evaluation of what has been learnt and no record of what has actually been taught. The subject is co-ordinated but not managed. The work done by the co-ordinator to produce a good scheme of work is effective, good resources are available and good contacts exist with outside speakers, but any monitoring is informal and records are minimal.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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