

INSPECTION REPORT

MONKSPATH JUNIOR AND INFANT SCHOOL

Shirley, Solihull

LEA area: Solihull

Unique reference number: 104084

Headteacher: Wendy J Hutchinson

Lead inspector: Sean O'Toole

Dates of inspection: 15th – 18th September 2003

Inspection number: 256936

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	651
School address:	Farmhouse Way Shirley Solihull
Postcode:	B90 4EH
Telephone number:	0121 7052686
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K Hawkins
Date of previous inspection:	15 th June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in Shirley, a district of Solihull that is above average socio-economically. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is high (12.9%) and the main languages of those at an early stage of learning English are Japanese, Cantonese and Mandarin. There is a below average percentage of pupils with special educational needs including those with statements. School numbers have risen since the previous inspection. The large majority of pupils start school in the nursery and stay until Year 6. Their attainment on admission is above average. There have been several recent staff changes, including the headteacher. The school achieved Investors in People status two years ago.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20891	Sean O'Toole	Lead inspector	English as additional language; Information and communication technology; Art and design; Design and technology.
14178	Patricia Willman	Lay inspector	
20655	Beryl Rimmer	Team inspector	Special educational needs; Science; Geography; History.
23566	John Iles	Team inspector	English; Music; Physical education.
8867	Rebecca Russell	Team inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum; Mathematics; Religious education.

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school with several **very good** features. It is highly inclusive and parents and pupils hold it in high regard. The school provides **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides very good leadership and management is very good
- Most pupils achieve well, especially so in the nursery and Year 6
- Teaching and learning are good and at their best in English, mathematics and science
- Assessment is underdeveloped except in the Foundation Stage
- Standards are not high enough in some aspects of ICT and music

The school has been through significant change since the previous inspection, including the recent appointment of the headteacher. A recent decline in standards at the end of Year 2 has now been reversed. Well above average standards have been maintained in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. Until recently, the school has been slow to tackle the issues of assessment and development planning but is now accelerating at pace and standards are rising because priorities are much more focused. **Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory but is now satisfactory with a very good potential for further improvement.**

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			Prior attainment
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	A	A	C
Mathematics	A	A	A	C
Science	A	A	A	C

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

Pupils' achievement is mostly good. Test results and inspection evidence show that pupils in **Year 6 are particularly successful in English, mathematics and science and attain well above average standards.** In relation to their attainment at the end of Year 2 pupils who left the school in July 2002 achieved satisfactorily. Inspection evidence shows that progress is most rapid in Year 6 and that some of the momentum for learning was lost in Years 3 to 5. The headteacher has re-organised teaching in these year groups and this is having a positive effect on pupils' achievement. There is now a concentration on developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding consistently between year groups and most of the work set is sufficiently challenging so that pupils are now achieving well. There is little significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

Test results in 2002 at the end of Year 2 showed that reading was above average and writing and mathematics were average. When compared with schools in similar contexts standards were average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. Initiatives including more opportunities for extended writing, better planning and more focused teaching have begun to make an impact. Inspection evidence shows that the current group of Year 2 pupils is achieving satisfactorily and their attainment is above average. Throughout the school, particular strengths are in speaking and listening and in pupils' work in science. Nursery children achieve very well. Children make good progress in the reception year. By the start of Year 1, most exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils are particularly successful in design and technology. Throughout the school standards in art and design, history, geography and religious education are above average. Standards in music are below average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. Those with English as an additional language attain at least average standards and are very successful in mathematics.

The pupils' **very good** personal qualities enrich the school and create a harmonious and well-ordered community in which all are valued. Pupils take responsibility seriously and the "listeners" and those who help younger pupils at lunchtime show maturity beyond their age. Pupils' spiritual development is good and their moral, social and cultural awareness is highly developed. Their attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Pupils are thoughtful and responsive although in a few lessons they lose concentration when tasks are not demanding enough. Pupils like school and attendance is **good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are **good** overall and very good in the nursery and Year 6; pupils in these year groups learn very effectively due to challenging lessons. English, mathematics and science are taught very well and pupils work hard in these subjects. Some staff lack confidence in teaching music and limited resources hamper the teaching and learning of ICT. Teachers are innovative and highly effective in working with pupils in the early stages of learning English. Support staff work successfully with pupils with special educational needs and both groups of pupils are keen learners. Assessment is not used well enough and does not have the impact it should on learning.

The **very good curriculum** and the high levels of care and shown by the staff contribute much to effective learning. Parental involvement and support are strengths and the school is highly regarded in the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall impact of leadership is **good** and management is **very good**. The headteacher is a very effective leader who has inspired the staff and improved the quality of education through rigorous analysis, performance management, monitoring and target setting. The governors are very supportive and make a good contribution to school development. The headteacher has done much to shape the direction of the school and is ambitious for the success of staff and pupils. Subject leaders are beginning to develop their roles and understand the challenges faced by the school. Their role in managing assessment in the subjects is underdeveloped.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents are **very satisfied** with the work of the school and value the contribution it makes to their children's development. Some would like to see communication improved but this is an area in which the school is largely successful. The **pupils love coming to school** and feel well supported by the staff. They expressed a few reservations about the behaviour of other pupils but commented that they felt secure, safe and well cared for. Older pupils particularly enjoy homework.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Develop more rigorous and consistent systems for assessment
- Improve the provision for information and communication technology
- Raise standards in music

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Children make a **very good start in the nursery** and achieve well. By the start of Year 1 most exceed the goals expected for their age in all of the areas of learning. Achievement in Years 1 to 5 in recent years has been only satisfactory but following recent improvements is now mostly good. Pupils in Year 6 achieve well because the teaching is of a high calibre. **By the end of Year 2 standards in English, mathematics and science are above average and well above average by the time the pupils leave the school.** There is little significant variation in the achievement of boys and girls.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Nursery are highly effective learners and children have well developed personal and language skills by the time they enter Year 1
- Throughout the school pupils are articulate, read fluently and have good writing skills
- Pupils use their literacy skills very well in a wide range of subjects
- Pupils are competent mathematicians and good at solving problems
- Achievement in science is high especially in investigative work
- Pupils have limited skills in using computers to support their work in some subjects
- There was a decline in performance in test results at the end of Year 2 between 1999 and 2002
- National test results in English, mathematics and science for pupils in Year 6 are consistently well above average
- Pupils with English as an additional language achieve very well and attain good standards

Commentary

1. National test results at the end of Year 6 have been very consistent since 1999 and show that boys and girls attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science with about half of the pupils achieving beyond the levels expected of 11-year-olds. When compared to schools in similar contexts the results are above average. The trend is broadly in line with national figures. Test results at the end of Year 2 have been more variable and declined from their high point in 1999. When the tests were taken sixteen months ago standards in reading were above average and average in writing and mathematics. Comparisons with similar schools showed that reading results were average but writing and mathematics were below average.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.7 (17.4)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	14.6 (15.9)	14.4 (14.3)
Mathematics	16.8 (17.8)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 79 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.9 (29.5)	27.0 (27.0)

Mathematics	28.9 (29.1)	26.7 (26.6)
Science	30.2 (30.3)	28.3 (28.3)

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

2. Although there are variations from year to year most children start in the nursery and reception classes with skills, knowledge and understanding in advance of children of a similar age. The cohort starting in Year 1 in 2000 had on average lower levels of skill than most other year groups and this was a contributory factor in lower attainment in the national tests in 2002. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 made consistent and sometimes good progress and achieved satisfactorily. Thanks largely to the recent improvements there are signs at the beginning of a new academic year that progress and achievement are improving. Progress is at its best in the nursery because of the quality of teaching. By the end of the reception year the children are well-equipped learners with above average skills, knowledge and understanding in mathematical, personal, social, emotional, physical and creative development. They exceed the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. The children's successes are due to very good teaching and assessment, a challenging and well-focused curriculum and high quality leadership and management.
3. Overall achievement at the school is mostly good. There has been a recent upturn in standards and achievement due to effective re-organisation of teaching and learning and the impact of leadership and management. Pupils' work and test results from 1999 to 2002 show that there had been insufficient emphasis on assessing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding rigorously and as a result there had been some slippage in performance in Years 1 to 5. This issue has now been tackled and the impact is being seen in rising standards as teachers take more account of pupils' capabilities when planning lessons. Most pupils are now working to capacity in almost all subjects although progress in music and some aspects of ICT is unsatisfactory. The more able and those the school has identified as gifted and talented pupils are set demanding tasks and are stretched well in English, mathematics and science, especially in Year 6. Pupils with English as an additional language are supported very well and teachers use a very good range of strategies to involve them in learning; they are very successful, especially in mathematics. The very good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that these pupils are included well in lessons and they achieve very well. Pupils with physical difficulties are supported very effectively, enabling them to achieve very good levels of success. Setting pupils by ability for English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6 mostly works effectively although in some sets the work is too similar for the different groups and work is not matched closely enough to ensure maximum progress.
4. Inspection evidence points to improvements in teaching and learning and consequently the standards attained by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 are now above average. The rate of progress has improved and pupils are now achieving satisfactorily. Most pupils are competent readers who enjoy books and read fluently and with expression. Their writing skills are not as advanced as their reading skills but good headway has been made in recent months in setting more challenging tasks which are raising achievement. Standards in speaking are particularly good. The inspection team found that the very good teaching in Year 6 contributes a great deal to the above average standards in English, mathematics and science in the national tests. By the end of Year 6 pupils are articulate and confidently discuss a wide range of issues and interests such as bias in newspaper reporting. They read with perception and understanding complex ideas, drawing on a range of evidence to support their hypotheses. Their engaging writing holds the reader's attention and includes extensive and thought-provoking vocabulary. A contributory factor in raising attainment through the school has been the strong emphasis given to presentation, handwriting and accuracy in grammar, spelling and punctuation.

5. Recent improvements in standards at the end of Year 2 and in achievement in Years 1 to 5 have been brought about by:
 - Rigorous analysis of performance by the headteacher
 - Setting sharply focused targets for improvement
 - Supporting and monitoring the work of teachers
 - Improved planning
 - Re-distribution of staff with particular responsibilities and skills
6. Pupils are successful in history, geography and religious education and attain above average standards at the end of Years 2 and 6. Their success is due to effective teaching and the application of literacy skills when recording their work and carrying out research. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in design and technology; they plan, evaluate and modify their work successfully and develop a good understanding of mechanisms and techniques. Artwork is above average throughout the school and pupils are very successful in observational drawing and adding detail to their pictures.
7. Throughout the school, the pupils' basic skills in ICT are average but shortages of resources and time to use computers mean that their skills in using ICT across the curriculum as a tool for learning are unsatisfactory. Music is taught inconsistently because of lack of teachers' confidence, and the pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards in music are below average throughout the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES

Pupils enjoy coming to school and overall **attendance for the last year was good**. Their **attitudes to school are very positive** and, because pupils are very receptive to the excellent moral and social values promoted by the school, their behaviour and overall personal development are very good. There are some good opportunities created for spiritual development and pupils' self-awareness increases well as they mature. Partly because the school actively promotes an understanding of diverse cultures, pupils develop very good levels of interest in and tolerance of those from different ethnic backgrounds.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very keen to take on responsibilities
- Relationships between the pupils and between pupils and staff are excellent
- The school very successfully promotes pupils' confidence and self-esteem
- There is a very high level racial harmony
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and are consistently encouraged and praised for making the right choices
- The genuine kindness and care shown by the older pupils towards their younger friends makes a very strong contribution to the quality of school life
- The personal, social and emotional development of children in the Foundation Stage is very good

Commentary

8. Parents are very good at notifying the school of reasons for absence and, as a result, there is very little unauthorised absence. Although many pupils have excellent attendance records, more than

ten percent of pupils are missing in excess of a tenth of their lessons and, despite the school's efforts to discourage parents from booking holidays in term time, a significant amount of the recorded absence relates to this. Most pupils show very good levels of interest in school life and comment that many of their lessons are fun. This has a very positive impact on achievement. Literacy lessons are often enlivened by an interesting choice of text that makes pupils laugh and successfully stimulates their desire to learn. Although most pupils behave very well, there are times when teaching does not fully engage their attention when their behaviour deteriorates. The involvement of pupils in developing the *Umbrella Code* has resulted in an understanding of the reasons behind the rules and acceptance of the need for them. Pupils comment that they have no concerns about bullying because they know that the school deals with any incidents. There have been no exclusions.

9. Two Year 6 pupils said that one of the best things about school was the opportunity to get to know people from other countries. They learn about the faiths and lifestyles of the different ethnic groups in the school in many of their lessons and this promotes an excellent level of understanding and tolerance. The excellent relationships enable pupils to work very effectively as a team, collaborating and sharing as a matter of course. The genuine friendliness shown by many pupils towards their Japanese friends helps them to settle quickly into their new environment. Staff consistently and continuously praise and encourage pupils in their work and play which makes them feel valued and they grow in confidence. Assemblies contribute well to the moral development of pupils, but the spiritual element is not always evident. The excellent moral and social values promoted by the school and reinforced by parents help create a cohesive community where pupils mature into self-confident and interesting individuals who genuinely care for others. They are well-motivated learners who understand the value and purpose of education.

10. Nursery and Reception children thoroughly enjoy their time at school. They love stories and listen raptly, responding with delight and excitement. They take turns and follow instructions carefully, making sensible choices and learning to follow the established class routines. Throughout the day all staff consistently encourage the development of the children's personal and social skills. Even the very new Nursery children are beginning to play together and develop strong relationships with their teachers.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.8
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.5

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
526	0	0
13	0	0

Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	66	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	20	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	13	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	4	0	0
Chinese	21	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	10	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Pupils learn effectively and benefit from mostly good teaching although assessment is variable but satisfactory overall. This highly inclusive school provides very well for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. The curriculum is very good. The provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. Parental involvement is very good and the school serves its community well.

Teaching and learning

Most of the teaching is **good** and pupils are **effective learners**. As a result achievement is mostly good especially in English, mathematics and science. Teaching and learning are most effective in the nursery and Year 6. **Assessment is satisfactory**. The good quality of teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Basic skills are taught well and pupils are very successful in using literacy skills when carrying out research
- Pupils are attentive, hard-working and productive workers
- In a quarter of lessons in Years 1 to 5 there is insufficient match of work and the pace is slow
- Pupils with special educational needs are taught very well
- Teachers are imaginative and effective in including pupils at an early stage of learning English in lessons
- The teacher in the nursery makes very effective use of assessment to provide challenging activities for all children
- Marking in some classes is highly effective but some teachers in Years 1 to 5 make insufficient use of assessment to match work to pupils' capabilities

Commentary

10. Predominantly good teaching ensures that most pupils learn effectively although in about a quarter of the lessons seen pupils could have achieved more if the pace, match and challenge in the work had been more focused. Similarly the analysis of pupils' work showed that some of the activities were mundane and insufficient attention had been given to setting tasks at the right level for the range of abilities in the class or set. This resulted in low-level learning and some

underachievement. Most of the satisfactory or weaker aspects of teaching shown in the table below were in lessons in geography, design and technology and information and communication technology and were the result of insufficient teacher knowledge, poor organisation or lack of pace. A significant barrier to learning in ICT is the limited number of computers. The good or better teaching was in English, mathematics and science in most year groups and the best lessons were in Year 6 where the level of challenge was very high. For example, in English lessons, Year 6 pupils were set challenging tasks, such as detecting bias in historical documents and encouraged to draw their own conclusions and write accounts based on facts. This open-ended approach stimulated learning and encouraged initiative and independence resulting in high quality work.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 60 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1(2%)	20 (33%)	22 (37%)	13 (23%)	3 (5%)	1 (2 %)	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. Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding

11. Throughout the school, teachers have a good working knowledge of English, mathematics and science and guidance from subject leaders has brought about consistency in developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in these subjects. The consistent approach to the teaching of reading, which also involves much parental support, contributes to pupils' competence in reading and understanding complex texts and ideas and using skills such as building words from the sounds of letters and skimming and scanning text to locate ideas and themes quickly. The headteacher's drive to raise standards in writing has brought a sharp focus on improving grammar, spelling, punctuation and presentation and staff are consistent in teaching these skills. As a result pupils write imaginatively and accurately and make very good use of their literacy skills for research. The teaching of mathematics is good. Staff have secure subject knowledge and structure lessons well to include opportunities to practise mental arithmetic and to refine skills. Pupils are avid learners of mathematics and respond enthusiastically, work hard and are very competent in explaining mathematical strategies because teachers ask the right questions. Science teaching is especially effective because of the high quality guidance from the subject leader, the emphasis on practical work and the good use of assessment to pinpoint pupils' needs. Setting in Year 3 to 6 works moderately well although within the sets teachers do not discriminate enough between the abilities of the pupils and this results in some lack of challenge. This issue was raised in the previous inspection report.
12. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is predominantly very good and is at its best in the nursery because the teacher has high levels of understanding of the individual needs of the children based on rigorous assessment and observation. This means that work is set at just the right level to challenge the different ability groups and progress is rapid. Very good use is made of support staff. The strong emphasis on personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy ensures that the children settle quickly and become well-equipped learners. Much is expected of the children in a caring and interesting environment and they thrive in such a positive atmosphere. Very good gains are made in early reading and mathematics because of the wide range of activities and effective adult involvement for example in role-play.
13. Throughout the school, the pupils comment favourably about their teachers and feel that they are taught well. Most say that they enjoy homework and that it contributes to their understanding. Inspection evidence shows exceptionally good relationships between staff and pupils and this

contributes much to harmonious and purposeful learning. Pupils become confident in making decisions and in using their initiative because the staff foster independence. This was seen in most lessons and especially in science where pupils took responsibility for planning their own work, designed investigations and followed through their hypotheses in a well-organised manner. The staff manage behaviour very well and make good use of praise.

14. Staff are very aware of the need for equal opportunities and successfully meet the needs of boys and girls. Often lessons include slight variations in tasks and approaches so that boys and girls are able to learn in the way most suited to them. Other groups of pupils have their needs met very well. Those with special educational needs are given good support by classroom assistants when available and teachers plan lessons and activities taking into account the individual education plans of the pupils. Much thought has gone into supporting pupils with physical disabilities; equipment and resources such as special programs for the computers have been used to ensure that all have good access. Very good support for pupils at an early stage of English from visiting staff, and imaginative and inclusive methods by teachers, help to integrate pupils with English as an additional language fully in lessons. Wherever possible both languages are used and several teachers have learned some key words in the pupils' home languages to make learning easier. These pupils respond very well, work hard, show much tenacity and are highly successful, especially in mathematics. Teaching mostly meets the needs of pupils of all abilities and staff have identified some gifted and talented pupils and provides suitably challenging work.
15. The most significant barrier to learning is the lack of focus in assessment. There are very good examples of assessment in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6 where marking and guidance are sharply focused and pupils are left in no doubt about what to do to improve. Clear targets for improvement are set and the teachers keep a check on what has been achieved. In these year groups the pupils are very clear about what to do to improve. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are assessed very carefully and programmes of work for them are well focused and have a good impact on attainment. Assessment is now being used to track the achievement of pupils in English, mathematics and science but this information is not used sufficiently to set starting points for different groups of pupils in classes or sets. There is very little recorded information about pupils' performance in other subjects. Strong leadership by the headteacher has led to some recent improvements which are seen most clearly in the quality of planning. Staff are now in the process of linking planning and assessment in a much more focused way than in the past. Nevertheless more remains to be done to sharpen up assessment in order to improve the challenge and match of work for pupils.

THE CURRICULUM

The school provides a broad range of interesting and well-structured curricular opportunities that cater **very well** for pupils of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. This leads to very good personal development and high standards of attainment and mostly good achievement. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is enriched by the good provision of activities outside school time.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good cross-curricular links and use of literacy and numeracy
- Good range of visits, visitors and resources to support teaching and learning
- Provision for children in the nursery
- The very good provision for pupils with special educational needs
- Very good support for pupils who are in the early stages of learning English
- Very good accommodation and good resources, except for ICT
- Unsatisfactory provision for music
- Gaps in the provision for information and communication technology

Commentary

16. Much thought has been given to planning the curriculum to make it inclusive and to meet the needs of all. This process begins very effectively in the nursery and the headteacher has set up a new model of planning which is working well throughout the school. Staff use common formats for planning, kept under review by senior staff and subject leaders. Priorities are linked very well to the development plan and there are good opportunities for further training for staff. Staff ensure that pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are used well and this enhances achievement and learning especially in religious education and history.
17. Staff work hard to make lessons interesting and pupils comment that they particularly enjoy visits and visitors who bring expertise. Pupils say that they enjoy the residential visits and these contribute well to their personal, social and emotional development. The curriculum is enriched by a strong focus on personal development, including teaching about sex and relationships and the dangers of drugs, which prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. The recent review of the school day and the re-organisation of timetables have successfully reduced the slippage of time and are proving to be an aid to teaching and learning. The physical education programme and extra-curricular activities for sport provide opportunities for the pupils to compete successfully against other schools. There are opportunities for some pupils to learn to play instruments but the overall provision for music is erratic.
18. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from strong support and well-crafted individual education plans used in classrooms to focus on the next step in learning. Additional support for these pupils works well. The school's inclusive nature makes sure that the physical needs of pupils are met very well through the purchase of specialist equipment. Pupils with English as an additional language are given very good support and their traditions and home languages are used well to make the teaching inclusive. Additional support from outside agencies for these pupils is very good.
19. The school's staffing, accommodation and resources contribute well to the quality of education. The school has a suitable number of teaching staff although there are few support staff. All staff contribute well to the quality of education, benefiting from regular training. They are well qualified and there is a good balance of expertise. This is a very attractive school set in its own well-tended grounds. Access for pupils and others with disabilities is very good. The school is maintained to a high standard of cleanliness. Learning resources are good overall although there are insufficient computers and this hampers pupils' progress in using ICT to support their work in other subjects.

CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The school has **very good and effective procedures and practices** to safeguard the welfare of the pupils. Because of the **excellent relationships in school**, pupils have access to very good personal support and guidance. The involvement of pupils in the decision making process is very good. The overall quality of care provided for pupils has been maintained well since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The procedures for child protection are very good
- The personal support and guidance provided by all members of staff are of very good quality
- The support provided for those pupils with limited knowledge of the English language and those with special educational needs is very good

- The work of the Listeners and the lunch-time helpers helps the younger pupils to feel safe and secure
- Pupils' views are sought and valued
- The educational support and guidance provided by the school is not as good as it could be

Commentary

20. All pupils, including the children in the Nursery and Reception classes are very well cared for in this school. A fundamental element in this high quality of care is the kindness and commitment of all members of staff, teaching and non-teaching. The supervision during the mid-day break is very good. The mid-day supervisors know the pupils very well and treat them fairly and with good humour. The governors and headteacher, with the valued support of the site manager, ensure that the premises are clean and any health and safety hazards are either managed effectively or remedied.
21. Because of the excellent relationships between the pupils and staff, there is open communication between them and pupils comment that their teachers always try to help them. However, the inconsistencies in the collation and monitoring of assessment data mean that the educational support and advice for pupils, although good in many areas, could be better. Induction into the Nursery and Reception classes, including home visits, is very good. The period at the beginning of the day is particularly valued and helpful for all parents, allowing them the opportunity to speak to the teachers about any small matters of concern. Parents comment that it also gives them the chance to see what their children have been doing in their lessons. The formal and informal support provided for those pupils with English as an additional language or with special educational needs is very effective. Because of this, these pupils are fully included in all of the school's activities.
22. The school council is a very effective body whose ideas and views are taken very seriously by all involved in the management of the school. Pupils' views are sought on a wide range of issues. The new *Umbrella Code* is the most recent outcome of this consultation process and many pupils comment that, because they understand and accept the Code, behaviour has improved. The school is very receptive to pupils' ideas for fund raising, encouraging them to use their initiative.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY

The school has **very effective links with parents**. The school has good links with the local community and liaison arrangements with other schools are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides many opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning and in school life
- Parents are consulted and involved in the decision making process
- Parental support has a very good impact on their children's academic progress and personal development
- The school deals with any concerns or complaints very effectively
- There are very good induction and transfer procedures
- Events organised by the hard working committee of the parents' association are very well supported by parents and substantial funds are raised

- The pupils' annual reports give parents plenty of information but do not always clearly indicate how well the children are doing in relation to others of the same age

Commentary

23. The overall quality of information provided for parents about the school is good. The annual reports on pupils' progress lack specific information about attainment but the consultation evenings during the year and the ease of communication with teachers ensure that parents have as much access as they need to any further information they may require. Records are kept of those parents who attend curriculum evenings and relevant information is sent to those who are unable to be there. Consultation with and involvement of parents is an important element in planning the future development of the school. This is accomplished through formal questionnaires and focus groups as well as through informal discussion. The events organised by the parents' association provide a forum for social interaction between parents and staff and raise the level of communication. Parents play a vital role in helping and encouraging their children with their homework. This has a major impact on the high standards the children achieve in Year 6. Parents who expressed views prior to and during the inspection were mostly very supportive of the work of the school and strongly approve of the values promoted by the school. They are confident that the school does its best for their children.
24. The school receives good support from the local community, which contributes well to pupils' learning and personal development. The school premises are used by a number of community organisations and local business and industry generously support the parents' association events. There are very effective transition arrangements with the secondary schools to which the pupils transfer and parents comment that their older children settle very quickly into this new environment. The school has close links with other local primary schools, sharing experiences and expertise.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides **very good leadership** and is committed to ensuring that pupils achieve as highly as possible. In her short time at the school she has built a cohesive and largely successful team, inspiring her colleagues and winning the respect of staff, pupils and governors. The impact of **leadership by other key staff is generally good**. **Very good management** of the school's systems and procedures ensures consistency in almost all aspects of its work. The Governing Body has a positive influence on the work of the school and **governors provide good levels of support and challenge**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Incisive analysis and evaluation of the school's performance by the headteacher has begun to have a positive impact on standards
- The headteacher inspires confidence in staff, pupils, parents and governors
- The school has a very positive ethos and is highly inclusive
- The school's development plan focuses very sharply on key priorities
- Performance management has been used very well to set targets for staff based on pupil performance
- Financial administration and control are robust
- Although aspects of subject leadership are good there is room for improvement in managing assessment

Commentary

25. The headteacher's major strengths lie in her ability to analyse the school's strengths and weaknesses and to respond quickly and very effectively. Her incisive and challenging approach has welded together a strong team who show much commitment to raising standards and improving the quality of education, in particular teaching and learning. This is reflected in the re-organisation of year groups following an analysis of pupils' work which revealed some shortcomings; improving planning to ensure consistency in the development of skills, knowledge and understanding; calling to account senior managers and subject leaders through performance management linked to the achievement of pupils and setting up a regular programme of monitoring and evaluation. Another success has been a review and changes to the time of the school to maximise learning opportunities by shortening some lessons and providing additional time for the development of skills in a range of areas.
26. The school's strategic plan is very well focused and includes a clear identification of the priorities that are most effective in raising pupils' achievement. The strong focus on improving writing has already had an impact and it is clear from an analysis of pupils' work from the previous year that standards of presentation, spelling and the quality of writing have improved. Professional development is regarded as pivotal and all staff are set targets for developing and improving their skills and given the resources and training to succeed. Staff now form an effective team and are clear about their responsibilities. The re-organisation of the senior management team has empowered staff to take more of a lead in curriculum development and to monitor teaching and learning. Subject leaders are clear about the school's priorities and their role in achieving them. Some subject leaders need further training in developing assessment systems and methods of tracking pupils' performance and consistency in the teaching.
27. Staff share common values and all show a strong commitment to equal opportunities. This is a highly inclusive school and leaders provide very good role models to other staff and pupils. There are very good support systems and all feel valued. This is reflected in the pupil questionnaires and in discussions with staff and pupils who speak highly of the work of the school and its leadership and management. The school is a welcoming place and is a good provider of teacher training. Teachers new to the profession are mentored very well and there is good guidance for all staff on procedures and policies.
28. The school is very organised and managed very well. There are well established systems to ensure that the school runs smoothly and the office staff contribute much to this aspect. The senior staff, led very effectively by the headteacher, have analysed the future staffing needs of the school and the potential resources available and have flexible and comprehensive plans and strategies to cope with eventualities. The school's self evaluation is well focused and correctly identifies the priorities for management. Staff are kept well informed about projects and developments and fully involved in decision-making. This process also includes parents and pupils wherever possible. The school is self-critical. In response to a decline in standards at the end of Year 2 the headteacher has set very ambitious targets for improvements and is on course to achieve them. For example, provisional results for the national tests in 2003 show an upturn and inspection evidence points to further improvement in the current Year 2. Target setting is now very focused. The headteacher has made very good use of performance management to set targets and staff have responded well. The process has led to a greater understanding by staff and governors of the ways in which standards may be improved. One of the barriers to raising standards at the school in the past has been the lack of sharp assessment and rigorous analysis of achievement. This process has started in earnest and is beginning to impact well on the quality of teaching and learning.

29. Governors have a very strong commitment to the school and are proud of its achievements. They have analysed the school's performance over time and recently begun to evaluate its performance in national tests. They work hard to ensure that statutory requirements are met and contribute to the school improvement process. Some governors are regular visitors to school and there are plans to take a more active role in supporting different year groups and subjects. Governors offer challenge and are keen to ensure that the limited funds are spent wisely. They pursue best value in purchasing supplies and services. Governors are prepared to take difficult decisions as necessary, for example, in issues of redundancy and they plan ahead to minimise the disruption to the school that such issues cause.

30. The school has good systems to monitor and evaluate spending and is financially secure. The funds allocated to the school are about average for its size and they are used well, although there are few support staff. Staffing costs are high and the school has plans to reduce these costs over a period of time to free funds for other resources. Funds for specific purposes and grants are used well. Financial controls are administered very well.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,338,177
Total expenditure	1,316,318
Expenditure per pupil	1,927.26

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	31,207
Balance carried forward to the next	53,066

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children in the Foundation Stage **achieve well**. The children get off to a very good start in the Nursery and make very good gains in all of the areas of learning because of **good teaching**. The children's skills are developed further in the reception classes and by the end of the year **most children exceed the goals expected** of them in communication, language and literacy, personal, social and emotional development, mathematical, creative, physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. **Leadership and management are very good**. The co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage is highly skilled and promotes learning effectively through support and guidance to her colleagues. A particular strength is the clear and well-focused assessment of the children's progress which is used well to plan the next step in learning. The curriculum has been completely revised since the last inspection and provides **very good learning opportunities** in all aspects of the Foundation Stage. The school has improved its provision since the previous inspection.

The **good quality of teaching** underpins all that is done in the Foundation Stage and results in the children achieving well. Staff plan and prepare well to use a wide variety of activities and methods to motivate and challenge the children. They have good levels of expertise, and support staff are fully involved in the preparation and delivery of lessons. Teachers make the lessons interesting and involve the children well through questions and practical work. For example, in walking a round the school, observing different shapes and recording them using digital photography.

Personal, social and emotional development

Good overall provision results in above average attainment by the time children start in Year 1.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff have a good understanding of the needs of individuals
- Independence and initiative are fostered very well
- The induction procedures and parental involvement contribute much to the children's personal, social and emotional development

Commentary

31. The children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They achieve well because of the lively, open and challenging curriculum and the very good involvement of parents with the school. Strong relationships are quickly established between the children, their families and the staff. Daily routines and rules are quickly established. Teaching is very good and enables the children to grow in confidence and to use their own initiative. From the moment of arrival children are shown how to find their own named peg and hang up their coat and bag. They learn to clear up their own equipment, to tidy shared areas and to use the toilet and washrooms independently. The children develop positive attitudes to learning and are keen to please their teachers. The staff create a caring atmosphere, value every individual and use praise and encouragement effectively. If the children make mistakes or, when they do not succeed with tasks, they are encouraged to understand that they may not get things right the first time and it is necessary to persevere. Children are encouraged to think about their actions and how these might affect other people. They listen carefully to their teachers and concentrate well in whole class situations. When working in small groups they share resources, help each other and concentrate on the task they have been set or have chosen to do. Children with English as an additional language are fully involved in lessons, staff and children learn rhymes and songs in a variety of languages to encourage those at an early stage of English to feel part of the school.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision is **good overall**; the children achieve well and most exceed the goals expected of them by the end of the reception year. The teaching is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are wide ranging opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills
- Children of different abilities are challenged well and move on at a good pace
- Staff have a good understanding of how to develop skills in reading and writing

Commentary

32. There is a very clear emphasis in teachers' daily planning on developing language, literacy and communication skills and all adults within the department take every opportunity of inviting the children to talk about what they are doing and to listen to the views of others. This is evident as children come into school in the morning bursting with news from home or as they play out their stories in the 'home corner'. Teacher directed activities are full of question/answer sessions and pupils learn to take it in turns to speak. In the story of 'The Unhappy Hedgehog' the children are full of ideas about how to make him feel better and speak out with confidence. Early reading skills are developed through the sharing of books and stories and it is quite common to see small groups of children settling in the library, or in a corner, sitting on the floor 'reading' to each other or to an adult. Reading books are taken home regularly to share with a parent or carer and this makes a very positive contribution to their progress in learning to read. In the reception classes pupils are taught effectively the sounds of letters and begin to build up a bank of words which are familiar. The early skills of writing are well taught from the point where pupils begin to make marks, hold a pencil correctly, draw pictures, copy patterns and trace round letter shapes. The children work independently in the writing corners and also enjoy working with the staff on activities such as writing their own name, copy writing and working out simple phrases and sentences. The classroom assistants are very well briefed and work in tandem with class teachers to ensure that pupils are given many varied writing opportunities.

Mathematical development

Overall provision is **good**. The children achieve well and by the end of the reception year exceed the early learning goals in this area of learning. The teaching is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are well balanced and challenging
- Much of the mathematical work is practical
- There is a good emphasis on developing mathematical vocabulary

Commentary

33. Teachers ensure that children become familiar with mathematical language through stories, rhymes, discussions and activities. Every opportunity is taken to introduce numbers and counting. This is particularly successful when pupils work in groups on practical tasks such as building and counting the number of bricks in a tower or when making cards for 'Spot's birthday' and counting the number of candles on the cake. Most children count up to ten and beyond, recognise and name numbers and begin to trace and write numbers to ten. They develop confidence by playing number games and creating patterns of repeating colours. Through work in art and modelling, basic shapes such as circles and triangles become familiar and through using sand and water an awareness of weight and capacity begins. All classes have access to computers and a variety of programs to enrich their mathematical progress. Class teachers and assistants work very well together to ensure that all pupils are drawn in to planned mathematical activities. even if it was not what the child might have originally chosen to do.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

The **good provision** results in almost all children exceeding the goals expected of them by the start of Year 1. This area of learning is taught well and staff provide a broad and interesting curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective planning
- The wide range of opportunities provided stimulate learning
- The children achieve well because activities are matched well to their capabilities

Commentary

34. The staff plan together and each is clear about what is expected but assessment is used well to focus on the needs of groups and individuals. The teaching focuses on helping the children to develop a good understanding of the world around them by providing an interesting range of work. The children have a thirst to learn and this helps them to achieve well. They gain a good understanding of the past and the present and begin to have some idea about chronology in relation to their own birthdays and those of brothers and sisters. All adults seek to make birthdays special for every child and they are keen to declare how old they now are. Walks around the school and the locality are a common occurrence providing a valuable teaching resource through which an awareness of places beyond their own immediate environment can be fostered. Teachers are careful to stress the kinds of food which help to maintain good health and the daily ritual of eating fruit and drinking water for 'snack time' is very popular with the children. In science activities children are given many opportunities to study plants and ask and answer questions about how they grow and reproduce. They track weather conditions and use correct vocabulary to describe them. In the nursery, during sand and water play, the children pour water over a wheel and find that it is possible to make it go round at different speeds depending on the force of the water flow. Staff extend the children's understanding of this process by asking well focused questions and by providing a range of equipment for the children to experiment with.

Physical development

Provision is **good** because staff teach well and resources are of a high quality. The children achieve well and exceed the goals expected of them by the end of the reception year.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good range of opportunities and resources to support this area of learning

Commentary

35. All classes in the Foundation Stage have an allocated time in the school hall for physical education. The outdoor play area is also very well equipped for all weathers having a covered area in the middle plus a very good range of apparatus which makes it possible for pupils to go outside at most times of the year. Only one lesson was observed in the hall during the inspection. In this lesson pupils in a reception class demonstrated independence in getting dressed and undressed and good spatial awareness whilst working. They behaved very well, obeyed the clear instructions given by the class teacher and showed good control in their movements. The children are provided with good opportunities to develop their manipulative skills by engaging in a wide range of activities such as constructing, cutting, drawing, painting and gluing. They roll out and cut dough using the tools confidently and safely. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported to be able to participate fully in all activities.

Creative development

As a result of **good quality provision** children achieve well and exceed the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has good resources to support children's creative development
- The staff achieve a good balance between guiding the children and allowing them to experiment

Commentary

36. The children are provided with good opportunities to experiment with colour, texture and shape. They make good gains in using a variety of tools; they handle pencils well and produce lively drawings, illustrations and paintings. Children quickly become independent in finding their own paper and paint and cleaning up afterwards. They regularly sing and clap to nursery rhymes and songs demonstrating good rhythm and enthusiastic enjoyment. There are very good supplies of percussion instruments which are well used in music lessons. Opportunities are provided for dressing-up and imaginative play and all pupils co-operate well when working together on this activity, sharing equipment. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported during creative activities and those with English as an additional language find that interaction with their peers in this way is very helpful to their language development.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good** and results in above average standards at the end of Year 2 and well above average attainment by pupils at the end of Year 6. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been maintained well since the previous inspection. However, there was a decline in pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Year 2 between 1999 and 2002.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school pupils' speaking and listening skills are very well developed
- The use of literacy skills across the curriculum is especially good
- Pupils read fluently, with expression and accuracy
- By the end of Year 6, the standard of writing is very good
- Pupils with English as an additional language achieve very well
- Achievement is at its best in Year 6
- Most of the teaching is good and it is very good in Year 6
- Assessment is very good in Year 6 but in most classes it is not used rigorously enough to plan work.

Commentary

37. Through very good analysis of weaknesses in reading and writing and setting ambitious targets the leadership of the school have begun to raise standards. Good quality provision in the Foundation Stage and good transition to the Year 1 programme of work meets the needs of individuals and those with special educational needs, English as a second language and more able pupils well. Pupils achieve well and rates of progress are sustained in all year groups. Progress accelerates in Year 6 and is very good because high quality teaching motivates pupils and generates enthusiasm for literature. Work is challenging and marking and assessments enable pupils to know how they need to improve. Strong relationships and mutual respect for others reflect a positive ethos for learning.

38. Pupils successfully share opinions and discuss issues using well-structured arguments. Books are valued and carefully chosen texts provide excellent models to develop sophisticated writing structures, for example, persuasive writing. Pupils enjoy reading and this is reflected in critical reviews recorded in reading notebooks. Pupils take pride in their work. Good attention is given to handwriting and presentation and pupils value and act upon helpful comments to raise standards higher.

39. The headteacher has successfully led and monitored the recent development in English. Difficulties of recruiting a co-ordinator have recently been resolved. The literacy hour has been very successfully implemented and staff have good subject knowledge. They also have a very good knowledge of the pupils' needs and this enables all groups of pupils to make good progress and achieve well. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils have high self-esteem because their successes are celebrated. For example, the high priority placed on inclusion is reflected in the very good support provided for Japanese pupils.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

There are strong links with other subjects so pupils have many opportunities to practice and use their reading and writing skills. Weekly extended writing sessions provide time for pupils to use different writing styles. This was seen in Years 3 when pupils recorded historical research to write a story about an adventure in Egypt and in Year 6 when pupils summarised their debate about the propaganda of World War Two.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good** and the pupils benefit from a challenging curriculum. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the time the pupils leave the school. Standards in mathematics have been maintained well at the end of Year 6 since the previous inspection, but they are not as high as those reported in 1998 at the end of Year 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good skills in investigation and solving problems
- Pupils of all abilities achieve well
- Attainment in number is high
- The teaching is good and very good in Year 6
- The subject is led and managed very effectively
- Overall assessment is satisfactory and good in Year 6 but insufficient use is made of assessment to match work to pupils' ability in some lessons.

Commentary

40. Pupils with special educational needs have clear targets and where possible are given additional support. Those with English as an additional language benefit from very good intervention by visiting staff, and their class teachers ensure that they can participate fully in lessons because work is carefully structured and explained. Pupils at an early stage of English are very successful in mathematics. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Analysis of work shows that, in the past, pupils in Years 1 to 5 achieved satisfactorily. Now, due to much more focused teaching and sharp target setting achievement is good. In Year 6, as the volume and pace of work increases, the achievement of all pupils is very good.

41. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a solid grounding in basic numeracy skills, knowing how to order, add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers to 20 and beyond. They know how to partition numbers into tens and units and have a good grasp of the value of numbers. Teachers ensure that all aspects of the mathematics curriculum are covered in sufficient depth and pupils make good progress in all strands of the curriculum and achieve competently in shape, space and measures.

A strength in mathematics is the ability of pupils to apply their knowledge of number to solving problems and because the pupils have good language skills they cope well with investigations. Lessons include regular opportunities for mental arithmetic the pupils become competent in the quick and accurate recall of number facts.

42. Years 3 to 6 are taught in sets and this enables teachers to plan lessons that mostly meet the needs of pupils within different ability groups. However, there is not always a close match of work within each set as pupils are often required to complete the same work as their peers. This is because assessment is not sharp enough. Nevertheless, pupils work hard and generally achieve well. They have a good grasp of all areas of mathematics and are particularly good at solving problems because they use their wide mathematical vocabulary and skills of mental calculation to good effect.
43. Teaching is good in mathematics with very good practice observed in all Year 6 classes. Pupils in Year 6 make the most progress and achieve very well because the teaching is of high calibre. These teachers have high expectations and move learning on briskly through well-focused questions. Tasks are challenging and require pupils to think beyond the obvious and to explain their methods of working.
44. Lessons are carefully planned and the teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and the National Numeracy Strategy. Support staff are usually involved well in lessons and contribute effectively to pupils' understanding. Good use is made of apparatus to support pupils' understanding. Computers are used in some classes to facilitate, enrich and challenge pupils' learning but this practice is inconsistent. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their mathematics lessons. They behave very well, show interest and take a pride in the way their work is presented. Teachers' marking is generally good and their comments are helpful and evaluative; this is particularly the case in Year 6. There are regular opportunities for homework and older pupils comment that they find it helpful. The curriculum co-ordinator provides strong leadership and, through her own practice and subject expertise, is a good role model for other staff. Following monitoring of pupils' work last year the headteacher and senior staff reviewed the effectiveness of teaching and this has led to good improvement in presentation, pace and the timing of lessons. These influences are beginning to have a beneficial impact on raising pupils' achievement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Mathematical skills are widely used across the curriculum. In science there are many examples of pupils measuring temperature, volume of water and length or height of shadows. Pupils talk of the masks they make in design and technology that require them to take accurate face measurements before beginning to cut the card - or research into the kind of materials needed to make a 'cool bag'. In geography pupils draw plans of the school, estimate the area of classrooms, hall and playground and measure distances accurately. An understanding of time helps pupils to use a 'time line' in history. Computer programs are employed for data handling, graphs and an exercise in planning a party. In many lessons pupils are required to explain how they solve problems, using good mathematical language.

SCIENCE

The school makes **very good** provision for science. By the end of Year 2 standards are above average and well above average by the end of Year 6. Overall standards in science have been maintained well since the previous inspection and a good proportion of pupils continue to achieve very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The challenging curriculum inspires pupils to do well.
- Pupils are particularly skilful in using scientific vocabulary and investigating scientific processes.
- The subject is led very effectively and this promotes consistency in the teaching.
- Pupils have a wide scientific knowledge and understanding.
- Assessment is used well to pinpoint pupils' strengths and weaknesses.

Commentary

45. Provisional results for the 2003 national tests indicate that standards have risen again. Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve well in all aspects of science. This is because of a thoughtfully planned and well-organised curriculum. The school provides a good variety of stimulating and challenging investigations and experiments leading to high levels of attainment in scientific enquiry. There is good guidance for staff and the quality of teaching is good overall. In Year 6, teaching is consistently very good because teachers' expertise and enthusiasm motivates pupils to reach the highest standards they can and they achieve very well.
46. By the end of Year 2, pupils have good knowledge and understanding of scientific principles and vocabulary. They readily use language such as 'absorbent' and 'transparent', for example, and can explain clearly why one kind of material is more suited to a task than another. Pupils are carefully directed to ask questions, carry out experiments and record their findings clearly and carefully through tables, charts, diagrams and writing which are presented to a very high standard. In Years 3 to 6 pupils build progressively on this secure foundation of basic skills. They approach practical tasks with enthusiasm and enjoyment and have a secure understanding of what constitutes a fair test. Increasingly, pupils express their own ideas about finding solutions to problems. In Year 6 they share ideas and have lively discussions. This is prompted by searching questions from teachers who challenge pupils to extend their thinking and explore reasons for their conclusions. The majority of pupils make predictions based on an above average scientific knowledge and understanding.
47. Strong leadership has developed teachers' confidence through example and has ensured consistency within and between year groups. There are very good systems for assessing pupils' work allowing teachers to build effectively upon what pupils have understood. Grouping pupils according to ability provides good opportunities for teachers to match the work more closely to pupils' different needs. Where additional support is needed, adults provide specific help, resulting in all pupils, whatever their ability, the same chance to do well. The experienced subject leader has a very good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses in science and shows determination and expertise to build on the school's successes and improve standards even further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision is **satisfactory**. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are average but are not as high as those reported at the time of the previous inspection, due mainly to a shortage of computers.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has insufficient resources
- The subject leader has a good understanding of how to improve standards
- Assessment is under-developed

Commentary

48. Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve satisfactorily in developing basic skills but unsatisfactorily in applying ICT to their work across the curriculum. Teaching is satisfactory and

staff follow appropriate guidance in developing pupils' basic skills. Pupils with special educational needs are successful because they often receive additional support. More able pupils often partner those with English as an additional language and this is beneficial to both parties. As a result, by the end of Year 2, pupils have a secure grasp of word processing, simple control technology and using drawing software to create imaginative pictures. The teachers in Years 3 to 6 build on these skills and by the end of Year 6 pupils are competent in making spreadsheets, using the Internet and making multi-media presentations. Pupils communicate their ideas and write effectively, editing their work and enhancing it by importing graphics and text.

49. The subject leader has enhanced her colleagues' competence and brought consistency between year groups through monitoring. She provides clear direction and has ambitious yet achievable plans to extend resources, backed by the headteacher and governors. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge. They manage lessons well but time is sometimes wasted on overlong explanations rather than on providing hands on experience for the pupils which hampers progress. Lessons are planned thoroughly but because of the shortage of time the pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to explore new ways of doing things. Pupils are keen to learn and work hard. They listen carefully and follow instructions. The less able lack confidence when starting new topics although the staff are quick to intervene with support.

ICT across the curriculum

Although the school has made some headway in developing pupils' computer skills to support learning across the curriculum this aspect of ICT is unsatisfactory, the main reason being limited time and opportunities for pupils to work independently in honing their skills. There are appropriate examples of ICT being used across the curriculum but they are inconsistent. Most pupils use their word processing skills satisfactorily in English lessons, writing, stories, poems and letters making use of the computers' tools to draft, edit and refine their work. A Year 2 pupil successfully used alliteration to describe her feelings of fear, "I am sometimes afraid when I see hungry hedgehogs hunting in the dark." In mathematics and science, Year 5 and 6 pupils make effective use of spreadsheets to analyse information and of databases to research facts about the solar system. Subjects such as history and geography are enhanced through the use of the Internet and pupils use drawing software satisfactorily to create pictures in the style of famous artists but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use computers in music and design and technology.

HUMANITIES

Inspectors analysed a good range of pupils' work in all subjects and held discussions with them about their work. They met with subject leaders. They observed five lessons in religious education, three in history and two in geography.

Religious education

The school makes **good** provision for religious education. Standards in the subject have risen since the previous inspection and pupils' attainment exceeds the expectations of the syllabus followed by most schools in Solihull. Pupils achieve well and their understanding is complemented by their very good use of literacy skills. Subject leadership is much improved.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a well-organised curriculum and the subject leader provides good guidance for colleagues
- The teaching is good and pupils are effective learners
- Pupils have a good understanding of major faiths and the impact of religion on some people's lives
- The subject does much to promote tolerance, understanding and racial harmony
- The school has a good range of resources

- There is little formal assessment of pupils' attainment and progress

Commentary

50. There has been good improvement in religious education since the last inspection and the quality of teaching in the subject is good. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively in lessons and achieve well. Staff are good at involving those with English as an additional language and encouraged them to share their beliefs and values with the rest of the class. These pupils achieve well. The curriculum has been re-written in line with the agreed syllabus for Solihull and the subject co-ordinator assists all teachers with their planning and helps to find resources to support their teaching which brings consistency to the teaching.
51. Many lessons follow the main festivals of the Christian calendar providing a rich source of inspiration in art, history and language. Stories from the Bible - both Old and New Testaments – are frequently read helping to promote interesting class debates. Teachers are skilful in making lessons relevant and this fosters good learning. Year 5 classes understand the underlying message in the story of Jesus and the Pharisees and relate it to people in their own lives who are sometimes hypocritical. From their studies of Samuel the pupils in Year 1 develop a good understanding of how God calls some people to take on some difficult task in their lives.
52. Another good teaching technique involves the use of evidence from artefacts and books. Teachers emphasise the preciousness of some objects in different religions and generate a sense of awe among the pupils as they handle Hindu bracelets and the Book of Kells. Work is very well presented showing that both teachers and pupils value these lessons. Pupils are keen on the subject and show much interest in the beliefs and traditions followed by their classmates who have a variety of backgrounds. The staff capitalise on these interests and use them to promote a strong sense of value and harmony.

History

The school's provision for history is good and pupils are keenly interested in lessons and achieve well in Year 6. Achievement in other year groups is satisfactory. Standards are above average and the school has maintained its provision well since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils use their literacy skills very well to support their work on historical inquiry
- They have a wide ranging knowledge of the different periods of British history
- The teaching is lively and informative, making good use of resources and visits
- The subject leader provides incisive guidance for her colleagues and planning is effective
- In some classes in Years 1 to 4 not enough account is taken of pupils' individual capabilities

Commentary

53. Pupils apply their literacy skills effectively as they research the good resources used to bring the subject to life. The well-planned curriculum provides a stimulating variety of activities, visits and visitors, which leads to high levels of interest and engagement in historical enquiry. By the end of Year 2, pupils' knowledge of historical periods and personalities and where they fit chronologically is above average. Pupils in Year 6 distinguish well between fact, fiction and propaganda. They are challenged through good questioning skills to critically compare and contrast information from a wide variety of sources, such as newspaper articles and headlines of the day. In a very good lesson in Year 6, for example, evocative posters and musical excerpts

from the 1930s inspired pupils to learn. They took part in lively debate and discussion to evaluate the motives and meanings behind the propaganda. Pupils begin to understand that some historical events can be interpreted in different ways and they achieve very well. Literacy skills are very well promoted through, for example, reading books which relate to the particular period of history being studied such as 'Goodnight Mr. Tom'.

54. Teaching is good and pupils are effective learners. There is an emphasis on accurate recording of information and pupils complete their work to a very high standard of presentation. However, assessment is not used well enough to identify the pupils' particular strengths and weaknesses and this leads to some lack of challenge for more able pupils particularly at the start of topics. Resources are good. Imaginative and eye-catching displays capture pupils' attention and lead to further enquiry and thinking by posing pertinent questions. The good use of homework provides opportunities for pupils to carry out further independent research, often involving parents and this contributes to the high standards found.

Geography

The school makes **good** provision for geography and the pupils' work shows that they have a good understanding of the main themes and ideas of the geography curriculum. Pupils' work shows that standards are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection and are **above average** standards by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A well planned curriculum with strong links to literacy providing clear guidance for teachers
- Good leadership
- Lack of procedures for assessment

Commentary

55. Achievement is satisfactory overall and pupils in Year 6 mostly achieve well because they are stretched effectively. The lessons seen varied in quality; one was unsatisfactory because the work was not challenging enough, the other was satisfactory. Pupils' work shows that generally teaching is good. Mostly, geography is well-planned and organised effectively in half-termly units which provides good consistency and continuity between year groups. There is a good variety of interesting activities taking place with very good links across other curriculum areas. Good leadership is strongly supported by an effective school development plan which provides a clear focus for improvement. There is a sense of good teamwork. Procedures for assessment are being reviewed and updated to enable pupils to achieve more effectively. Work in pupils' books in some classes in Years 1 to 5 is not matched closely enough to their wide range of ability and this results in work being set that is similar for all abilities. Resources, including environmental visits, books, maps and globes are of good quality and contribute to the good standards.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work in art and design, design and technology, and music. They observed two lessons in physical education, three in music and one in each of art and design and design and technology. Inspectors held meetings with the leaders of each subject.

Art and Design

The provision is good and the subject contributes positively to pupils' cultural development and awareness of humankind's impact on the environment. Although few lessons were seen, analysis of

pupils' work and discussions with them show that **standards are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6**. Pupils achieve well because of lessons which include opportunities to explore and investigate a wide range of media and techniques. Standards have been maintained well since the previous inspection and resources have been improved.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have advanced observational skills
- The curriculum is challenging and interesting
- Pupils' work shows that the teaching is good and pupils speak positively about what they have learned
- The subject is led and managed effectively

Commentary

56. Pupils' enthusiasm for art is reflected in their work. They carefully build up pictures using a variety of skills and techniques. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a good knowledge of the work of several famous painters and they apply this knowledge when producing effective self-portraits. By the end of Year 6 pupils have a very good understanding of line, shape and form. In their paintings of the environment they successfully used a viewfinder to focus on minute detail which created good abstract designs. In the good lesson seen in Year 2 the pupils joined in enthusiastically in discussion and articulately described their feelings. The teacher encouraged accurate descriptions and questioned the pupils carefully about the techniques they had studied. Pupils observed carefully before starting work and this meant that they were successful in planning and executing their drawings. Pupils of all abilities were challenged and achieved well making good progress in identifying pattern and correctly describing shapes. The lesson linked well with work in mathematics and also promoted good use of technical vocabulary. ICT is used satisfactorily to support some aspects of the subject such as producing pictures in the style of famous artists but pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop creative skills and use the Internet to support their artwork.

Design and technology

Provision by the school for design and technology is **satisfactory** and standards are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 shows that they achieve well and standards are above average by the end of Year 2. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory and pupils attain the standards expected by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Year 1 and 2 have a good grasp of techniques and skills
- Some of the work in Year 5 lacks sufficient challenge
- Some aspects of teaching are unsatisfactory
- There has been little monitoring of pupils' work

Commentary

57. Little headway has been made in developing the subject in Years 3 to 6 since the previous inspection although the school now uses national and local guidance so that skills are developed satisfactorily from year to year. However, the lack of assessment and therefore awareness of what has been achieved in previous years leads to some repetition and lack of challenge in the teaching. This was illustrated in a poor lesson in Year 5 where the teacher laboriously led the pupils through a biscuit recipe and the pupils had no opportunity to think about how they would tackle the process. Pace and challenge were lacking and the pupils became unsettled and lost

interest. The analysis of work shows that in Years 1 and 2 there is plenty of challenge and the pupils rise to it. They make good models with moving parts and explore a variety of techniques to improve their projects. Their design skills are good and they make effective attempts to comment on how they could improve. There is some good work in Year 6; the pupils design, make and evaluate slippers and use skills such as embroidery to enhance their work. They are very good at evaluating make perceptive comments using sophisticated vocabulary. Pupils' work shows that the teaching in Year 6 is good. Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory and good in Years 1 and 2 because much is expected of the pupils and there is a good focus on extending pupils' skills and techniques.

58. The impact of subject leadership on maintaining standards has been satisfactory but more remains to be done to raise achievement in the juniors and in monitoring the work of teachers. Assessment is a weak area and no records of pupils' attainment in the subject are kept other than annual reports to parents. This leads to some underachievement as pupils are not always set tasks that build upon previous learning.

Music

Although there is some exceptional practice in Year 6, the provision overall is **unsatisfactory**. Standards are much lower than those reported at the time of the previous inspection and the pupils do not achieve well enough.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Musical skills are not being developed consistently over a period of time
- Pupils have very limited knowledge of musical vocabulary and composers
- There is a lack of teaching expertise in music on the staff
- Teaching in Year 6 is of high calibre

Commentary

59. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are below average. Given their capabilities, the pupils do not achieve well enough and this is due to limited opportunities to develop their skills consistently. Pupils do take part in some musical events, which are of good quality, but these are in isolation and too limited in their scope. Few pupils have a secure grasp of performance and composition. Their singing is rather stilted although enthusiastic. Pupils find it difficult to discuss the lives and works of famous composers and their knowledge of this is below that of pupils of a similar age. Teachers lack confidence and subject knowledge and the development of musical skills is inconsistent. Although the school uses national guidelines for the subject, staff lack confidence in implementing them.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is **good**. The school has a large playing field and hard play areas marked for team games. Swimming is taught by instructors and teaching staff at the nearby leisure centre. Records show that most pupils can swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school with a high proportion swimming much longer distances. There is good leadership in the subject, particularly for the teaching of dance, which was the only aspect of the subject observed during the inspection. Two lessons were observed. In the lesson with Year 6 pupils standards and achievement were very good in dance because the quality of teaching was very good and the teacher had strong subject knowledge and the ability to challenge pupils to extend their physical capabilities and range

of sequences. In the second lesson teaching was unsatisfactory and pupils' achievement was poor because they were inactive for too long, listening to the teacher. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about standards. The school makes satisfactory for extra-curricular activities in sport; the pupils achieve well in competitions against other schools.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

Personal, social, health and citizenship education,

Provision in personal, social, health and citizenship education is **good**. The provision impacts very well on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and contributes effectively to achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop very good levels of confidence and become socially mature
- Pupils are involved very well in decision making

Commentary

60. This highly inclusive school does much to involve pupils in all aspects of its work. The school council play an important part in contributing to priorities in the school development plan. Pupils are encouraged to think about how their actions impact on others, to reflect on significant issues and explain their choices. This was done very effectively in an English lesson when pupils discussed the role of the media in shaping public opinion. The school has a well-developed programme of health education and sensitive issues such as sex and relationship education are handled very well. The most telling aspect of this programme of study is the way in which the school promotes racial harmony and tolerance and challenges pupils to reject stereotyping.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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