

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Hillstone Primary School**

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103361

Headteacher: Ms G. Sparrow

Lead inspector: Mr P. Martin

Dates of inspection: 24 – 28 November 2003

Inspection number: 256440

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of children:	3 – 11
Gender of children:	Mixed
Number on roll:	264
School address:	Hillstone Road Shard End Birmingham
Postcode:	B34 7PY
Telephone number:	0121 747 3573
Fax number:	0121 776 7077
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C. Daykin
Date of previous inspection:	28 June 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- Hillstone Primary School is a large urban primary school catering for 264 boys and girls between the ages of three and eleven years of age.
- Most children, just over 91 per cent, come from a white British background.
- Other children have a range of different ethnic backgrounds.
- No children are at an early stage of learning English.
- The percentage of children with special educational needs, about 20 per cent, is similar to the national average.
- The percentage of children having statements of special educational needs, about 2 per cent, is above the national average.
- The percentage of children who have free school meals, about 30 per cent, is above the national average.
- Children, on average, come from poor socio-economic backgrounds.
- Children's attainment on entry is well below average when they start school in the nursery.
- The number of children leaving and joining the school at other than the usual times last year was high.
- The school received a Schools' Achievement Award in 2003 for improved standards.
- The school is part of an Education Action Zone and takes part in the Excellence in Cities Initiative.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23262	Mr P. Martin	Lead inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education
9428	Mrs J. Butler	Lay inspector	
25074	Mrs J. Cox	Team inspector	Special educational needs, Foundation Stage, science, personal, social and health education
19709	Mrs J. Fisher	Team inspector	English as an additional language, English, geography, history, religious education

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education Limited  
102 Bath Road  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL53 7JX

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Children’s attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>12</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>33</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good and improving** school which provides **good** value for money. The school helps children to achieve well and reach satisfactory standards of attainment. Leadership and management are very good. This helps to ensure that standards are improving and that the quality of education is good.

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

- Children achieve well.
- Standards attained in mathematics and science are above average by the time children leave school at the end of Year 6.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is good.
- The school looks after the children in its care very well.
- The school ensures that all children have very good opportunities to learn.
- The good curriculum is enriched through effective links with the community.
- There is no secure outdoor play area for children in the reception class.
- There are some shortcomings about formal communication with parents and response to their concerns.
- Attendance is below average.
- There are no assessment procedures in religious education, art and design, design and technology or music.

There has been a **very good** degree of improvement since the previous inspection. The key issues of that report have been very successfully dealt with. There have been very good improvements in standards attained in mathematics and science and good improvements in those attained in English and information and communication technology. Lesson planning now includes good detail of how children with special educational needs will be supported. Liaison between the nursery and reception classes is now good. There is now a very good range of extra-curricular activities. However, although the governors' annual report to parents contains the required information, there are still some omissions in the prospectus.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

#### Year 6 results

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

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

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

Achievement is **good**. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is also **good**. Children attain the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception in creative development, physical development and personal, social and emotional development. They achieve well from well below average starting

points in communications, language and literacy, mathematical understanding and knowledge and understanding of the world. However, by the time they start school in Year 1, standards are below those expected in these areas of learning for children of that age. Children achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and, by the end of Year 2, many have reached the standards expected in reading, writing, mathematics and science. However, there is a relatively high number of children with special educational needs in these year groups and standards overall are below average. Children in Years 3 to 6 achieve well overall, and very well in mathematics and science. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 6, children attain average standards in English and above average standards in mathematics, science and personal, social and health education. Children with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. No children are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The few children from ethnic minority groups achieve as well as their classmates.

The school makes **good** provision for children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children show a good level of maturity and responsibility, particularly in Year 6. They very much enjoy being at school and this is reflected in their **good** attitudes and behaviour.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **good**. The quality of teaching is **good** throughout the school and this leads to **good** learning, resulting in a good level of achievement. The school provides a **good** range of curricular opportunities which are enriched by **very good** opportunities for enrichment. The interests of all children are at the heart of the school's work, and it provides **very good** care, guidance and support. The school has **satisfactory** links with parents. It has **good** links with the local community and benefits from **very good** links with other schools through its participation in an Education Action Zone. These links greatly benefit the quality of education provided and have a positive effect on children's achievement.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management of the school are **very good**.

The headteacher provides **very good, inspirational** leadership and clarity of purpose and high expectations that are shared by other members of staff. This results in a **very good** ethos in which the children's interests and their quality of learning are central to the school's work and purpose. Governance is **satisfactory**. However, the Governing Body does not meet statutory obligations in that the school's prospectus omits some required information. Governors have a **satisfactory** understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

### **PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Most parents are generally **pleased** with the school and the quality of experiences provided for their children. However, a few parents expressed concern that their children have experienced some degree of harassment from other children. The inspection team identified that although there have been isolated instances of such behaviour, the school has dealt with them effectively. Children themselves are **very happy** with the school. They feel they are treated fairly, that teachers help them to learn and that they enjoy coming to school.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- raise standards of attainment in reading, writing, mathematics and science at the end of Year 2;
- improve attendance;
- provide a secure outdoor play area for children in reception;

- improve assessment procedures in art and design, design and technology, music and religious education;
- improve communication with parents;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that the school's prospectus contains the required information.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN**

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

Boys and girls of all ability levels achieve **well**. Achievement is **good** in the nursery and reception classes. At the end of Year 2, children's attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is **below average**. By the end of Year 6, standards of attainment in mathematics and science are **above average**. Standards in English are **average**. Girls perform better than boys in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, although no significant differences were noted during the inspection. Children from different ethnic groups achieve as well as their classmates.

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

- The school's average points scores in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 have been improving at a greater rate than nationally.
- The school's average points scores in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 have been improving at a greater rate than nationally.
- Children achieve very well in mathematics and science and children reach above average standards in these subjects by the time they leave school.
- Children who have special educational needs achieve well in relation to their starting points.
- Children from different ethnic groups achieve as well as their classmates.
- Girls perform better than boys in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, although no significant differences were noted during the inspection.

#### **Commentary**

##### **Foundation Stage**

1. When children start in the nursery and reception classes their experiences of learning are well below those for the age group. Children achieve well because of the good quality of education they receive. By the time they start school in Year 1, they have reached the early learning goals<sup>1</sup> in personal, social and emotional development, creative development and physical development. However, the results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in 2003 show that children's performance was:
  - below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics;
  - above average for similar schools in writing and mathematics;
  - similar to the average for similar schools in reading.

##### **Key Stage 1**

2. The improvement in the school's average points score for reading, writing and mathematics has been greater than the national trend. In 2003, girls did better than boys in reading, writing and mathematics. This reflects the trend over the last three years. Teachers judged that the percentage of children reaching the expected level in science was well below the national

---

<sup>1</sup> Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning, for example, in language and literacy children should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

average and that for similar schools. The results of the tests show a faster increase than that seen nationally. This stems from the good quality of education that children receive. Inspection findings show that standards of attainment are below those expected in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Although many children do reach the expected standards, there are a number of children with special educational needs who do not.

***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores<sup>2</sup> in 2003***

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.9 (14.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.1 (13.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.0 (14.4)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 41 children in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

**Key Stage 2**

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.5 (26.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.9 (27.9)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.6 (30.2)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 41 children in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. Results of the National Curriculum tests for Year 6 children in 2003 show that children's performance was:
  - below the national average in English;
  - similar to the national average in mathematics and science;
  - average for similar schools in writing and mathematics;
  - above average in English when compared with schools with similar prior attainment;
  - well above average in mathematics and science when compared with schools with similar prior attainment.
4. The school's average points scores have been improving at a greater rate than nationally because of the good quality of education resulting from very good leadership and management.
5. Inspection findings are that standards attained are average for English and above average in mathematics and science. This is because the present Year 6 children are taught well and have very positive attitudes to learning. These results reflect good levels of achievement because children start school in the nursery and reception classes with well below average experiences of learning. Standards in information and communication technology, art and design, geography and physical education are similar to what they should be by the time children leave school at the age of eleven.

<sup>2</sup> The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by all of their children with the grades attained by children in another school as well as an average for all schools nationally. The National Curriculum level attained by each pupil, for example, in mathematics, is given a score. A Level 1 = 9 points, a Level 2 = 15 points, Level 3 = 21 points and so on. Therefore, the average points score in mathematics is worked out by adding up all of the points based on the level attained by children and then dividing by the number of children who took the test. This means that a school whose average points score for mathematics in the end of Year 2 national tests is greater than 15.0 is one whose children are performing above that expected for their age. The average points score for Level 4, the nationally expected level for children at the end of Year 6 is 27.

6. Children with special educational needs have individual education plans with clear and achievable targets. They make good progress towards achieving their targets. Although their standards are below the national expectation in most subjects, they achieve well in relation to their prior attainment because of highly effective support.

### **Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Children have **good** attitudes to school. They behave **well**, both at work and at play. Their personal development is **good**. Attendance is **unsatisfactory but improving** and punctuality is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school promotes the development of the whole child very successfully, by creating an ethos in which individuals feel valued, develop their self-esteem, and learn to care for the needs of others.
- Attitudes to school are good. Children say they love school, both for learning and social opportunities.
- Behaviour is good. Children work well together and playtimes are harmonious.
- Personal development is good, especially children's moral and social awareness.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory and below that expected for primary schools, but is improving each year.
- Punctuality is satisfactory, but for a few children frequent late arrival means that they miss the vital teaching points which shape the following lesson.

### **Commentary**

7. This aspect is a strength of the school and its good outcomes underpin children's learning and help them become responsible young people with a good level of maturity for their age. Parents value the fact that their children like coming to school and that school helps them to become mature and responsible. The children themselves show a great deal of pride and affection for their school, and praise the opportunities they have to learn and to have fun. Children are eager to learn and respond well in lessons. They are often inspired to give of their very best and try hard to succeed. They are fascinated by new discoveries and enjoy investigations in a range of subjects. For example, children in a Year 2 class excitedly tested the qualities of materials that could be pushed or pulled to change their shape and recorded their results accurately. In a different subject, Year 3 children in a literacy lesson diligently investigated the use of different types of print face in non-fiction texts in order to understand how information is set out.
8. Behaviour is good both in lessons, where children collaborate well, and at playtimes. The great majority of children conduct themselves in a sensible, considerate fashion, showing respect for people and property. From the time they first start school, they respond well to the wide variety of strategies used by the teachers and support staff to promote self-control and obedience by highlighting good role models. Children are proud of the rewards they achieve, and understand the need for sanctions when problems occur. The few children with behavioural difficulties are very well supported and are thus included well in lessons without disruption to learning. The school will not tolerate violent or aggressive behaviour and has used fixed-term exclusions on a few occasions for fully justified reasons. In the playground, 'playtime friends' and adult

supervisors ensure that play is harmonious and happy and encourage children to remember the school motto 'Don't call names, play games'. Boys and girls, and children from different ethnic groups play and work together well.

9. Children's personal development is good overall, which represents considerable strides made by some children in developing their self-esteem and confidence. Children are practical, sensible and polite. They demonstrate a mature and responsible approach to school life and those in the upper juniors carry out their various duties with considerable autonomy and reliability. This is particularly well illustrated by the children's supervision of the indoor quiet area at lunchtime. Children with special educational needs have positive attitudes to work and learning. The school ensures they take pride in their achievements.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of children*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of children on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	207	3	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	9	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	0	0

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

10. The school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its children is good. It pervades all of school life and is greatly enriched by the special opportunities presented on residential visits. Assemblies are used well to give children time to reflect on the qualities which make them unique, and to provide inspirational examples from the rest of the world, and from history. A significant minority of children with low self-esteem and inadequate social skills benefit greatly from the confidence building, teamwork exercises provided through schemes like the TOAD (The Outdoors Against Drugs) course, and the SPARKS (Socially Proactive Assertive Resilient Kids) group. The school also provides support groups to resolve conflicts when required, like the 'Circle of Friends' work with girls in Year 4. A very real strength of the school is the wealth of rewards and recognition for good work and personal achievements, however small, which help children to develop their sense of pride and self-worth, as well as to share in celebration of the successes of others.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.5	School data:	0.2
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.*

11. Attendance is below the level expected for primary schools and is unsatisfactory, although it is improving at a good rate. The school uses a very good range of strategies to promote good attendance, and has been successful in reducing unauthorised absence to less than the national average. Unfavourable social circumstances and ill health appear to contribute to the absence figures and the school actively encourages parents to understand the value of continuous education.
12. Punctuality is satisfactory, with the majority of children adhering to the slogan 'Be on time at quarter to nine'. However, a few children habitually arrive several minutes after the start of lessons in the morning. This has a serious effect on their progress because, having missed the teaching points in the first part of the lesson, they find difficulty in completing the tasks set.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The quality of teaching and learning, and of the curriculum, is **good**. Assessment is **satisfactory**. The school cares for, guides and supports children **very well**. It has satisfactory links with parents and **very good** partnerships with other schools and colleges.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching provided by the school is **good** throughout the school, leading to a **good** quality of learning for all children. The use of assessment procedures to raise standards of attainment and improve children's achievements is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good, leading to good quality of learning.
- Teaching is good in English, mathematics and science.
- Teachers have a good command of the subjects they teach.
- They plan lessons that engage children's interest and help them to achieve well.
- Support assistants offer very good support.
- Teachers have high expectations for children's learning and behaviour.
- Teaching makes a very good contribution to children's social development.
- Assessment procedures are used well in English and mathematics.
- There are no assessment procedures in art and design, design and technology, music and religious education.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 53 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (3.8%)	22 (41.5%)	24 (45.3%)	5 (9.4%)	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.*

### Commentary

13. A number of key features contribute to the good quality of teaching. The leadership and management of teaching have a very good effect on the quality of both teaching and learning. The school has considered what works well and what have been the main barriers to learning and has introduced strategies to build on strengths and overcome weaknesses. For example, class groupings make very good use of teachers and support assistants to place effective support where it is needed. The arrangement whereby children with special educational needs in Years 1 and 2 and Years 5 and 6 are taught in their own classes benefits these children's learning. The children are supported well by teachers and classroom assistants. In the mixed Years 1 and 2 class, for example, children clearly benefited from the good adult to children ratios when learning about shape. Year 6 children in the mixed Years 5 and 6 class join the Year 6 class when ready. This means that they benefit from the teaching that this class receives in preparation for the National Curriculum tests. This helps to raise standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
14. Teachers have a very good understanding of the subjects they teach and match this understanding well to children's interests and abilities so that children learn well. They have high expectations that children will learn well and behave. In an excellent lesson, the teacher led a discussion of Oberon's speech from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that interested all children. The teacher understood the meaning and context of the speech well and exploited many different opportunities, including the use of information and communication technology, to encourage and include all children in the discussion. Consequently, children were fully involved and made excellent progress in the lesson. Children with special educational needs are well supported in class, which ensures good achievement. Their targets are clear and relevant and they are consulted as to how much progress they are making. Regular reviews ensure that the assessment of children's achievement is systematic and the special educational needs co-ordinator keeps meticulous records of children's achievement.
15. There is a very good level of support from support assistants. They also have a good understanding of what is being taught and how children learn. This leads to effective support for children in their groups. For example, the support assistants repeat and rephrase questions to ensure understanding. During children's individual and group work, the support assistants discuss and guide children's work, thus helping them to succeed. In a mixed Years 1 and 2 science lesson, the support assistants were effective in holding children's attention and reinforcing teaching points made during the introductory session on pushes and pulls. This helped to ensure that all children learned well.
16. Because teachers plan and teach interesting lessons and children are very keen to learn, there are very few problems of misbehaviour or lapses of attention. Children know that they are expected to behave well, and teachers deal with the very few instances that occur quickly and sensitively, with a minimum of fuss. This helps to ensure that children continue to learn throughout the lesson. Teachers give children good opportunities to work together, for example sharing the preparation of multimedia presentations or taking part in mathematics games. Children respond well to these opportunities which has a positive impact on their social development. In a very good art lesson, the teacher worked hard to overcome the lack of self-esteem that some children displayed, for example, expecting that there 'would be a disaster' during the lesson. Because of the teacher's encouragement and very good use of praise, these children were delighted by the flower pictures they successfully completed.
17. Assessment is used well to respond to individual needs in English and mathematics. Assessment and its use are satisfactory in other subjects, except in art and design, design and technology, music and religious education. The system has evolved well since the previous

inspection. The school has recognised the need to extend this good practice to religious education, art and design, design and technology and music where there is no assessment, so insufficient information about children's progress to guide planning. Teachers and teaching assistants have detailed knowledge of the needs of children with special educational needs, particularly in relation to literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers use this information well to match work to children's ability. This helps children take a full part in lessons. Teachers use marking satisfactorily. Some teachers make good use of marking to inform children of their areas for improvement and how well they have done. However, this practice is inconsistent and others do not provide enough of this sort of guidance.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides its children with a **good** range of curricular opportunities. The curriculum includes **very good** opportunities for enrichment. The **good** quality of accommodation and resources meet the needs of the curriculum well.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The planned curriculum successfully meets the needs of all pupils, irrespective of gender, background, ethnicity or prior attainment.
  - The school provides a very interesting and varied programme of activities outside normal school hours.
  - Teachers and support staff have good qualifications and experience and make a significant contribution to the success of the curriculum.
  - The accommodation is safe, attractive and adequately resourced.
  - There is no secure outdoor play area for children in the reception class.
18. The curriculum provides a broad range of worthwhile activities that successfully cater for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of all children. Children with special educational needs receive a good curriculum, which is skilfully adapted by the special educational needs co-ordinator and all staff to meet particular needs. Subject leaders effectively evaluate the curriculum to assess its impact on children's learning. As a result, the school is currently adapting the curriculum to make it even more relevant to children's different learning needs. The school has usefully canvassed children's views and considered these when planning the new curriculum. All the areas for improvement in the curriculum noted at the time of the last inspection have been fully addressed.
19. All staff work very hard to provide a very interesting and stimulating range of sporting, academic and craft activities, to enrich the curriculum provision. For instance, every child from Year 1 to Year 6 has an opportunity to join a club and all the junior children have the chance to participate in residential visits. Older children really appreciate the very good extra-curricular provision and speak enthusiastically about the dedication and commitment of the staff. Year 6 children feel that the extra clubs and visits help them to become more independent and that they learn how to work as a team. The extra-curricular activities make a significant contribution to children's social and moral development and raise their self-esteem and confidence. The school successfully achieves its target to 'Inspire, Care, and Educate'.
20. The accommodation is very spacious and provides a bright, attractively presented learning environment. The school is set in large grounds which enhance provision for physical education. The school is in the process of constructing an exciting 'Outdoor Classroom' which will support the whole curriculum. The school has identified the need to create a secure

outdoor play area for the reception children. The most valued and valuable resources in the school are the dedicated and highly committed teaching and support staff who work tirelessly to provide a varied and stimulating curriculum for all children. Because of their efforts in skilfully adapting and teaching the curriculum all children achieve well.

### Care, guidance and support

Procedures to ensure children's welfare, health and safety are **very good**. Support and guidance for personal and academic development are **very good**. The involvement of children in school life through considering their views is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- This is a very caring school where teachers and all support staff are dedicated to the well-being and best interests of the children.
- Procedures to ensure the health, safety, care and protection of children are very good.
- Children have very good relationships with the adults in school with whom they have the most contact.
- Teachers know their children well and provide very good guidance to assist them in their personal and academic development, whatever their ability.
- Identification and careful monitoring of problems are combined with a wide range of support strategies to give every child a chance to reach their potential.
- Children are encouraged to take an active part in decision-making and their views are considered.
- However, the school council is not yet fully effective, and it lacks a formal recognition of time for class debate.

### Commentary

21. The school places the welfare of all its children at the very heart of its work. Welfare, health and safety procedures are very good overall, and demonstrate the school's determined approach to provide for the needs of every individual, however diverse. School policy is adhered to with vigilance and children feel confident and secure in the knowledge that their needs will be met. However, parents are not always made fully aware of the outcomes.
22. Child protection procedures are comprehensive and in line with local arrangements. Children have very good, trusting and respectful relationships with the adults who work with them. The school provides children who have special educational needs with carefully considered support and guidance.
23. The induction arrangements are very good into the Foundation Stage, and include home visits for nursery children. Children who arrive further up the school settle quickly and are made to feel at home. The breakfast club is very beneficial in establishing a family atmosphere in school, as well as ensuring a healthy start to the day.
24. The good achievements made by children are supported by their access to well-informed guidance which is based on careful monitoring of individual progress. As a result, children, especially in the juniors, are well aware of how they are getting on and what they need to do to improve. This is especially true in English, mathematics and science. Problems, especially concerning behavioural difficulties and low self-esteem, are tackled through a wide range of support strategies to give all children very good opportunities to succeed.



25. Children are encouraged to take an active part in decision-making and their views are considered. The school council presents itself as a fledgling democracy but lacks a formal recognition of time for class debate. Children do feel they are listened to, however, and the number of responsibilities and autonomy given to members of Year 6 is good. Children are also encouraged to help each other solve conflicts and they have a mature and practical view of school society.

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

Links with parents are **satisfactory**, with some good features, particularly the family learning events. Links with the community are **good**. There are **very good** links with other schools and colleges, particularly through the Education Action Zone.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a wide variety of initiatives designed to promote parents' participation in educational support.
- There is good informal communication with parents and frequent newsletters.
- Governors' communication with parents requires improvement.
- The school does not yet have the confidence of all parents.
- The Education Action Zone brings many benefits to the school, including staff training and funding for special initiatives.
- The good links with the community and beyond provide a rich curriculum and many extra-curricular opportunities for the children.

### **Commentary**

26. From the first contacts made with the families of nursery children, the school works hard to involve parents and support them in the shared education of their children. Whilst satisfactory overall, links with parents have strengths in the welcome with which parents are received and the level of support parents and carers give to special events like the recent family learning morning in the reception class. Parents most value the way their children settle in and make good progress at this school, the high expectations of the staff and the good teaching. However, a minority of parents are ill at ease regarding incidences of bullying or violent behaviour, do not feel the school seeks their views sufficiently, and would like more information about their child's progress.
27. The inspection found that incidences of bullying are very rare and such incidences are successfully dealt with. Children themselves reported a happy atmosphere in the school. However, when problems do occur, the school is not always successful in conveying the success of its strategies to the parents concerned. Weekly newsletters and invitations to the weekly special assemblies give parents a good opportunity to keep up with children's successes and school events.
28. Formal communication with parents requires improvement, both in reports from the governors, and the detail provided in the prospectus. Annual children's progress reports meet legal requirements and give good detail about the skills acquired, particularly in English and mathematics, but do not give parents any indication about how well their child is getting on compared with national expectations. They also miss the opportunity to share targets for improvement with parents. The school meets its obligations to parents of children with special

educational needs well. These parents are invited to meetings to discuss the achievements of their children and the school expects parents and children to contribute to children's individual education plans.

29. Good links with the community benefit children's quality of learning. The school makes use of a good number of initiatives provided in partnership with other agencies that help to support and guide children and work against negative aspects of their environment. For example, the TOAD (The Outdoors Against Drugs) project helps children in Year 5 develop their team-working skills and self-esteem in order to deal with the pressures of the outside world. The curriculum is enriched by links with local artists and performers, including the current initiative with the Birmingham Royal Ballet. Residential trips broaden children's horizons well. Community volunteers, like those from the airport, help to provide more support by hearing reading in school. The school also provides community support by accommodating the playgroup and by running occasional courses, for instance, in computer skills.
30. Links with other schools and colleges, through the Education Action Zone, are very good and make a significant contribution to the strategies employed by the school to produce good achievement. There is a very good range of transfer activities and procedures to ensure children's smooth transit to the secondary school to which most children will transfer. The Education Action Zone co-ordinates links with other schools well. Shared funding provided through this organisation helps children to enjoy a wider range of special events, as well as providing effective staff development for teaching and support staff. Funding for the breakfast clubs, homework club and Easter revision clubs is well spent and produces measurable results in children's attainment in their academic and personal development.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**. The leadership by the headteacher and other senior staff is also **very good** and is a major factor in the school's success. Management is **very effective**. Governance is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership by the headteacher and other key staff has promoted good improvement.
- The headteacher generates a very good learning ethos.
- The school ensures that all children, irrespective of background, gender or ethnicity, have equal opportunities to succeed.
- Subject leaders check the school's provision and practices meticulously and have a good understanding of classroom effectiveness.
- The school is very well managed on a day-to-day basis.
- Under the chairman's enthusiastic guidance, the governing body has a sound understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school.
- The governors meet most of their statutory requirements except in the information provided in the school's prospectus.
- Educational priorities are supported through sound financial planning and specific grants received by the school are used very effectively.
- Management systems to check the quality of provision and the impact of new initiatives are consistent and rigorous.

### Commentary

31. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff have been successful in bringing about good improvement in the issues identified in the previous inspection A few are ongoing, mainly where there are implications for information to parents.
32. The headteacher has a high profile about the school. She leads in a thorough, perceptive manner, and she and other key staff generate an excellent atmosphere of calm in which staff and children know what is expected of them. Teachers and other staff are equally committed. They give individual support to every child. The school puts into practice its vision to provide well for all children whatever their ability, ethnic group or background. This is carried out in an atmosphere of genuine concern for each individual and children and parents appreciate this. The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. The co-ordinator is confident and experienced and has a very good understanding of children's needs. She provides a very good role model to other staff by her highly effecting teaching.
33. The headteacher has established effective management systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. These have had a significant impact on raising high standards from a very low level on entry to one of the most improved schools in the country. The school is making very good use of self-evaluation procedures to identify areas for improvement in each subject. Subject leaders do this very well, linking their findings to the school's overall school improvement plan, which has realistically prioritised targets, but does not indicate the cost of the innovations to be undertaken. Performance management is effective in focusing attention on raising achievement and identifying where professional development is needed. Subject leaders do this very well and link their findings effectively to an improved staff development plan. They make very effective use of planning.
34. The governing body, under the guidance of an enthusiastic, hard working chair, has built up a sound committee structure to support and develop the aims of the school. This has had a positive impact on keeping governors informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the school, as well as supporting raising standards. Governors promote the close relationship between the school and the community. They ask questions of the school and are beginning to challenge its thinking on various issues. Hence, the governing body has a sound working knowledge of the school's strengths and it knows where and when improvements are needed. It has worked hard to resolve the weaknesses found in the previous inspection, but has yet to meet its statutory requirements with regard to omissions in its school prospectus. This lacks information about parents' rights to withdraw children from religious education and collective worship.
35. Financial control is satisfactory. The budget is satisfactorily linked to strategic planning. The school benefits from the income generated by the Education Action Zone grant awarded to the school. There are perceptive contingency plans to deal with the projected shortfall for the current year in order to maintain the breadth of the curriculum and staffing. The headteacher and governors are very resourceful in seeking out additional funds.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	687,701
Total expenditure	711,759
Expenditure per pupil	2,429

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	26,260
Balance carried forward to next year	-24,058

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

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

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

36. Children's attainment is well below that of others of their age when they start in the nursery class. Good provision for children of all capabilities and backgrounds supports good achievement in both the nursery and the reception class. Teaching is consistently good and the Foundation Stage leader provides very good leadership. Major strengths in the provision are the way in which the teachers and the support staff work as a highly effective team in both the nursery and the reception class and in the detailed record keeping and assessments. There is very good liaison between the nursery and the reception class. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection when this liaison was identified as being a weakness. The one area for improvement is the lack of a secure outdoor area for children in the reception class. The school has identified this as an area for improvement in the school development plan.

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

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

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

- Children achieve very well because of the very good teaching and the high expectations set by staff.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Staff provide very good opportunities for children to develop this area of learning.
- Very good relationships have been established so that nursery and reception children feel confident and happy.

#### **Commentary**

37. Nursery children settle into school well and very good teaching promotes independence and co-operation. Staff clearly explain the need for behaviour, courtesy and collaboration and require children to demonstrate these qualities at all times. Children are supported very well in a safe, secure environment where they gain increasing confidence in exploring new and exciting activities.
38. Children in the reception class demonstrate good self-esteem and confidence. They already know the class routines well, settle to tasks with a minimum of fuss and behave sensibly. Children and staff clearly enjoy each other's company and the positive ethos supports all children. This is leading to very good achievement in emotional development, independence and behaviour. They learn to understand that people have different beliefs when they visit the nearby Catholic church. Children are in line to reach the expected goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff take every opportunity to develop the children's language skills and teaching is very good in the nursery and the reception class.
- In the reception class, many children recognise initial letters and sounds.

## **Commentary**

39. Children's achievement is very good because of very good teaching and learning. Children in the nursery are at a very early stage in terms of their language development and require considerable adult support to communicate. Nursery staff are extremely skilled at encouraging all children to speak by skilful questioning and sensitive listening. Children make very good progress because of the many opportunities they are given to talk and listen. The stimulating nursery environment provides children with something interesting to talk about. Children are learning to enjoy books and to listen carefully when the teacher reads stories.
40. Early indications are that the small number of higher attaining children in the reception class are on course to meet the expectations in this area of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage. However, although the majority of children make very good progress, they will not attain the expected level because they start school with difficulties in using and understanding language. Higher attaining children achieve very well because they can recall initial letter sounds, which they use to spell words such as 'cat'. Staff place considerable emphasis on the recognition of sounds to help children learn to read and write. All children are learning to write their names and higher attaining children are beginning to write short sentences.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff provide a wide range of activities to support learning, which ensures children achieve well.

## **Commentary**

41. Teaching and learning are good in the nursery and the reception class. Many of the nursery children do not recognise numbers or the names of colours and staff plan a range of interesting activities, which successfully promote children's mathematical understanding. In the nursery, children are encouraged to count in a variety of different situations. They are taught and encouraged to use mathematical language in all their activities and staff make learning fun by playing games such as 'Jump the Rainbow' which reinforce colour words and enhance children's personal and social skills.
42. In the reception class, children achieve well and are learning to count and the small number of higher attaining children can count to ten. However, the majority of children will not achieve the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1 despite the good teaching because of the low level at which they start school. Reception children are given many good opportunities to recognise patterns and shapes. Development of mathematical vocabulary is good because of the teacher taking every opportunity to reinforce this, for example, by the use of words such as 'long' and 'short'.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff plan a good range of interesting activities to stimulate children's curiosity and enhance their understanding.
- Staff make good use of the outdoor area to enhance the children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

### **Commentary**

43. Teaching and learning are good in the nursery and in the reception class, and children achieve well, although the majority of children will not attain the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. Teachers plan interesting activities that help to develop children's understanding of the world around them. For example, nursery children have planted pansies to improve the outdoor environment. Children achieve well because they are constantly encouraged to describe their experiences and observations, which means teachers can check if children understand what they are doing. Nursery and reception children have very good opportunities to use the computer and the listening centres and the majority of the reception children can complete a simple program on the computer. Nursery children are skilfully encouraged to remember and talk about events in their lives, although this is difficult for many children because of their poor language skills. Reception children are beginning to think about changes in their lives when they look at pictures of themselves as babies and think how they have changed.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Nursery children have access to a secure outdoor area, which means they have good opportunities to develop their physical skills.
- Staff are good role models and participate fully in physical activities, which enhances children's achievement.
- There is no secure outdoor area for reception children, although they do use the nursery outdoor facilities.

### **Commentary**

44. Teaching and learning are good. Children's physical development meets expectations for their age and they are on line to meet the expected goals by the end of the reception year. Nursery children are gaining confidence and becoming increasingly co-ordinated as they move around the classroom, the hall and the outdoor play area. This is because staff participate enthusiastically in all physical activities. Children are very happy and excited when they play 'What's the time Mr Wolf?' with the nursery staff.
45. Reception children move with control and co-ordination in the hall. They are confident and use their imagination well when acting the story of *The Gruffalo*. They work well with a partner and listen carefully to the teacher's clear instructions. Staff participate enthusiastically, acting

as very good role models for the children's movements, which accelerates attainment and achievement. The school is aware that the lack of an outdoor play area for reception children restricts certain aspects of their physical development. Most children in the nursery and the reception class are learning to control equipment such as pencils and crayons carefully and accurately.



## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good opportunities are provided for children to use their imagination in art, music, role-play and stories.

### **Commentary**

46. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. They are in line to attain the expected goals by the end of the reception year. Nursery children, because of their language difficulties, play quite quietly in the role-play area, without communicating with their classmates. Staff are very good at intervening in the children's play to encourage interactions. Nursery staff provide a very good range of exciting art activities and children are encouraged to choose their own art resources from a well-organised and accessible range. Reception staff build successfully on the good nursery provision and in role-play areas such as 'The Three Bears' Cottage' it is evident that many children are more confident and communicative as they act out the Goldilocks' story. Displays of children's artwork are colourful and indicate good achievement.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

#### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- All children achieve well, and have very positive attitudes to learning.
- Standards in English are beginning to improve because of the school's sharp focus on the acquirement of literacy skills.
- The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers emphasise basic literacy skills and use assessment information very well. Marking is positive but does not always inform children how to improve their work.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Targets are challenging and realistic for children's next steps in learning.
- Spelling, punctuation and handwriting skills are weak throughout the school and this has a negative impact on children's independent writing skills.

#### **Commentary**

47. Standards in English have improved since the previous inspection when standards were well below average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Now, inspection findings show that standards of attainment are below average at the end of Year 2 and similar to those expected at the end of Year 6. The work that the school has put into raising the low standards is having a good effect on attainment in Year 2 and very good effect in Year 6. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well from a very low level on entry to school. Achievement is good because of the good teaching and high expectations of work and behaviour of all children, and the

focus that the school has put on literacy during the last few years. Girls and boys, regardless of their ethnicity, make good progress and achieve well.

48. Children's speaking and listening skills are below average. The majority of children are confident speakers but not all listen attentively all the time. However, teachers focus on developing a wide range of vocabulary to help them explain themselves clearly and make their work interesting. The school provides many very good opportunities for children to develop their skills by discussing their work in pairs, groups and whole class sessions. There are some very good planned opportunities for children to discuss, practise and gain confidence in these skills, such as in the use of 'hot seating' when children engage in purposeful questioning and answering sessions, role play and productions.
49. Reading standards have improved because of the school's sharp focus on this aspect. Teachers have a very good knowledge of how to teach reading. Younger children are taught clear strategies to help them to read, and have a good knowledge of the alphabet. Group reading sessions are very well organised so that each group receives a good deal of attention, helping the children to make good progress. Consequently, children are interested in, and enjoy reading. Children achieve well and gain confidence in reading because of teachers' very good management of children and the calm atmosphere that results. Children read regularly to adults, including reading volunteers from a local business, which helps them to consolidate their skills. Teachers keep very good records of progress in reading and parents share in their children's learning. Research and comprehension skills are less well developed. A few Year 6 children show they are capable of high levels of analytical thought, for example, when reading challenging texts such as *The Return of the King*.
50. Standards in writing have improved, again because teachers have very good knowledge about how to teach this aspect. Teachers plan well so that work matches children's abilities. They have high expectations and offer children good opportunities to write in different styles, for example in science, history and religious education. Children in Years 1 and 2 are beginning to write simple sentences as they compile science booklets about babies, toys, and the Hindu festival of Diwali. Older children write accurate instructions on how to make bread, compose sensitive poems, such as '*the heaviness of sleep coming, sweet, safe, snuggled down, snoring*', present newspaper reports, and classify types of Roman foods. Whilst this accelerates their progress in writing, attention to spelling, punctuation and handwriting is not sufficiently evident in the writing that children do by themselves. However, teachers take every opportunity to extend children's vocabulary and, as a result, children are beginning to use a range of descriptive vocabulary to make their stories interesting. Standards of handwriting are satisfactory when children practise it, but the same standards when writing in other subjects are not as evident. Marking is encouraging and congratulates successes, but does not always offer enough help to improve. Children use information and communication technology well to present work such as poems, autobiographies and magazine pages attractively.
51. Children with special educational needs make good progress in their reading and writing skills. This is because the special educational needs co-ordinator makes very careful and detailed assessments of children's attainment in basic literacy skills. She then sets a detailed programme in place to provide structured progress and targets very good support from teaching assistants. In this way, some of the key barriers to children's learning are removed. This has a significant impact on the children's self-confidence and ability to study other areas of the curriculum.
52. Teaching is very good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan interesting lessons. They organise work so that it closely matches individual needs, using resources imaginatively

to motivate children to work hard. Teachers use their knowledge of children well in planning work for individuals and groups of children so that the work they do matches their abilities. Support assistants make very good contributions to lessons by supporting the least able. Teachers manage the children well and children's very good attitudes and behaviour contribute well to their learning. Teachers keep good records of children's progress and use the information well to identify what needs to be done to enhance learning.

### **Example of outstanding practice**

#### **This example illustrates an excellent English lesson**

In a Year 6 lesson of very high quality, children contributed very confidently, accurately and expressively when reading an extract of Titania's speech from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Children's subsequent analysis of the passage was remarkable, taking into consideration the difficult level of text. The commanding initial delivery by the teacher, the brisk pace, the probing questioning to challenge and assess all children, and the skilled use of an interactive whiteboard inspired all children to concentrate with avid interest and achieve to the highest level of which they were capable. Boys and girls entered into a purposeful discussion on the use of Shakespearean language, and explored vocabulary, such as '*boar with bristled hair*', '*gentle mortal*' and '*portion*', without a trace of self-consciousness. The end of the lesson was used to stimulate children's interest and curiosity to explore the works of William Shakespeare further and enrich their knowledge of our cultural heritage.

53. The subject is led and managed well. The school has effective systems to allow the subject leader to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. This allows the subject leader to gain a clear insight on the effectiveness of classroom practice. As a result, she has planned clear, useful action designed to improve standards. There has been a good degree of improvement since the previous inspection. Standards have improved considerably, and the two school libraries, recently refurbished and replenished, are now adequately stocked, and include a wide range of non-fiction books.

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

54. English writing skills are now used more frequently and effectively across the curriculum to extend learning in subjects such as history, geography or science. The use of these skills is now systematically planned. However, children do not always correctly use the skills in punctuation, handwriting and spelling when writing in other subjects. Teachers place a good emphasis on specific vocabulary in each subject, ensuring that children understand the relevant terminology. The standards the higher attaining children achieve in reading help their learning in other subjects but other children need intensive support.

### **Spanish**

55. The school has recently joined an initiative to introduce foreign language teaching and Year 3 children learn Spanish for half an hour each week. The teacher has a good understanding of how to teach children of this age and has planned a programme of oral activities that help to develop children's understanding well. The teacher structures lessons well, reminding children of what they have learned and introducing new vocabulary. She gives children many opportunities to use the words and phrases they know, for example greeting each other, asking each other's names and saying goodbye. Consequently, children learn well. They take part in these activities with obvious enjoyment that aids their learning. The provision of Spanish is a useful addition to children's experience and widens their cultural understanding.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the time children are eleven years of age but below average by the time, children are seven years of age.
- The quality of both teaching and learning is good.
- Achievement is very good.
- Children who have special educational needs are supported well.
- Leadership and management are good.
- There has been a very good degree of improvement since the last inspection.

### Commentary

56. Children achieve very well. They start school with standards that are well below average and reach above average standards by the time they leave school. Children with special educational needs achieve very well because of the support they receive. The very few children from ethnic minority groups achieve as well as their classmates. No children speak English as an additional language.
57. By the time children are seven years of age at the end of Year 2, standards of attainment are below the national average. This agrees with the school's results of the National Curriculum tests for children of this age. These results showed below average standards when compared with all schools nationally and above average for schools in similar contexts. Nonetheless, these findings show that children are achieving well in Years 1 and 2 because they start Year 1 at a low level of mathematical understanding. Because of good teaching and support for all children, including those with special educational needs, they make good progress. By the time children leave school at the age of eleven, most reach the expected standards and higher attaining children reach higher levels. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003, results were average when compared with all schools nationally. However, there are now more higher attaining Year 6 children, and children with special educational needs are well supported so standards of attainment are above average. The 2003 National Curriculum test results also show that the school's performance in mathematics was well above average when compared with similar schools. The results suggest that girls are doing better than boys in the tests. During the inspection, no significant differences in performance were noted.
58. Teaching is good and has some very good features. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and how it can be effectively taught. This means that planning is detailed and clearly shows how each ability group will be supported. The work that children do builds well on their prior knowledge. Teachers use a good range of strategies to aid learning. The periods of mental calculation at the beginning of lessons and the regular setting of mental maths tests have helped to improve their recall of mathematical facts, a weakness noted during the last inspection. The setting of classes in Years 1 and 2 and Years 5 and 6 means that children with special educational needs in these classes are supported well. In the mixed Years 1 and 2 class for children with special educational needs, the teacher uses support assistants very well so that all children learn well. In one lesson, the teacher encouraged the whole class to look at and talk about shapes such as triangles, circles, rectangles and squares using a good range of strategies to ensure understanding. Each group was very well supported in the group work that followed.

Teachers use resources well to make learning fun. In a Year 5 class the teacher provided mathematics games so children practised addition and subtraction of two-digit numbers enthusiastically, with great enjoyment. As a result, children have positive attitudes to mathematics. Children's good attitudes to the subject and to each other mean that they co-operate well during such lessons, taking turns and offering each other support. Teachers use information and communication technology well to support teaching and learning. The Year 6 teacher used the interactive whiteboard well when teaching children to find common multiples. Teachers' marking of children's work is satisfactory, an improvement since the last inspection. The school has a good range of programmes, part of the mathematics scheme, that help to provide useful practice in the mathematical theme being studied.

59. The good quality of both leadership and management has a positive impact on standards and the quality of education. The subject leader has a good understanding of the subject and uses good strategies to identify strengths and areas for development and to check how well mathematics is taught and learned. She uses the findings effectively to provide information and guidance to other teachers, leading to improving practice. The subject leader also helps to form useful links with parents, involving them in a project designed to help them support their children at home. The school has good assessment procedures which are used well in helping to ensure that children make good progress and in setting targets for children's learning. There has been a very good degree of improvement since the last inspection because:
- standards of attainment, which were well below average at the end of Year 6, are now above average;
  - standards of attainment, which were well below average at the end of Year 2, are now below average;
  - achievement is very good;
  - marking is now satisfactory;
  - assessment procedures help to check children's progress.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

60. Mathematics is used satisfactorily in teaching and learning in other subjects. Year 6 children accurately measure quantities of ingredients when making bread. The teacher uses a graph of the types and frequencies of deliberately started fires in the area as part of a mathematics lesson to make a good contribution to children's social development.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 6.
- Children achieve well because of the good teaching, which has a number of very good features, particularly in the juniors.
- Very good opportunities are provided for Year 6 children to devise and conduct their own experiments.
- Standards are below average at the end of Year 2 because of children's difficulties with language and comprehension.
- There is very good emphasis on the use of specific technical language in all classes.
- The co-ordinator provides very good leadership.

## Commentary

61. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection when standards in science at the end of Year 6 were judged to be well below average. The results of the unvalidated 2003 national test show that children attained above average in science when compared with children from similar schools. Year 2 children attain below the expected level in science because of their difficulties with language and comprehension. However, this is an improving picture because of staff changes and improved planning. Leadership has improved since the last inspection as the co-ordinator has increased opportunities to monitor teaching and learning and this, coupled with improved planning for investigative science, has raised children's attainment and achievement. Children demonstrate good knowledge across the curriculum and older children are very skilled at planning and undertaking investigations. Lessons are planned very well to give children many opportunities to discuss their ideas and apply their knowledge.
62. Teachers throughout the school capture children's interest in science by providing practical, enjoyable activities in lessons so that children are very keen to learn, behave well, and talk very enthusiastically about the science work they do. Teaching is of a very high standard in the junior classes as teachers have high expectations and expect older children to plan and conduct their own tests and experiments so that they develop good investigation skills. Teachers are confident in their own knowledge of science so that they give children accurate information and use scientific terminology well, so that children expand their own knowledge, understanding and vocabulary. Teachers encourage group and collaborative work so that children learn good social skills, get on very well together and work responsibly in lessons. Teaching and support staff work very hard to ensure that children with special educational needs are well supported, take a full part in lessons and achieve well.
63. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership. She has considerable scientific knowledge and expertise, which she uses very well in her own teaching and to guide other staff. Information and communication technology is used very well in science; for instance, the Year 6 teacher makes excellent use of the interactive whiteboard to introduce investigative work on forces. Teachers encourage children to make good use of literacy and numeracy skills when recording their science work. The school has developed good systems for checking how well children are progressing in science.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a good degree of improvement since the previous inspection.
- Information and communication technology is well led and managed.

## Commentary

64. By the ages of seven and eleven, children reach the expected standards of attainment. Achievement is satisfactory. There has been a good degree of improvement since the previous inspection. At that time, progress was unsatisfactory throughout the school and attainment was well below expectations at the end of Year 6. Because of good leadership and management, the quality of education has improved, resulting in improved standards. The subject leader has a good understanding of the subject and how it can be taught and used in other subjects, and thus provides a good role model for staff and children. He has worked with other teachers, providing useful advice and guidance and has firm, useful plans for

further development. The quality of teaching has improved and is satisfactory overall, with a number of good aspects. Teachers plan, prepare and teach lessons that are effective in helping children to learn the required skills, often, usefully, in the context of other subjects. In a soundly taught Year 3 lesson, the teacher taught children how to create bar charts of class characteristics, eye colour for example, to link with data handling in mathematics. The school uses resources well. Two classrooms benefit from interactive whiteboards. These are well used by the teachers concerned. In Year 2, the teacher uses this resource well when extending children's understanding of how to use paint programs to make pictures.

65. The school has a satisfactory range of resources, including laptop computers that can be used in different classrooms and a sound range of software for teaching in other subjects. This software includes a good range of programs to complement the school's mathematics scheme.

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

66. Teachers satisfactorily use information and communication technology across the curriculum. There are some good examples of this use of information and communication technology in teaching and learning in other subjects. In English, children use text and graphics to display poetry attractively. In mathematics, as well as the examples provided above, children use information and communication technology to display the results of science investigations. Year 6 children use the Internet confidently to research the life and times of John Lennon. In Year 6, the teacher uses the interactive whiteboard well in lessons in other subjects, for example, when teaching about common multiples, or when using a world map to locate historical events.

## **HUMANITIES**

67. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about the school's provision for humanities because provision for geography and religious education could not be evaluated. This is because the school does not teach geography, history and religious education every half term, and no geography or religious education teaching was taking place during the inspection. Therefore, the inspection team could not judge the provision for these two subjects. Judgements in these subjects are based on an examination of children's work, an examination of documentation and discussions with children and teachers. However, enough teaching and work in history were seen to make judgements on provision in that subject.

## **Geography**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have good attitudes to their work.
  - The curriculum is enriched by the work that children do on residential visits.
68. The satisfactory standards reached at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. Teachers build soundly on children's knowledge, skills and understanding. The required curriculum is adequately taught. Satisfactory procedures are in place for evaluating children's progress on a regular basis. However, marking does not always provide children with enough information about how to improve their work. In discussion, children demonstrated good attitudes towards the subject and that the curriculum is complemented through a wide range of visits. Children vividly recount their study of India, their seven-mile orienteering activity at Bockleton Study centre and their enjoyment in using a globe and atlas to locate countries and continents. Resources are adequate and accessible.

## **History**

Provision for history is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well because of good teaching, the classroom organisation which allows all children's needs to be met, and the quality of individual support they receive.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons and children have positive attitudes and enjoy taking part.
- Children's weak literacy skills adversely affect their writing and presentation skills.
- Visitors enhance the teaching of history.

### **Commentary**

69. Standards of work are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and all children achieve well throughout the school. Children make satisfactory progress in learning knowledge and skills in the subject, because of the satisfactory quality of teaching, the classroom organisation which reflects their needs, and intensive support from the support assistants. Children enjoy their work.
70. The quality of teaching is sound with some good features. The teachers' enthusiastic approach is reflected in lesson planning and organisation which is tailored to children's needs and children develop a sound understanding of events and customs in the past. Teachers provide satisfactory activities so that children develop enquiry skills as well as learning facts. For example, younger children are beginning to understand why things were different in the past, by researching into the effects of using coal and electricity to fuel old and modern trains. Teaching assistants provide effective support. Teachers make lessons interesting and, because of this, children are interested in lessons and behaviour is good. Year 6 children recalled with enthusiasm, their participation in role play in a lesson given by an inspirational visitor and their subsequent research into Ancient Rome.

### **Example of outstanding practice**

#### **This example illustrates an inspirational history lesson.**

Teaching in Year 6 was excellent because of the teacher's high level of subject knowledge and his ability to challenge, yet inspire children to achieve to the highest level of which they were capable. In their study of John Lennon, children were highly motivated through the integration of other subjects into the lesson. The skilled use of an interactive whiteboard to facilitate children's easy understanding of the relevant locations, the introduction of the background of the world events of the time to gain an appropriate perspective, and the taped background music of the song 'Imagine' compelled children to listen sensitively, and fully engage in the related intellectual, physical and creative activities throughout the lesson. An atmosphere of spirituality pervaded and one lower attaining child wrote. *'What I am really trying to say is to care for everyone and to stop the wars going on in the world,.....and for peace'*.

71. Although children recall facts well, they are less secure in recalling significant dates and a few are unsure of the chronological order of events. Children's written work is not always as neat as it could be because of their weak handwriting skills.

### **Religious education**

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



- Religious education contributes well to children’s personal development.
- There are no assessment procedures.

### **Commentary**

72. Analysis of teachers’ planning and documentation, talking to the co-ordinators and children, along with the recorded evidence of children’s work and displays, show that the satisfactory standards reached by children at the end of Year 6 have been maintained. Teachers follow the school’s guidelines for teaching and this ensures that the requirements of the religious education syllabus are satisfactorily met. Planning indicates that the school soundly develops children’s knowledge and understanding of specific faiths, predominately Christianity, also additionally the celebrations of other faiths including Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism. As well as finding out about different religions and considering different accounts of the gospels, children have good opportunities to reflect on their own feelings, values and experiences. Assemblies are well linked to these themes. Children’s attitudes are good. They recall, and offer views and opinions confidently about, the various religions they have studied. Children’s self-esteem is raised very effectively and moral and social skills are developed very well. The range of artefacts for teaching and learning is adequate. However, no assessment procedures are in place, so teachers do not have enough information about children’s progress.

### **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

73. The team is not able to make overall judgements about teaching, and therefore about provision, in art and design, design and technology or music, because not enough lessons were observed in these subjects. Judgements are based on the small amount of teaching seen, an examination of children’s work and teachers’ planning and on discussions with children and teachers. No physical education lessons for Years 1 and 2 children were observed.

### **Art and design**

It is not possible to make a judgement on provision in art and design as not enough teaching was seen in different classes.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good quality teaching provided by the support teacher.
- The lack of assessment procedures in art.

### **Commentary**

74. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching because not enough was seen throughout the school. However, it is clear from displays that children reach expected standards in art and design by the end of Years 2 and 6, and that they achieve satisfactorily. Displays of the portraits painted by children of all ages show satisfactory progression in the use of paint and in children’s observational abilities. Older children use sketchbooks well to develop aspects of this work, experimenting thoughtfully with, for example, the shapes of noses and proportionality of the face. Throughout the school, there are pleasing displays of competent examples of children’s work. These include work in a satisfactory range of media, such as chalk and paint. Children use paint programs on the computer to produce attractive patterns and designs.

75. Teaching and learning in art are enhanced by the work of the teacher who teaches the classes of those teachers who have been released to work on their management duties. The teacher uses this time well to develop children's skills and work on a good range of activities. In the two art lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good with some very good features. The teacher has a good command of the subject and how to teach it, developing a good range of skills as well as preparing and teaching interesting activities, so that children are very keen and work hard, enhancing their quality of learning.
76. The subject is led and managed well, although there are no assessment procedures in place. The subject leader has a good understanding of what is working well, for example the use of specialist teaching, and where there are weaknesses, for example in assessment. There has been a satisfactory degree of improvement since the previous inspection. Although the school has been unable to provide sinks in each classroom, the subject leader has established a well-organised art area. The art club for infant children is well attended and makes a useful additional contribution to their learning.

### **Design and technology**

It is not possible to make a judgement on provision.

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

- There are no assessment procedures in design and technology.

#### **Commentary**

77. There has been a satisfactory degree of improvement since the last inspection as the school has been following guidelines for teaching based on those recommended by the government. Children reach the expected standards at the ages of seven and eleven and achieve soundly. In Years 1 and 2, children plan and make a range of artefacts, including carefully planned and constructed Barnaby Bear puppets. Older children thoughtfully evaluate different kinds of bread. This activity makes a positive contribution to their cultural development because they taste bread from a range of cultures, including pitta and naan bread. Teachers develop this work well, as children write and follow recipes and evaluate their finished products and complete a recipe book using desktop publishing techniques.
78. The subject is well led and managed, although assessment procedures have not yet been introduced. The subject leader has carried out effective monitoring and evaluation of provision in the subject and identified the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. The Imagineering Club makes a positive contribution to children's learning.

### **Music**

It is not possible to make a judgement on provision in music as not enough teaching was seen.

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

- Children sing well in assembly.
- There are no assessment procedures in music.

## Commentary

79. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. It is not possible to make judgements on standards or attainment, although children sing tunefully and confidently during assembly. Year 6 children have been learning about the life and times of John Lennon and the teacher made useful links with history and literacy as children learned about the features of the words and music styles used in protest songs. The children demonstrated a good understanding of these. The lesson made a good contribution to children's spiritual and social development as they discuss those areas they would like to write their own songs about. Children showed a good level of concern about issues such as cruelty to children and using animals for testing drugs and cosmetics.
80. There are no assessment procedures in music that inform teachers about how children are making progress, but this has been identified as an area for development.

## Physical education

Provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good provision for outdoor and adventurous activities.
- The school has good accommodation for physical education.
- The curriculum is enriched by extra-curricular activities.

## Commentary

81. It is not possible to judge standards or achievement for children in Years 1 and 2 because no lessons were seen. By the time children are eleven years old, they reach standards similar to those expected from children of that age. The quality of teaching for children of this age is sound, with some good features, resulting in satisfactory achievement for all children. Teachers plan well. Lessons follow a clear structure during which children build on skills they have learnt earlier in the lesson, or in previous lessons. Teachers generally manage the class well, so that children's behaviour is good. This aids their learning and they make satisfactory progress. Teachers have a sound grasp of the skills needed and encourage the development of these well, for example, when building up dodging and invasion skills in tag rugby. Usually, teachers make sure that children maintain a satisfactory level of physical activity, ensuring a sound quality of learning. However, in a dance lesson, the teacher did not give children enough time or opportunities to devise or rehearse their own movements. Teachers make sure that lessons are interesting so children participate fully. In a very good country dancing lesson, both boys and girls enthusiastically enjoyed learning a new dance. Nonetheless, this lesson linked well with history as children developed routines based on Roman soldiers building roads. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for children to appraise their work during the lesson, limiting their chances to improve and emulate good practice. Because of a well-designed curriculum, children experience a good range of physical education activities. These include a range of outdoor and adventurous activities during residential visits and as part of the initiatives in which the school participates. Most children reach satisfactory standards in swimming by the time they are eleven years of age.
82. The subject is well led and managed. The subject leader has identified areas for development and supports teachers well both formally and informally. There are sound procedures for assessing children's progress. The school has two good-sized halls that can be used for physical

education, including one that has been specifically redesigned for this purpose. There are also extensive playing fields. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of sporting activities and teams successfully participate in competitions with other schools, for example hockey tournaments.

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

Although not enough lessons were seen to make a judgement on teaching, it is clear that provision is very good. Concern for children's personal, social and health education is central to the school's efforts to raise standards, and the very good work that it does in this area has a positive impact on children's personal, social and academic development. Children's needs are met through a wide range of activities that permeate school life, not just in lessons.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Personal, social and health education is recognised by the school as being central to children's development.
  - The school makes very good use of outside agencies to support teaching in the subject.
  - Each class has a timetabled personal, social and health education lesson every week.
  - Circle time is also used to discuss specific issues.
83. The school considers personal, social and health education to be a very important part of the curriculum and organises many interesting activities to extend work being covered in science and other subjects. For instance, Year 5 children have taken part in an adventure packed TOAD (The Outdoors Against Drugs) programme. The school also participates in Birmingham's citizenship weeks and organises visits to the Lord Mayor's parlour.
84. Although there is no policy, the programme for personal, social and health education is good and includes work on healthy eating, sex and personal safety. Teachers are very skilled at handling and discussing sensitive issues with their children. In lessons, teachers help children understand how to develop a safe and healthy life style, gain confidence and learn to interact with others. The outcomes of the provision are positive as seen in children's very good attitudes and relationships. These are positive features in helping to raise attainment and achievement.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

