

INSPECTION REPORT

OLIVE HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Halesowen

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103796

Headteacher: Mrs P Greenhalgh

Lead inspector: Mr R Burgess

Dates of inspection: 26th – 30th April 2004

Inspection number: 257087

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:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	350
School address:	Springfield Road Halesowen West Midlands
Postcode:	B62 8JZ
Telephone number:	01384 818855
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Etheridge
Date of previous inspection:	23 rd March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in Halesowen to the west of Birmingham. It is bigger than most primary schools, with 350 pupils on roll, aged between four and eleven years. The school serves the immediate community but also admits pupils from a wider area. The pupils come from a range of social backgrounds. The proportion of boys and girls varies significantly in different year groups. The school admits children to the reception class after their fourth birthday. Children's attainment on entry is well below average. There is a higher than normal number of pupils who have entered the school at a date later than the first year. The majority of pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds. There are almost 25 per cent of pupils from other ethnic groups and almost 10 per cent of pupils with English as an additional language, which is high. Seventeen per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is similar to the national average. One child has a statement of special educational need, which is below the national average. The number of pupils in receipt of free school meals is similar to the national average. Since the last inspection in 1998 the school has received the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20950	R W Burgess	Lead inspector	English Physical education Religious education
9614	C Webb	Lay inspector	
27292	J Calvert	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Music Citizenship Special educational needs English as an additional language
33231	J Collins	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Art and design Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are very good. The governors know the school very well and give very good support. Pupils achieve well throughout the school, although standards are below national averages by the end of Year 6. Teaching and learning are good, with some very good features resulting in good learning in classrooms. Provision for special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language is very good. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching and learning is very good in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils' achievement is good.
- Standards are below average, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The pupils' personal development is very good.
- The support and guidance given to pupils are very good.
- Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

The school was last inspected in March 1998 and has made good improvement since then, effectively addressing all the issues raised. There is now a clear and very effective management structure. The curriculum provides a good balance of activities and time is used very effectively. The procedures for assessment and its use are now very good. Despite the school's best efforts issues regarding the uneven surface of the field remain unresolved and restrict activities which can be undertaken safely.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

The table gives the grades compared with schools where pupils attained similarly in Year 2 tests. When compared with schools with similar numbers of free school meals, standards are average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. **Achievement is good throughout the school.** Pupils with learning difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well. Standards in the nursery and reception classes are below average overall. The children currently in the Foundation Stage are achieving well because of good teaching. Standards are below average overall throughout the school. Although most pupils attain the expected levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, few attain above those levels. By the end of Year 2, standards in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics are below average. They are satisfactory in science, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education and good in art and design. By the end of Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are below average. They are satisfactory in science, ICT and religious education and good in art and design.

Pupils' personal development is very good. The provision for their moral and social development is very good, for their cultural development good and for their spiritual development satisfactory. Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils behave very well in class and most have positive attitudes to school. The staff have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour

and teach the differences between right and wrong very well. The pupils like coming to school. Attendance and punctuality are affected by a small number of pupils and is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is **good**. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is good in the nursery and reception classes, satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. The good quality teaching is resulting in good learning and improved standards throughout the school. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are good.

The quality and range of the curriculum are good. Throughout the school, pupils with potential difficulties are identified early and given very good levels of support. Pupils make very good progress towards their individual targets. The support and guidance given to pupils are very good. Links with parents are very good and parents are very supportive of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher shows very good leadership and is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and other senior staff. **Management is very good**. There is a shared vision and determination throughout the school to improve standards and the quality of educational provision. The governance of the school is very good. Governors are a committed team who know and understand the school and give strong support to the work of the staff as they strive to improve the school. There is a continuing review of the way the school is heading, and all aspects of the work of the school are kept under constant assessment. It has satisfactory resources, which are used effectively for the benefit of all its pupils.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Questionnaires and comments received from parents were positive and supportive of the school. Responses from pupils indicate a high level of pride in their school. They feel they are given good opportunities for taking responsibilities; they are given very good help in understanding how they can improve and are listened to when sharing their views with staff.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to raise standards particularly in English and mathematics, by improving opportunities for developing and using literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- Continue to seek to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality, by ensuring parents are aware of the impact of late arrivals on learning for all pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Although standards in English and mathematics remain below average in Years 2 and 6, the great majority of children of all abilities are working hard and achieving well. Attainment in art and design is above expectations in both Year 2 and Year 6, and is as expected in all other subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- From very low levels of attainment on entry, children in the Foundation Stage work hard and achieve well across all areas of learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those from different backgrounds do as well as other groups of pupils.
- The pupils achieve well in art and produce a variety of good quality work across the school.
- Pupils make better progress in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

1. The majority of children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress and achieve the standards expected of them in physical and creative development by the end of the reception year. Many children start school with poor social, language and mathematical skills but achieve well and come close to achieving the standards expected of them in these aspects of their learning by the end of the reception class. This is due to the consistently good and often very good teaching of all teachers and support assistants. Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is similarly good overall and standards are close to the national average in English and mathematics. They reach average standards in science, ICT and religious education. By the end of Year 6 pupils are achieving well but standards in English and mathematics are still below the national average. In spite of good and often very good teaching, standards are affected by the impact of higher proportions of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, plus higher than normal numbers of pupils who have entered the school at a date later than the first year.
2. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because teachers and support assistants take good regard of their needs and build effectively on what pupils already know and can do. The attainment and progress of all groups of pupils are monitored well and work is tailored to ensure that it is relevant. Additional support sessions out of class are well managed and small group work with well-trained assistants means that these pupils get intensive support and do well. This is also true of the increasing numbers of pupils from mixed race backgrounds for whom English is an additional language and who have limited English skills. All groups of pupils are treated equally and do equally as well as each other.
3. Standards in personal, social and health education are as expected nationally. There are similar standards in religious education and the school ensures that pupils learn about the major world religions and their beliefs. Attainment in art and design is above nationally expected levels because pupils are taught to take great care and pay attention to detail in all aspects of their work. Their work is displayed attractively around the school and raises their self-esteem and pride in what they do.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.9 (25.9)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.3 (24.1)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.1 (27.0)	28.6 (28.3)

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

4. The table shows that Year 6 test results rose better than nationally in mathematics and science, and matched the national rise in English. This is because of effective teaching and very good leadership. Pupils' performance in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science was better than 2002. The great majority of pupils achieve well in this school, particularly in Year 6, where very good and sometimes excellent teaching enables all groups of pupils to make rapid progress during their last year in school. In English boys perform less well than girls. Deeper analysis of the results shows that the better results in science were because of more higher attaining pupils achieving the levels expected of them.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.5 (15.5)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.6 (14.1)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.0 (14.5)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 54 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. Pupils in Year 2 did not do as well as expected. This was due to disruptions to their teaching over previous years and this has now been dealt with through effective leadership and management. Year 2 pupils are now showing a more positive trend in their attainment.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are **very good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall. Attendance is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils take pride in their school.
- Very good relationships ensure good integration and inclusion.
- Pupils' moral and social development is very good.
- A small number of pupils regularly arrive a few minutes late.

Commentary

6. Pupils are very proud of their school and enthusiastic about their lessons. They work well together and help those less fortunate than themselves, ensuring all, whatever their difficulties, take part in activities. Behaviour is generally very good, although some pupils, particularly in Year 2, need reminders of what is acceptable. Different break times, when exuberant play is enjoyed, have benefited all ages, giving space for pupils to 'let off steam' and no malicious or unkind behaviour was observed. All pupils develop a strong sense of natural justice, evident throughout the school, and their moral development is very good. House points, awarded for attitude, behaviour, good work and achievements outside school, are eagerly sought and to be

pronounced 'Star of the Week' is a great honour. Sanctions, though they vary between classes, are regarded as fair and effective. There have been no exclusions in the past three years.

7. Despite very good procedures to record and monitor attendance the percentage is below the national average because of the few families who take extended holidays to their homeland and the parents who arrange for holidays or days 'off' during term time. Parents are given regular reminders about punctuality and the effect late arrival has on pupils' education but still the same few regularly arrive minutes after the bell has gone.
8. Good social skills are encouraged from the time children arrive in the nursery, and all are expected to care for others and help adults as they go through the school. Relishing their opportunities, all take responsibilities very seriously, and monitors conscientiously carry out their tasks. School councillors regard their role of voicing the opinions and concerns of their peers, and those of their linked classes in the lower school, as important and feel that the school listens to their views. Councillors are also there 'to help teachers out', reading to pupils in their linked classes and playing with younger ones in the playground. Older pupils return from their residential visit with enhanced independence and maturity, knowing they can rely on others and that they have a duty to them as well as responsibility for themselves. Dinner times are sociable occasions, with all ages mixing well. Pupils learn of the difficulties and dangers outside their school environment and how to cope with these through lessons and the very popular, themed Charter days. Their social development is very good.
9. Pupils' spiritual development, encouraged through assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons as well as others, is satisfactory although opportunities are missed in some other lessons to enhance spiritual awareness. Gasps of indrawn breath were heard in assembly when a picture of Mount Everest was shown as they learnt of Chris Bonnington's determination to persevere with his climb.
10. The school, celebrating its community's rich cultural diversity, ensures pupils know of and understand other religions and traditions as well as their home culture. Visitors and many visits enhance this provision and as a result pupils' cultural development is good.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.1	School data	0.6
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

There were no exclusions in the last year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well. Provision for pupils with specific learning needs and with English as an additional language is very good. The breadth and balance of the curriculum are good. There is very good support, care and guidance for pupils. Links with parents are very good. The school's links with the community are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. They are stronger in Years 3 to 6 than in Year 1 and 2 and need to be consistently good across the school in order for pupils to achieve their full potential. Procedures for assessment and its use are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are very good and expectations are nearly always high.
- English and mathematics are taught well.
- Pupils learn well because management of classes is very effective.
- Very good support is given to pupils with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language.
- Procedures for assessment are very good and the information gained is used very effectively.
- Some lessons are not as inspiring as others.

Commentary

11. Overall, teaching is good. It is good for children in nursery and reception classes, satisfactory for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and very good for pupils in Years 3 to 6. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The proportion of very good and excellent lessons is much higher and planning is now very good.
12. The main strengths in the teaching are teachers' very good relationships with their pupils, high expectations and very good subject knowledge. Good teaching of basic skills in the nursery and reception classes sets solid foundations for future learning. Literacy and numeracy are taught well throughout the school with some very good and excellent teaching observed. In the very best examples, lessons are taught at a really brisk pace with infectious enthusiasm so that pupils are very keen to join in, answering questions and giving suggestions confidently. In these lessons, pupils work at a good rate and learn a great deal. Teachers state what it is they expect pupils to learn in the lesson and share this with them; however, opportunities are frequently missed for pupils to check up on their own learning as teachers rarely encourage pupils to consider what they have learned by the end of the lesson. Marking is good overall. In the very best examples, pupils are told how they have got on and what they need to do next, and personal targets for improvement receive comment. Homework, too, is always marked. It is used very well in a variety of subjects and extends pupils' knowledge or provides opportunities to practise reading. Very good habits are firmly established in the nursery when children take a library book home to share with their family. These habits are continued through the school, with many older pupils reading a great deal by themselves.
13. Teachers have high expectations of good behaviour; displays of the 'Golden rules' in each classroom help to reinforce the need for high standards of co-operation and behaviour. When sharing equipment such as musical instruments, pupils take turns with a minimum of fuss. They develop good listening skills and learn the skills of contributing to discussion without interrupting each other. Much of the skills development such as this is reinforced through the personal and social education programme throughout the school where pupils use sitting in a circle as a means of learning self-control and clear speaking. Principles of right and wrong are underlined well in religious education, for example in a Year 4 lesson on the Ten Commandments, which reinforce the school's expectations of good consistent behaviour effectively. In other lessons such as Year 3 English and Year 6 science, these skills are put into good practice as pupils listen well to instructions and share resources fairly, wasting no time and tackling their work with interest and maturity.
14. Classroom assistants are a valued and valuable part of the teaching team. The support given to pupils with behavioural difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language is also very good and ensures the individual pupil can learn effectively and that they do not impede the learning of others. Pupils with learning difficulties or behavioural problems and more able pupils

are all well supported and make equally good progress as their peers. Support assistants prepare their strategies well in conjunction with the teacher and have clearly defined roles. They often sit near pupils who are experiencing problems, and help them during the first or final parts of the lesson. This is especially effective in many English and mathematics lessons.

15. The school has very good procedures for assessment of pupils' work and their achievements. The teachers use day-to-day marking and assessment of work well to extend pupils' knowledge. The use of an assessment book is effective in tracking pupils' progress. The strategies and practices used by the school allow teachers to develop a clear understanding of pupils' abilities. This information is used well to set pupils in ability groups for specific subjects and provide targets for improvement.
16. Good or better lessons account for about three-quarters of the teaching and learning seen. All of the remainder were satisfactory. In these lessons, the pace was sometimes a little too slow and this resulted in occasional lapses of attention by pupils. Learning is still satisfactory and new skills and knowledge are acquired.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3 (7%)	13 (28%)	17 (37%)	13 (28%)	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **good**. The range of activities outside of lessons is good. Although accommodation and resources are good in the Foundation Stage, overall across the school they are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is equally accessible to all pupils and meets their needs very well.
- Provision for pupils with special education needs is very good.
- The school's participation in the arts, sport and other activities is good.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.
- Opportunities to extend pupils' writing in other subjects are under-developed.
- The contribution of support staff is very good in Years 3 to 6 and makes a positive contribution to the curriculum.

Commentary

17. The school has a good curriculum with a wide range of planned activities that meets pupils' needs. There are interesting opportunities for pupils to enrich their learning and development through a good range of educational visits and school clubs. The teachers and support staff are able to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, while the school recognises that accommodation and resources are vastly improved since the last inspection, it acknowledges much more has yet to be done to further improve them. The surface of the school field, which was identified as needing improvement in the last report, is still awaiting attention, in order that a more consistent and purposeful use can be made of it by pupils and community groups. The governors and headteacher ensure good use is made of the school buildings as a community resource. Several school groups, such as a Parents' Workshop, and community groups, such as St John's Ambulance, use the premises regularly.
18. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and gives time to all the required subjects and activities. Governors are involved in the initial stages of the school improvement plan and they

believe that the headteacher's relationship and communications with the curriculum committee are beneficial and effective. The well-organised curriculum is broad and balanced and is regularly reviewed, with the involvement of governors. Curriculum planning is well informed by the very effective arrangements for assessing pupils' achievements and measuring progress through school. Through their careful planning of the curriculum and day-to-day arrangements, teachers ensure all pupils, whatever their abilities, are given the same opportunity to make at least good progress and the school's provision to ensure this happens is very good. All groups of pupils are fully included in all areas of the school curriculum.

19. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those pupils with English as an additional language is very good. Learning support assistants provide a very high quality of support for pupils as they work very well alongside class teachers to modify the curriculum and support the learning targets identified in individual education plans. These are very carefully drawn up to ensure all pupils with special educational needs receive very good support. The school has established procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs. Each of these groups of pupils is fully included in all areas of the curriculum and achieves very well by the end of Year 6. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils become confident when working with other pupils in their year group. The school plans to increase the quantity and frequency of support by appointing additional learning support staff in the near future.
20. More able pupils are identified well in a range of subjects to enable teachers to closely match the planned work to meet their particular individual needs. The member of staff with responsibility for the more able pupils throughout the school works very closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator and teachers in order that all pupils experience opportunities to develop their skills and talents and be fully challenged.
21. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to participate in activities involving the arts, sport and other activities. Arrangements are made for individuals or groups to visit the school to enrich the curriculum. In addition, the school arranges a range of educational visits to places of interest and Year 6 pupils experience an annual residential visit. Sports coaches visit the school to improve pupils' basketball skills in addition to a wide range of clubs run by teachers. The school also supports a variety of charities enthusiastically and encourages pupils to think of others less fortunate than themselves.
22. The school has initiated the development of cross-curricular links within planning. There are plans to extend these links further through a carefully planned and structured cross-curricular approach to teaching and learning. However, because the school encourages pupils to discuss their ideas and share work with a partner, opportunities are sometimes missed which increase variety and breadth of writing experiences and improve the overall quality of their written English. Similarly, in other subjects pupils have limited opportunities to extend their writing skills by recording their own views, ideas or interpretations of arising issues in lessons and activities.
23. The teachers and support staff are able to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, learning resources are good and the accommodation is satisfactory. The ICT suite is small and becomes very hot during class lessons. The uneven surface of the playing field restricts the range of activities which can be undertaken safely. This problem was identified in the last inspection report and, despite the school's best efforts, remains unresolved.

Care, guidance and support

All pupils receive **very good** advice, information and support. The school's procedures to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the whole school community and arrangements for consulting pupils are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have someone to talk to if they have concerns.
- Security is regularly reviewed.
- Good procedures are followed for child protection.

Commentary

24. The health, safety and welfare of pupils and adults are high priorities and the school's procedures to ensure these are good. Regular risk assessments and security reviews take place, personnel trained in first aid are always on site and practice is good. All teaching staff are aware of child protection issues and what to do should the need arise.
25. As a result of teachers' high expectations and knowledge of pupils, the personal development of pupils is very good although not formally recorded nor monitored. Pupils know their targets for literacy and numeracy and understand what they have to do to achieve these. Comments made in class and on their written work are very useful. Older pupils write personal targets in their home organisers, review these with teachers and try hard to reach them. Because of very good relationships all have an adult to turn to, confident that worries and problems will be resolved. Discussion in circle time is well used to highlight problems and decide how to deal with them. School councillors are very conscientious about collecting the views of their class before their meetings, and speak articulately about these. The school does not otherwise formally consult pupils but they are invited to choose, for instance, history topics and class assembly themes, and it is Year 6 pupils' decision what they perform in the end of summer term presentation.
26. Pupils who have special educational or other needs are very well supported by adults and their peers. Parents are involved in any individual education plans and invited to termly reviews. Those who speak English as an additional language enjoy the same very good support.
27. Arrangements for the induction of new children are good. Children are well prepared by the school before their admission to the nursery or reception class.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links and relationship with parents are **very good**. Support for those who speak English as an additional language is **very good**. Links with other schools, local churches and the local community are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very keen to support their children's education.
- The school facilitates very good support for parents who speak English as an additional language.
- The school provides good information for parents.

Commentary

28. Parents are very pleased their children attend this school, and fully support its aims and ambitions for their children. Warmly invited to share in their education, some parents help in classes, train to hear readers, and others help with after-school clubs. Attendance at consultation meetings and at school productions is very good. However, events organised by the parent teacher association are not always well supported and the recently planned parent quiz was cancelled due to lack of interest. Parents are grateful for the breakfast club, family literacy workshops and the course on 'How to support your child', which some who speak English as an additional language currently enjoy.

29. Parents of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are fully involved in their children's learning. They are consulted when progress and achievements are regularly reviewed and new targets are set and agreed.
30. The prospectus, governors' annual report, news and other letters ensure parents are well informed about the curriculum and their children's progress. Communication daily is very good. The headteacher is in the playground every morning, and she as well as teachers and friendly office staff are always willing to talk to and help parents. Interpreters for the parents of pupils with English as an additional language are found when necessary. Children's annual reports contain the statutory information but the language is not easy for all parents to understand, and most reports lack sufficiently defined targets to inform children where and how to improve. The school ensures that parents who speak English as an additional language understand communications and that those whose children have special educational or other needs are well informed about their children's progress.
31. There are good links with other schools as a result of the new local consortium, and secondary schools report that Olive Hill pupils are well prepared for transfer. Some pupils attend physical education master classes at a local secondary school, and share what they learn with their peers. Transfer arrangements vary but are satisfactory overall and curricular liaison is developing. The practice of Year 6 and Year 7 pupils from the secondary school becoming pen pals and spending a day together in class at one secondary school works well, pupils feel.
32. Members of the local community make a positive contribution to children's education. Some help in school, one talks about his experiences during World War II, and others are involved in the very popular Charter days, when representatives of agencies such as the police and fire services talk to children and, in the case of the latter, bring the fire engine into the grounds – a memorable occasion. The children's outreach worker helps in school, and links with local churches are good and well used.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher, who is well supported by the deputy head and senior staff, provides **very good** leadership and very effective management. Governance of the school is very good and governors give **very good** support and fulfil their statutory duties well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and senior staff have a clear vision for improvement.
- Special educational needs and English as an additional language are very well led and managed.
- There is very effective teamwork in the Foundation Stage.
- Governance is very good and governors play an active role in raising standards and improving the school further.
- The school rigorously evaluates its performance.

Commentary

33. The leadership provided by the headteacher is a strength of the school. She has created a clear sense of direction for the school, based on the creation of a shared vision of success for all. The vision is underpinned by the belief that all pupils can succeed, and that children and learning are the school's priorities. The headteacher has worked hard to develop leadership at all levels, which is apparent in all the school does, from the very good quality of subject leadership to the strong role of the school council. Additionally, the headteacher has developed a culture amongst the staff of sharing good practice. This has resulted in the overall good standard of teaching and learning. Procedures to ensure best value underpin decision making throughout the school. All staff and governors are involved in the school improvement plan annually. It accurately identifies priority areas for improvement, which reflect school aims.

34. The teacher responsible for English as an additional language in school works closely with the co-ordinator for special educational needs, who organises all aspects of the provision very well and has a high awareness and understanding of pupils' needs and how they are to be met. Pupils with English as an additional language have benefited well from further specialist support and advice from the local authority, which enables those pupils to show a marked improvement by the end of Year 6 in national tests. There are good links with the local authority Ethnic Minority Achievement Service. The teacher in charge runs workshops for parents, so that they can develop their own English language skills and in turn can help their own children. A minority of pupils with English as an additional language attend community language sessions after school or at the 'Saturday Club'. Resources for English as an additional language have improved significantly since the last inspection and are well used to impact upon teaching and learning.
35. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the way young children learn and provides good leadership to the very effective team of adults in all classes. The staff plan work together closely, ensuring that teaching builds effectively on what has been previously taught. Throughout the Foundation Stage, the teaching assistants play a significant role in ensuring the children make the progress of which they are capable.
36. The governing body is a committed and strong team and a great strength to the staff and the school. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's success and areas that can be further improved in the future. Governors are committed to principles of high standards and are loyal to the school. They enjoy good relationships with staff and useful links with the local community and in turn the school is appreciative of the support governors provide. In order to improve their expertise, they have evaluated their strengths, and sought further training where appropriate. The governors are helping to shape the future direction of the school very effectively. They know and understand the school well, visit regularly with a clear purpose and agenda, and are aware of its strengths and weaknesses. They carefully monitor progress and implementation of policies through these regular visits. There are strong links established between governors and subject leaders as well as with special educational needs, and through the very detailed reports from the headteacher and subject leaders. They are well informed on the progress of the school's improvement plan. They ensure their spending decisions are followed up and improvements measured where practicable. The significant carry-forward includes funds ear-marked for building work in the next financial year. The school provides good value for money.
37. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses and senior staff have a very good grasp of relevant issues. The school has developed excellent monitoring systems covering all aspects, which results in the school knowing its strengths and areas for improvement. Subject leaders play a key role in this by checking on their colleagues' planning. As a consequence the standard of planning is good, and is partly responsible for the good progress made across the school. Additionally subject leaders observe colleagues teaching and look at pupils' work, and this is contributing to the good teaching in the school. In particular the subject leaders for English and mathematics are continuously monitoring and evaluating their subjects. Pupils' progress is carefully analysed and appropriate action taken to target and improve learning. Subject leaders have identified appropriate key priorities and have put in place effective strategies to raise standards. A major strength is the effective way these strategies are implemented and monitored. Teacher performance and professional development have been closely linked to the school's priorities, and are helping to raise standards further.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	885652
Total expenditure	861606
Expenditure per pupil	2326

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	74994
Balance carried forward to the next	99040

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The Foundation Stage continues to be a strength of the school, despite the significantly lower levels of attainment on entry to the nursery due to the widening catchment of the school. The different entries to the morning and afternoon nursery sessions and two reception classes means that there is a wide range of children with varying length of time of pre-school experiences in both nursery and reception classes. Current assessments show that most children have poor language, mathematical and personal and social skills on entry to the nursery. Although most children make good progress, their skills in these areas are still well below average when they reach the reception classes. Attainment on entry to the nursery in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative areas of learning are well below average and still below average on entry to reception.

During the inspection, it was not possible to gather much evidence about the children's knowledge and understanding of the world so this aspect is not reported separately. However, from the limited evidence collected and informal conversations with the children, the normal curiosity of children of this age is clearly evident.

Teachers and nursery nurses are very clear about what children will learn from each of the activities, and this gives direction and purpose to their work. They make very detailed and accurate assessments of what children achieve and this gives them a clear idea about what each child already knows, understands and can do. This information is then used very effectively to plan the next stage of learning for the children, enabling them to make good progress overall during their time in the Foundation Stage.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for the children's personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall levels of skills are low on entry to the nursery.
- Teachers and nursery nurses work together extremely well to create a purposeful atmosphere in which children become secure and confident learners.
- Children show curiosity in activities and there are good opportunities for them to develop independence and work collaboratively.

Commentary

38. By the end of the reception classes, most children are unlikely to attain the learning goals for this area but nonetheless achieve well and make good progress because of the good teaching. This is due to the way that all staff make a sustained and focused effort to extend children's personal, social and emotional development through well-planned and well-resourced activities. All adults provide very good examples for the children and good behaviour is encouraged at all times. Most children are learning to get on very well together. Often encouraged to work in pairs, they show sensitivity towards their classmates. Most children are eager to come to school. The very good relationships already well established in both classes mean that children enjoy school and confidently try new things. They quickly ask for help when struggling with a task because they feel secure and they are not afraid to get something wrong.
39. Teachers promote personal hygiene and the social skills of children at the daily fruit and drinks time. Good opportunities are taken to engage children in conversation and encourage good manners. This is an important social time that all staff make very good use of to develop children's awareness of the needs of others.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children start school with low levels of language skills.
- Adults value talk; they encourage children to describe what they are doing and explain what they have done.
- The book areas are attractive and invite and encourage children to develop a love of reading.
- Letter sounds are taught well.

Commentary

40. Children start in the nursery class with poor speaking skills. They often use gestures rather than words, and some children do not respond to questions or comments at all. A regular circle time is used well to encourage speaking and listening skills but most children are unlikely to attain the learning goals by the end of Foundation Stage. Speaking skills are developed well in the nursery and further in the reception class. Teaching is good. Teachers model talk well and give children many opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings. In question and answer sessions, teachers and support assistants are quick to assess children who need to be involved and give encouragement and support to the less confident. This enables all groups of children to develop their speaking and listening skills effectively.

41. Many reception children are now becoming more familiar with letter names and sounds but many of them struggle to form letters correctly. Although there are lots of opportunities in both classes to develop these skills, only a few children write well-formed letters. In the reception classes, a few of the more able children accurately copy the adults' writing and some write one or two sentences independently, such as when writing a letter from Goldilocks to the three bears. However, far fewer children than found in most other schools write at the level expected for their age.

42. The book areas are cosy and inviting and, because of this, children enjoy browsing through books. Although a few of the reception children recognise some words in isolation, they do not attempt to pick them out in books. Many children look at the pictures and, although they know that print carries meaning, they make little attempt to decipher the words.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and children achieve well from a low level of skills on entry to the nursery.
- Most children count to 10 and back.
- Children enjoy lively mental mathematics sessions and join in counting rhymes and songs.
- Good resources are used well to provide a stimulating range of practical activities.

Commentary

43. Although not as many children attain the early learning goals for this area of learning as expected nationally, most are close to doing so and do well to achieve as well as they do. This is because of the good range of mathematical activities in both the nursery and reception classes. There are many mathematics-based tasks set up daily, such as number jigsaws, games using positional language, and making pictures from shapes. There are many opportunities for children to count and order numbers around the rooms.

44. Teaching provides for a good range of practical activities that engage children's interest in counting and sorting and develops their understanding well. Most are already confident in counting to 10 and a few more able children count to 20 and beyond. Children join in the lively mental mathematics start to lessons with enthusiasm and take part in well-organised independent tasks with good concentration. Careful attention is paid to learning mathematical vocabulary and formation of numbers, which promote children's basic numeracy skills well.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision for the children's creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The well-equipped role-play corner stimulates the children's imagination.
- Musical experiences enhance children's imagination and experiences.
- There are good opportunities for the children to design and construct.

Commentary

45. Children achieve well in both the nursery class and the reception classes as a result of good teaching. Children's work is valued and displayed attractively. Many children are pleased to tell which piece of work is theirs and they take pride in their efforts. Nursery children show confidence in using construction kits and children in both reception classes are beginning to use scissors with a good degree of accuracy. All children show enjoyment and enthusiasm in listening to music in their assembly times and a visit by the local fire service enhanced their curiosity and interest in how things work.

46. All classes have well-equipped play corners that are used well to stimulate children's imagination. Children in the nursery enjoy role-play based on themselves and are already beginning to introduce a story line in their play. Most children are likely to attain the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for the children's physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children are well co-ordinated and exercise vigorously.
- The outside play area is thoughtfully designed and equipped.
- The physical education lessons are of good quality.

Commentary

47. There has been good improvement in this aspect of the provision. The children now have access to a secure and well-designed play area outside the classroom. This enables the adults to provide daily opportunities for the children to climb and balance, and either push or pedal various wheeled vehicles. The staff also makes good use of this facility for activities linked with other areas of learning, for example by using large tiles with numerals for hopscotch and other counting equipment.

48. Teaching is good; children are fast approaching the targets expected for children of this age. In one lesson, the nursery children were observed jogging, running and striding with good awareness of the space around them. They work well independently and in pairs. A reception class lesson was very well managed and the children were taught how to handle benches and

mats safely and with good effect. They then demonstrated good levels of skill in moving along the benches in different ways.

49. The children's finer physical control is also well advanced. Most are developing greater dexterity with buttons and zips as they get changed. Their control of pencils and paintbrushes is also good because the adults take great care to develop a correct grip. This starts the children on the right road and also supports the development of their early writing skills.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average.
- Pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- Teaching and learning in English are very good in Years 3 to 6.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- The English curriculum is good but there insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum.

Commentary

50. In both Year 2 and Year 6, standards in English are below average, with particular weaknesses in writing. Pupils come to school with standards well below the national average and the majority do well to achieve levels that are close to the national expectations by the age of eleven. Standards are below average because there are fewer pupils attaining the higher levels than is found nationally. Boys perform less well than girls. The school has identified this and is effectively implementing a good range of strategies to help raise boys' standards. For example, effective use is made of initiatives to provide extra support, targeted particularly towards pupils identified as in need of more intensive help to boost their progress in the acquisition of basic skills in literacy. Achievement for most pupils is good. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is often very good, particularly for more able pupils learning English as an additional language who benefit from the school's provision for gifted and talented pupils.
51. Reading is taught thoroughly so that pupils build on the skills learned in Years 1 and 2. Most pupils enjoy reading and know several ways of finding out what the unfamiliar words are. A discussion with older pupils shows that they can read independently, have access to a wide choice of appropriate literature and can talk with knowledge about their favourite authors. Often the pupils' vocabulary is restricted through lack of experience and this lowers standards in writing. Despite the fact that many of them were at an early stage in learning English when they started school, by the time they leave at the end of Year 6 most pupils reach average standards in speaking and listening. Pupils listen and converse confidently and show good consideration for the speaker.
52. Teaching and learning are satisfactory for pupils in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 they are better, particularly in Year 6, and are very good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use effectively in their planning and teaching. Teachers know pupils very well and ensure that all of them are fully included in the lessons. Assistants and specialist teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well prepared for lessons and maintain good concentration in the classroom. Boys and girls from a range of different ethnic backgrounds work together naturally and without inhibition. Activities and resources are carefully matched to the purpose of the lesson and the different abilities of the children. This leads to pupils making good gains in learning new skills.

For example, in a Year 6 lesson about conditional clauses, work was carefully matched to different abilities. Teachers mark work thoroughly, offering useful guidance on how pupils can improve. As a result pupils have a good understanding of their own learning with clear targets and are able to fit new learning into their current understanding, because teachers explain this clearly at the beginning of a lesson. Pupils' learning is further helped by teachers using time at the end of lessons to reflect on what has been learnt.

53. The subject leader is determined to raise standards. She constantly monitors teaching and learning, by looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning and by observing lessons. Thorough analysis of national and school test marks is used to pinpoint how particular groups of pupils need supporting, and swift action is then taken. Very good guidance is given to teachers and leads to pupils making good progress across the school, including pupils with special educational needs. Although standards across the school are below the national average, this shows good achievement from pupils' low starting points when they enter the school.
54. The school places a strong emphasis on language work and basic skills are developed well. This was recognised by the award of the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2003. There is a very good structure to the development of reading skills and resources for this are continually being improved and are of a high quality and good range. Pupils learn about how to write for many different purposes, such as letters, reports, instructions, poems and stories. This broad range of writing is carefully structured so that pupils make small confident steps forward with their learning. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils were learning how to write an advertisement to develop their skills of persuasive writing.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. The teaching of English is well supported by printed material in classrooms and there is some good display of pupils' work around the school. This includes work linked to other subjects. Writing is combined with ICT and art in some displays. However, opportunities for writing in a variety of contexts across the curriculum are limited and only limited use is made of exemplars of good practice, either in lessons or in classroom display. The school has appropriately identified the need for improvement in writing, including the need for more opportunities for writing across the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teaching and learning are very good overall.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is very good.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

56. In the current Year 2, there is a very small proportion of pupils reaching the higher level of attainment and as a result standards remain below average. Overall, pupils make good progress compared to the very low level of attainment upon entry to the school. The school has identified the need to provide support for teachers in Years 1 and 2 to enable them to use a greater variety of mathematical strategies in lessons. The school is encouraged by the improved standards in Year 6 in 2003 and is working hard in order to maintain these standards this year. Currently pupils achieve well in mathematics by the end of Year 6. During the inspection in the Year 6 lessons on shape and space, where teaching is good or excellent, there is evidence that the majority of pupils are seen to be working at the level expected of pupils of their age, but

overall, based upon all inspection evidence, standards remain below average. This is because in the present Year 6, there is a higher proportion of pupils whose attainment in mathematics is below the national average and a smaller proportion whose attainment exceeds the standard expected for their age. Over time the group of pupils in the current Year 6 classes has experienced a high level of movement of pupils coming into and leaving the school. It provides considerable challenges to the school to maintain continuity of learning and ensure all pupils make the progress expected of them.

57. The quality of teaching and learning in school has improved since the last inspection. The quality of learning is now also very good, helped by the very good attitudes and behaviour shown by the pupils. Achievement is good overall. Teachers planning together in each year groups serves to improve the quality of teaching across the school. Teachers identify and share learning objectives with pupils and where marking is seen to be good teachers make positive comments relating to the learning objectives, so that not only do pupils know what they are to learn, they also understand what they need to do to improve further. Teachers have very high expectations and as a result pupils generally present their work neatly, enjoy the activities and take pride in their work. The school's recent focus to develop the strategy of 'talking partners' has been very effective. Pupils show a very positive attitude towards this approach, where they are seen to be focused and sensible in discussions. Assessment arrangements are very effective and assessment information is very well used to inform planning and respond to individual pupils' needs. The thoroughness and constructiveness of assessment, its use and the improved system to monitor pupils' progress represent a marked improvement since the last inspection.
58. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve very well because the level of support they receive is of a high quality, particularly in Years 3 to 6, where learning support assistants make a significant contribution to the learning and achievement for pupils with special educational needs and lower ability in mathematics. There are pupils with English as an additional language who also benefit from additional bilingual support in lessons. Teachers and their assistants modify the mathematics curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils.
59. The subject is well led and managed by an experienced co-ordinator who is committed to providing a range of interesting activities within a well-planned curriculum to motivate pupils and meet their differing needs. As a result pupils enjoy their work and recognise their own achievements as they extend their mathematical thinking and meet their individual targets. The co-ordinator has clear ideas of the strategies that need to be employed to further improve provision and raise standards. She is proud of the improvements the school has made since the last inspection and continues to evaluate the good provision so as to further extend it. The co-ordinator recognises the importance of maintaining a consistently high subject profile across the school. She also acknowledges that at the time of the inspection not all displays reflect or represent pupils' work, to stimulate interest, challenge mathematical thinking or celebrate their achievements.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. There is evidence to demonstrate appropriate links with other subjects but the co-ordinator knows these are not always identified or consistently well planned. Pupils have a number of opportunities to develop mathematical skills, for example in history in Year 2. Similarly, in Year 6 pupils are asked to find and place other important dates on a timeline as part of their Victorian study. Older pupils also use bar charts to make graphical representations of 'dissolving solids' in science. During the inspection ICT was seen to be used well, for example where the interactive whiteboards impacted upon teaching and learning in mathematics. The opportunities for teachers and pupils to use the ICT suite for mathematics are restricted and the co-ordinator plans to develop a wider use of ICT to support teaching and learning across the school. The school has good plans to introduce a new approach to cross-curricular planning to provide

opportunities to incorporate mathematics activities to further develop mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

The provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching and learning are good, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- The great majority of pupils respond to the planned activities with interest and enthusiasm and achieve well.
- The planning of the curriculum is good with a new scheme of work for science producing better continuity and development of the pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- More use could be made of literacy, numeracy and computer skills in recording the data and observations of experiments.

Commentary

61. Standards remain below average but the majority of pupils are achieving well as they progress through the school. Their skills of investigation are good overall. Most pupils of different abilities achieve well, but the proportion of higher attaining pupils is not matching the levels expected of seven and eleven year olds in the national tests each year. The school has an increasing proportion of pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language. Additionally, the current Year 6 group has an above average number of pupils who have entered the school over the last four years with standards below average.
62. The teachers' lesson planning is now supported by national guidance, which is enabling better development of skills, knowledge and understanding across the school. The great majority of the pupils are enthused and engaged by the activities planned for them and respond with interest. For example, in the Year 6 lesson, the pupils developed their understanding of how to plan an investigation to answer the question 'Do all materials dissolve in water?' Good emphasis on the correct use of vocabulary successfully developed their understanding, and very good support for pupils with special educational needs and those few pupils with English as an additional language, enabled all pupils to achieve better than expected. Talking to pupils afterwards showed they had a clear understanding of the processes involved and could justify their decisions sensibly and scientifically.
63. Year 6 pupils use their mathematical skills in recording the results of their investigations in the form of bar charts, tally charts and tables. However, the pupils do not make enough use of computers for this type of recording. The pupils' enthusiasm for science was evident in a Year 3 lesson, where they investigated how rocks could be sorted by a range of criteria. They were fully involved and co-operated well in small groups. Much science work is planned for pairs or small groups and this contributes well to the personal and social development of pupils across the school. However, the marking of the work does not always give the pupils any indication of what they must do in order to improve. This remains an area of improvement for the school. The subject is well led and managed, and the resources are good. They are well organised, readily available and used effectively to enhance the pupils' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good overall so pupils are keen to learn, and by the end of Year 6 achieve very well.
- Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are very good, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- There has been a marked improvement since the last inspection.
- Opportunities for ICT to impact further in other subjects could be increased.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

Commentary

64. The school has done well to improve upon standards reported at the time of the last inspection in ICT. Average standards at the end of Year 6 have been reached. Pupils achieve very well because they are learning skills in a planned step-by-step progression and have a number of opportunities to apply and develop these skills. The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs to enable them to develop their skills. These pupils work with partners who are carefully selected by teachers so that those more able can support a less confident or experienced pupil. Teaching is very good which results in very good learning for pupils of all abilities. With the help and advice of the experienced co-ordinator and use of national guidance, teachers carefully select resources and activities to match the pupils' needs, and plan effective links with other subjects, where possible. Teachers share expertise and plan together in each year group, which provides consistency and continuity of curriculum coverage and extended learning opportunities for all pupils. Pupils are keen to participate in lessons and enjoy a range of interesting activities. Year 6 pupils say they have "enjoyed developing a range of ICT skills" and are currently working in pairs on a *PowerPoint* presentation to produce an interactive book. Older pupils have opportunities to plot their own progress as the school implements a self-evaluation initiative. Pupils are very well motivated to become engrossed in their work, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The subject contributes very well to pupils' personal development. Social skills are positively influenced by teachers' high expectations of co-operative work of pupils. Pupils support each other in their learning and are proud to share their ideas and skills.
65. Major weaknesses have been addressed successfully since the last inspection and there have been significant improvements in resources. Within the separate, albeit small, ICT suite, networked machines enable all pupils to be included in a wide range of curriculum opportunities available to them. All staff have successfully completed ICT training and are now confident users who, in the lessons seen in Years 3 to 6, share their very good subject knowledge with pupils. ICT is an integrated element in pupils' work in school. The ICT curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements and all aspects are covered. Resources are used very effectively in the suite by staff and pupils. This clearly contributes to the popularity of ICT and has impacted upon improving skills and standards across the school.
66. The subject is very well led and managed by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator. She has a clear understanding of how to improve standards and is continually striving to further extend ICT opportunities, further improve resources and move the subject forward. The school is aware that the suite is fully used, enabling every class to visit twice weekly and that this facility has limited ventilation, which impinges upon pupils' learning. Good time allocation provides for the teaching of ICT skills and one additional cross-curricular lesson where ICT supports learning in another subject. Options and flexibility to provide more frequent use of the developing technology to support teaching and learning in all subjects are currently limited. For example, only three classrooms have interactive whiteboards; these are very well utilised and impact upon the quality of teaching and learning in the school. Within the developing role the co-ordinator supports colleagues in a variety of ways and monitors teaching, learning and

subject performance through examination of pupils' work and lesson observations. The co-ordinator runs two clubs, for younger and older pupils respectively.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. The use of ICT across the curriculum is good in the computer suite and good use is made of classroom computers to support learning in other subjects. Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to develop skills in subjects such as English, geography, history and art. While teachers in Year 6 were seen to make very effective use of the interactive whiteboard to support teaching and learning in mathematics, opportunities for pupils to use the computer suite to improve their learning in the mathematics are currently restricted. Pupils recognise the value of ICT and the relevance of its use as they use a range of skills in other subjects.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**. In addition to the two lessons seen, inspectors looked at the previous work of pupils and teachers' planning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is now planned more systematically to ensure better continuity and progress in developing pupils' knowledge and skills.
- More opportunities need to be given to allow pupils to practise their writing skills.

Commentary

68. The teaching and learning of geography have improved since the last inspection, particularly in junior classes where attainment was judged to be slightly below expectations. Current standards of work are broadly in line with those expected and the majority of pupils are making satisfactory progress as they move through the school. This has been helped by the school's use of national guidance for teaching and learning in geography, across the school. Teaching and learning are now satisfactory and sometimes good, as was seen in the Year 6 lessons. These were very well planned and managed effectively so that all groups of pupils could extend their knowledge and understanding of how seaside features were formed. Very good use of ICT was seen, which engaged and interested all pupils. In Year 2 pupils showed a secure understanding of the differences between natural and man-made features. The school makes good use of the local environment and makes visits further afield to develop pupils' sense of place and the impact of people on different places. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection but should consider making available more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in recording their ideas and opinions.

HISTORY

The quality of provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of planning across all year groups is enabling better progression and continuity through building on previous skills, knowledge and understanding.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is often good.
- Good working attitudes are shown by pupils in lessons.
- Leadership of the subject is good.
- Pupils too often record their work pictorially on worksheets, which inhibits their writing skills and opportunities to express their ideas and opinions.

Commentary

69. Attainment in history by ages seven and eleven is in line with that expected nationally and the achievement of the majority of pupils is satisfactory. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress, often as a result of well-targeted support by teachers and learning support assistants.
70. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and sometimes good, because in lessons teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subject. They often capture the imagination of the pupils who in turn respond very positively in lessons. Whole-class discussions build upon pupils' understanding of the past, and further develop their skills in interpreting historical events. This was well seen in a Year 3 lesson where pupils were able to use portraits of Henry VIII as a source of information to build up a picture of his life in Tudor times. Year 2 pupils were able to correctly sequence some of the main events of the life of Queen Victoria, so building up a sense of chronology through times past. The progress pupils make in this aspect of history was clearly evident in a scrutiny of the work of Year 6 pupils, who were able to see how the past has been represented and whether that was a true picture or not.
71. History makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' literacy, mathematics and ICT development. There are opportunities for pupils to use computers for research on the Internet under careful supervision. The achievement of pupils could be higher if opportunities to record their work extended beyond the use of worksheets.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils respect the values and beliefs of others.
- The subject makes useful links with other curricular areas and adds greatly to pupils' personal development.
- Lessons could be improved by providing more opportunities to study artefacts and to write about what pupils have learnt.

Commentary

72. In religious education pupils achieve standards in line with levels expected in the locally agreed syllabus by the time they reach Year 6. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils achieve well. The good relationships give pupils the security to discuss the values of other faiths and religions.
73. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers help pupils to apply their understanding of religious education beyond the subject. In personal, social and health education pupils consider important issues such as truth and honesty. They consider the problems that occur when different religious beliefs come into conflict. There are good links with external religious groups. The subject makes a very positive contribution to pupils' personal development and extends their moral and cultural understanding.
74. Pupils show respect for the values and beliefs of others. This is reflected in the displays around the school and in the ways that pupils positively value the contributions of others. Teachers use the expertise of visitors to introduce pupils to different faiths, and pupils respond well. Pupils show good skills in research and benefit from practical activities such as interrogating websites to find key words to help them develop their ideas. Teachers use the interest of pupils with particular knowledge of different faiths in whole-class discussions.

75. The quality of the limited amount of written work examined does not reflect the standards pupils exhibit in their discussions. Recording their learning in written form is unsatisfactory. Pupils' work is marked but comments to let pupils know what they can do to improve are limited. Presentation does not reflect pupils' knowledge and understanding. Although pupils have a good knowledge of a range of religious topics they rarely write extensively. The lack of challenge in some of the writing means that pupils have not had the opportunity to think through ideas and develop them at greater length. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to examine and explore artefacts from different religions.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Judgements on provision, achievement and quality of teaching and learning are not possible for design and technology or music as neither of these subjects was a focus for inspection. No lessons were seen.

However, in **design and technology** there is a substantial amount of evidence around the school, particularly in classrooms and corridor displays and in folders with the results of previous projects and lessons, which indicates standards are in line with those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The projects undertaken by each year group provide opportunities for pupils to understand the design and technology process while developing appropriate skills associated with designing and making. Design and technology makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal and social development because pupils are actively encouraged to work closely together, share ideas and help each other in designing and making the finished item. Although there is limited evidence of pupils' evaluation of the work, Year 6 pupils recognise the purpose and value of evaluation as an integral part at the design and technology process. Displays and small amounts of work in folders show how pupils make decisions about their design and explain how, for example, in Year 6 they made models of fairground rides, which could be operated. Links with other subjects are clearly identified, such as mathematics, in the use of graphs to represent 'pizza toppings' in Year 3 and 4. Pupils enjoy design and technology lessons and Year 6 pupils attribute this partly to the longer sessions allocated to the subject, which gives them 'more time to spend' on their project without clearing away resources, materials and tools.

Music is promoted in school in assemblies where pupils are heard to sing with energy and enthusiasm. Year 6 pupils say they 'like music' because they enjoy opportunities to perform in school, such as in Year 5 when they 'wrote their own Christmas songs'. There is a good range of other opportunities for pupils to be involved in and enjoy music; for example, there are recorder clubs and a handbell club. A small number of pupils benefit from keyboard, guitar and brass tuition and the school choir has performed to audiences at the National Indoor Arena and Birmingham Symphony Hall. Year 6 pupils remember these, along with the performance at Dudley Zoo with a number of other local schools, as providing much obvious enjoyment.

ART AND DESIGN

Standards in art and design are **good**, based on a scrutiny of previous work and work on display. No lessons were seen.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The planned curriculum provides good opportunities for all pupils to experience a wide range of materials and develop a wide range of skills.
- Attainment is above average for most pupils.

Commentary

76. Attainment by the ages of seven and eleven is above that expected nationally. The majority of pupils achieve well through a well-planned programme of experiences that develops skills in a range of media. These are well displayed around the school and provide inspiration and

encouragement to all pupils. No firm judgement on the quality of teaching was possible, but scrutiny of pupils' previous work shows that they are taught well to develop their skills. For example, following a visit to Kinver Outdoor Centre, younger pupils developed their own three-dimensional sculptures using natural materials. The work of famous artists such as Picasso and Van Gogh, and the use of the cultures of ethnic groups in the school, such as Rangoli and Diwali patterns, help to extend the knowledge and understanding of all pupils. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory and the resources are managed well so that they make a positive contribution to the standards pupils achieve. The school has improved standards since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and in Year 6 it is very good.
- Pupils have very good attitudes towards physical education.
- Subject leadership is very good.

Commentary

77. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. All the sections of physical education identified in the National Curriculum are provided for. Swimming is undertaken in Year 4 and standards achieved by the time the pupils leave the school are good. Almost all the pupils, with very few exceptions, achieve the minimum national requirements, with a significant proportion attaining standards higher than expected.
78. Pupils enjoy the active and sometimes competitive nature of the subject and respond well to the tasks set, playing co-operatively together. Pupils benefit from a broad range of activities. Pupils enjoy opportunities for physical activity and express themselves confidently. The pupils in their relationships with one another follow the very good relationships between the teachers and pupils. They are generous in their applause for success, and helpful and courteous when they make observations about each other's performance, encouraging each other to do better, such as when a groups of Year 6 pupils were developing their throwing and catching skills.
79. The teaching of physical education is good. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and their teaching of basic skills is good. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own performance, to become self-critical in attempting to improve the standards of their skills. This they do in an increasingly mature way. The enthusiasm of the teachers for the subject is conveyed to the pupils and maintains their motivation for the subject.
80. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has sensible plans for the development of the subject and to extend the experience of pupils outside school. She monitors teachers' planning and provides feedback and advice. The nationally recognised scheme of work is being used, with suitable adaptations to make it relevant to the school. The quality of learning resources is good and used well. The uneven surface of the field, as recognised in the last report, restricts the range of activities which can be undertaken safely.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for pupils to develop personal attributes and social skills are very good.
- The inclusive nature of the school ensures that all pupils are valued and made to feel part of the school.
- Pupils show a mature attitude towards the school's personal, social and health education and citizenship programme.

Commentary

81. The school ensures that a good range of opportunities covers all aspects of development in this subject. At the time of the last inspection the Young Person's Charter was judged to be a strength of the school because it promotes self-esteem, independence and citizenship. Personal, social and health education opportunities have been further improved whilst retaining all the positive benefits recognised at the last inspection. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are actively involved in well-structured and organised challenges on 'Charter days' with a clear purpose while still consistently developing social skills. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 enjoy 'Charter afternoons' which enable them to develop personal and social skills within well-organised activities to heighten the sense of occasion. The award system is based upon completion of tasks and pupils receive certificates at the end of the year to acknowledge and reward their achievements. It serves as a further incentive for pupils to work well with, and for, others. Pupils in Year 3 to 6 consult with the teachers to confirm their achievements to form a self-assessment opportunity through evaluation of their own work and involvement in tasks. Year 6 pupils say how much they enjoy 'Charter days' because they 'do different things and topics with different teachers' in addition to benefiting from visitors to the school. Pupils are encouraged to look after each other and circle time activities offer opportunities for pupils' concerns to be shared.
82. In the two lessons seen pupils showed positive attitudes towards learning and achieved well overall because opportunities were created for group discussions. There is time for reflection to consider implications of their behaviour and actions, linked directly to a number of issues to which the pupils can readily relate. Pupils work very well together, with a partner or in small groups. Where teaching was seen to be very good the techniques were very effective for developing and involving pupils in discussion. Both pupils and teachers were open and honest in their comments.
83. Amongst a number of their suggestions to develop personal, social and moral qualities, Year 6 pupils highlight the extent of thought made towards their choices, for example, "I believe we can always work harder", "...if you work hard you succeed" and "...you should respect families". Personal, social and health education and citizenship are fully integrated into the curriculum of other subjects and are planned over each calendar year to be incorporated into school assemblies. The school has become a 'Health Promoting' school and the personal, social and health education policy is supported by the sex education policy. The drug awareness policy is planned to be implemented fully during the summer term 2004. The subject is very well led and managed by an enthusiastic and committed co-ordinator.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

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

Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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