

INSPECTION REPORT

**OUR LADY OF FATIMA CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Harborne, Birmingham.

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103461

Headteacher: Mrs M Speers

Lead inspector: Mr Sean O'Toole

Dates of inspection: 29th September – 1st October 2003

Inspection number: 257108

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:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	207
School address:	Winchfield Drive Harborne Birmingham
Postcode:	B17 8TR
Telephone number:	0121 4292900
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs F Woolley
Date of previous inspection:	30 th March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This Roman Catholic primary school is situated in Harborne, a suburb of Birmingham and serves the parish of Quinton. With 207 pupils (105 girls and 102 boys), it is about the same size as most primary schools and is oversubscribed. Thirty children are in the Foundation Stage (the reception class). The large majority of the pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage. Eight pupils speak English as an additional language; their home languages are Punjabi and Spanish. The pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic groups and attainment on entry for most pupils is above average. Very few pupils (five) have special educational needs, which is well below average. Most of these pupils have difficulties including speech, communication, social and emotional needs. No pupil has a statement of special educational need. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (six per cent) is below average. The school has received national or local achievement awards for the previous three years. In July 2003, the school was severely damaged by fire.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20891	Sean O'Toole	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum; English as additional language; Science Information and communication technology; Art and design
14178	Patricia Willman	Lay inspector	
21114	Malcolm Johnstone	Team inspector	Special educational needs; Maths; Design and technology Geography; History
21858	John Pryor	Team inspector	English; Music; Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with some very good features. The pupils are very successful in national tests and achievement is good in English, mathematics and science. The leadership and management of the school are good and there is strong commitment to promoting the school's aims and inclusion. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science, and pupils achieve well in these subjects
- Pupils are very good at using their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects
- Teaching is good
- The pupils are well behaved, thoughtful and considerate
- Leadership has been very successful in improving the high standards in English, mathematics and science
- Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage
- The governors are highly committed to the school and support it very well
- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in art and technological subjects
- Assessment is not rigorous enough in subjects other than English, mathematics and science
- The school has a very good partnership with parents and the community
- The school and the community have responded very well to the difficulties caused by the recent fire

Since the school was inspected in 1998 the rate of improvement has been good. The school has raised the already high standards in English, mathematics and science. Leadership and management have improved the use of data analysis to set ambitious targets. The quality of teaching has been maintained. There have been improvements in the provision for the arts and cultural development although more remains to be done to extend pupils' achievement in some areas. The school is in a secure position to build upon its success.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A*	A	A*	A
Mathematics	A*	A	A*	A
Science	A*	A	A	A

*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.*

Because of good teaching in the Foundation Stage the children achieve well and are on course to exceed the goals expected of them in all of the areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1. Inspection evidence and national test results show that by the end of Year 2, standards are very high and among the top five per cent of schools in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are among the top five per cent of schools and well above average in science. When compared with similar schools standards are well above average. The school's test results are impressive and have been at these levels for several years. They represent **good overall achievement**. In history and geography standards are above average and pupils achieve well; pupils are particularly good at using their literacy skills to support their work in these subjects. Achievement in art and design, information and communication technology (ICT) and design and

technology is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve very well. The performance of boys has risen at a faster rate than girls and, boys achieve better than girls in most aspects although the percentages are small and not significant.

The pupils have good attitudes to school. They are enthusiastic, keen to learn and arrive at school punctually. Older pupils take responsibility very seriously. Standards of behaviour are good and the pupils are polite, considerate and thoughtful. Attendance is above the national average. **The spiritual and cultural awareness of the pupils is good and staff make very good provision for pupils' moral and social development.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. The **teaching is good** and supports the effective learning of all groups and abilities of pupils. The teaching in the reception class is good and is very well supported by the classroom assistant. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very effective. The most effective teaching was seen in English, mathematics and science and there were particular strengths in Years 2 and 6 where many of the lessons were very good. Pupils are hardworking and productive, taking pride in their achievements and in presenting their work well. Strengths in the teaching include the fostering of effective working relationships, very good behaviour management, the use of resources to make lessons interesting and opportunities to extend learning through homework. Support staff make a valuable contribution to learning. Assessment is mostly good in English, mathematics and science but underdeveloped in other subjects. Some teachers use marking effectively to guide pupils on what to do next.

The broad, balanced and relevant curriculum is of good quality. It is planned to meet the needs of all pupils and is readily accessible to them. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed very well across the curriculum. The resources and accommodation are good. The staff have coped very well with the difficulties caused by the recent fire and have a planned programme of replacement. The school has a very good partnership with parents and the local community. The school provides effective care for the pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is good. The effective teamwork between staff and governors leads to clear educational direction and high standards in English, mathematics and science. **The management of the school and its governance are good.** Senior staff and governors monitor and evaluate the standards, teaching and learning effectively, although more emphasis is needed on subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Financial control and routine administration are good. Spending priorities are linked well to the school's development plan.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The large majority of parents hold the school in high regard. Most pupils like school and enjoy their learning.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

In order to build upon the very high standards attained in English, mathematics and science the school should:

- Further improve pupils' achievements in the creative arts and technological subjects
- Ensure that assessment is used more effectively to plan what pupils do next

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above the national average. Pupils' achievement in these subjects is good. Pupils achieve well in history and geography and standards are above average. In the other subjects inspected, standards are similar to those expected for pupils' age and their achievements are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well in English, mathematics and science
- Children in the reception class exceed the expected goals in the areas of learning by the start of Year 1
- While there are pockets of good work in art, design and technology and ICT, skills are not developed consistently and the pupils should do better
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) achieve very well
- Pupils have very good literacy skills

Commentary

1. Most children starting school have above average levels of skills, knowledge and understanding. They achieve well in the reception class and achieve well. Contributory factors to their good attainment include good teaching, a well focused curriculum and effective assessment so that work is planned to meet their needs.

Standards at the end of the Foundation Stage

Standards in relation to the early learning goals by the end of reception in:	
Personal, social and emotional development	Good
Communication, language and literacy	Good
Mathematical development	Good
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Good
Physical development	Good
Creative development	Good

Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.

2. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 2, standards, when compared nationally and with similar schools, were among the top five per cent of schools in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence, supported by provisional results from the 2003 tests, indicates that these impressive results have been maintained. The strong focus on developing basic skills, very effective teaching and the targeting of writing have helped pupils to consistently achieve well for several years.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	19.3 (18.9)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	18.7 (17.6)	14.4 (14.3)

Mathematics	20.2 (18.2)	16.5 (16.2)
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There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. In the 2002 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, results were among the top five per cent of schools in English and mathematics and well above the national average in science. Inspection evidence supported by provisional results from the 2003 national tests indicates that these standards have been maintained. In all three subjects, standards are well above average when compared with schools with similar intakes and there has been improvement since the previous inspection. The results represent very good achievement. Analysis of test results over the last four years shows that boys have improved their performance at a quicker rate than the girls. Overall, boys attain slightly better than girls in mathematics and science but the figures are not significant. Different groups of pupils achieve well. Above average pupils generally achieve well in all three subjects and the number of pupils reaching the higher levels in tests outstrips the national average. The school makes good use of data to set challenging targets in English and mathematics and is on course to achieve them because of consistent and effective teaching in these subjects.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.7 (30)	27 (27)
Mathematics	30.5 (28.6)	26.7 (26.6)
Science	30.9 (30.8)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. All aspects of English are developed well and the school's focus on extending pupils' writing skills has brought particular success in strengthening the already impressive work done by pupils. The key strengths in English are pupils' very good speaking and listening skills, which equip them effectively to hold interesting and well informed conversation. Literacy skills are very advanced and the pupils and read accurately with expression and meaning and write to a high standard using handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar very well. Pupils' mathematical understanding is of high calibre. They have a very advanced grasp of number, mental strategies and written calculation. Their mathematical vocabulary is very good. Science is taught very well and pupils have a very good knowledge of all strands of the subject. They understand scientific terms and processes very well. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills very well in history and geography and often write imaginative accounts with detailed description and analysis. Their graph work and use of charts and measures in recording scientific experiments is good.
5. Standards in history and geography are above average and pupils have a wide and thorough knowledge. Although some headway has been made in improving some aspects of three-dimensional work in art and design since the previous inspection, standards are average and could be better if skills, knowledge and understanding were developed more consistently. This is also true in design and technology where, despite good pockets of work, there is a lack of consistency in building upon previous learning because of weaknesses in assessment. Standards in ICT are average overall but pupils have insufficient opportunity to use control technology and this aspect of the subject is weak. Conversely, pupils have good skills in word processing. Teachers make appropriate use of computers to support the work in subjects linked to literacy but there are few opportunities for pupils to enhance their work in art and design, design and technology and science.
6. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and the work set for them is challenging. They make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils are keen to come to school and attendance for the last year was good. This reflects their good attitudes to the educational and personal opportunities that the school offers. Pupils respond very positively to the strong Catholic spiritual, moral, social and cultural values promoted by the school and their behaviour and personal development are good. The overall quality of these aspects of pupils' development has been maintained well since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very willing to take responsibility
- Parents and pupils trust the school to deal with any anti-social or unkind behaviour
- Pupils learn to respect others and to be tolerant of differences and are prepared well for life in a diverse society
- Pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and are consistently encouraged and praised for making the right choices

Commentary

7. Although attendance at school has been consistently good over recent years, there are a small number of parents who, despite the school's advice to the contrary, take their children on holiday during term time. This accounts for the recorded unauthorised absence. Pupils arrive at school in good time and the school day starts promptly.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.9	School data	0.4
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

8. Pupils talk with interest about their school life and obviously enjoy many of their lessons. Year 1 and 2 pupils particularly like their art lessons. Year 1 pupils were excited at the prospect of weaving and enthusiastically chose different colours and fabrics which they wove into colourful pieces, showing them proudly to their class mates. Older pupils comment that they enjoy experimenting in science and are sometimes surprised at how they turn out. Because all staff expect pupils to behave well, behaviour is consistently good and often very good when lessons are particularly interesting and they become absorbed in their learning. Pupils have few concerns about bullying, although there have been a small number of incidents in the past. They understand the need to tell someone if they are unhappy and know that their teachers will always try to help them. Relationships between the pupils themselves and with the adults who work with them are good overall, and often very good. As a result, pupils work and play effectively together and in groups, growing in confidence and self-esteem. Their contributions in lessons are valued and they say that they are never made to feel stupid if they do not understand something. There were eight fixed period exclusions during the last year involving five boys for a total of 48 days. All were the result of violent and abusive behaviour towards other pupils.
9. Pupils develop good levels of spiritual awareness, enhanced well through the curriculum. They write interesting poems and displays show a keen observation of the natural world and thereby gain an insight into the less tangible aspects of their learning. Parents are very supportive of the school's very good approach to promoting pupils' moral and social development. Pupils clearly

understand what is expected of them and why and most willingly comply. Staff treat each other and pupils with respect and pupils naturally emulate this and show a very good awareness for the needs of others. Year 6 pupils take their responsibilities as Special Friends to the Reception children very seriously and this makes a significant contribution to the happy community life in the school. Pupils learn about different lifestyles and faiths and this encourages them to be tolerant of those who originate from other countries. Year 2 pupils thoroughly enjoyed tasting Caribbean foods savouring the unfamiliar flavours. Year 6 pupils have a very clear understanding of fairness and equality. Through their studies of Martin Luther King they show a readiness to challenge intolerance and injustice. Pupils value the opportunities the school provides for them to take part in activities out of school. The residential visits and other visits successfully promote pupils' self-reliance and contribute well to their personal and social development. During their time at school pupils develop into sensible and useful members of the community.

10. The personal, social and emotional development of the children in the Foundation Stage is very good. They are encouraged to work and play constructively and happily together and learn to make sensible choices. They listen carefully to instructions and try hard to please their teacher and other adults who work with them. They behave well.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	141	8	0
White – Irish	12	0	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	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 education. Predominantly there is good teaching and learning. The good curriculum meets the needs of all pupils effectively. There is very good support for pupils who have special educational needs. The quality of resources and accommodation is good. However, the recent fire at the school has destroyed the accommodation and resources for reception children and Years 1 and 2. All staff have worked hard to ensure that the effects of the fire have been minimised

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good teaching of English, mathematics and science, especially in Years 2 and 6. The good teaching results in effective learning and mostly good

achievement for pupils of all abilities. The quality of teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in the Reception class are good
- Good relationships and an insistence on high standards of behaviour help to create a purposeful learning environment
- Teachers' subject is mostly good and very good in English, mathematics and science
- Literacy and numeracy skills are taught very well
- Classroom assistants are used well and make an effective contribution to pupils' learning
- Homework is given regularly
- Teachers assess pupils' learning well and build successfully on the outcomes in English, mathematics and science but are less effective in other subjects
- Some lessons are too long
- Most pupils apply themselves, present their work well and are productive workers
- Pupils are co-operative and work well collaboratively; they enjoy research and work independently

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	19	5	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

11. The Reception class teacher has a good understanding of how young children learn and focuses very well on promoting independence. Working very effectively with the support assistant she stimulates the children's learning through a good balance of direct teaching of small groups and opportunities for the children to work on practical tasks and to choose their own activities. The very positive approach to fostering personal, social and emotional development right from the start is a result of careful observation of the children at work and early identification of their needs. The children are encouraged to use their initiative and to work alongside others. The frequent and effective use of praise inspires the children to work hard and to be proud of their achievements. This was reflected very well in the approach to teaching communication, language and literacy. Children proudly share their early attempts at writing and gain a real understanding of how text conveys meaning as they interpret what they have written to the class. Good use is made of practical resources to help the children appreciate mathematical processes and to learn to count and to sequence numbers. The staff know the children well. The good use of assessment, through careful observation and recording, enables the staff to plan work which is suitably challenging and well matched. As a result of the positive experiences provided the children develop good learning skills. They are keen to work hard and to please their teachers.
12. There is little difference in the quality of teaching between year groups. The best lessons were seen in Years 2, 4 and 6. Throughout the school, English, mathematics and science are taught very well due to high levels of expertise and subject knowledge. Teachers' explanations are very thorough and the pupils are left in no doubt about what to do. The pupils work hard and are productive but the overlong introductions to some lessons means that more could be achieved if stricter time limits were imposed. The school has adapted the recommendations from the national literacy and numeracy frameworks very well to meet the needs of the pupils and provide additional challenge. Reading and writing are taught very well and often involve the use of homework and the support of parents. The focus on writing skills has been very successful and its impact has spilled over into the good work done in history and geography. Teachers' have a very good grasp of mathematics and make good use of questions to assess pupils'

understanding and to encourage pupils to explain their problem solving strategies. The teachers' real strengths in teaching science are their insistence on the use of precise scientific vocabulary and processes, and the way in which they impart knowledge, making good use of resources and research.

13. The teachers have a secure knowledge of most subjects and there are planned programmes of training to further knowledge where there are any weaknesses, for example in control technology. They use their knowledge to make lessons interesting. In history there is good use of anecdotes and sources of evidence to stir pupils' thinking about different interpretations of events. In personal, social and health education pupils are encouraged to question stereotypes and to think beyond the obvious. Effective questioning helps pupils to move on in their learning and is used well in English, mathematics and science to check on understanding. However, gaps in assessment in art and design, design and technology and ICT mean that teachers do not always build on pupils' previous experiences in and this hampers progress. Further strengths in teaching and learning include the fostering of effective relationships and developing pupils' discussion skills. This is evident in providing some opportunities for pupils to plan their own investigations but this practice is not sufficiently widespread. There is an atmosphere of calm and purpose in most lessons and the staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and foster a positive work ethic. They are effectively supported in this through the work of classroom assistants who are briefed well and fully engaged in learning. Lessons start and finish promptly but in some lessons the teachers talk for too long and pupils become restless. Marking is encouraging and used to reinforce learning. In the best examples, the teachers clearly indicate what the pupils need to do next to improve.
14. Teachers' planning is thorough and includes activities that are matched to the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils receive very good support and make very good progress. Teachers are careful to frame questions and to direct them at pupils with special educational needs so that they are fully included in lessons. More able pupils achieve well although the pace of their learning is not always as quick as it should be. This is because in many lessons pupils of all abilities start with the same task.

The curriculum

The curriculum provided by the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of National Curriculum guidelines.
- The curriculum provided for English, mathematics and science promotes very good standards and good achievement
- The Foundation Stage curriculum is good
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is very good
- The provision made for the pupils' personal, social and health education is good
- Pupils are well prepared for transfer from one stage of education to the next

Commentary

15. Children in the reception class benefit from very good provision for personal, social and emotional development and develop into proficient and well-motivated learners. The organisation and planning of the curriculum throughout the school is effective in ensuring that high standards are maintained in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and further improvements have been made in these subjects since the previous inspection. Similar levels of improvement and high standards are not seen generally in the other subjects and areas of the curriculum. The monitoring of standards of achievement and the quality of teaching in the foundation subjects is too informal and lacks sufficient rigour so some pupils are not challenged enough, especially in art and music. In geography and history, where the very good quality of literacy teaching supports the subject, attainment is good and pupils achieve well. Statutory requirements for the teaching of the subjects are met although there are gaps in ICT where control

technology is not taught to a sufficient depth. Literacy and numeracy receive a strong emphasis across the curriculum.

16. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and the school also provides support for pupils who struggle with some aspects of learning especially reading. Parents and pupils are involved in the preparation of detailed individual education plans for those pupils for whom the school has special concerns. There are regular opportunities for pupils to receive support in class or in small groups and good attention is given to checking on their progress.
17. The school is successful in ensuring equality of opportunity for all its pupils. Test results are analysed by gender and where appropriate by ethnicity. The school meets the needs of individuals through its programme of personal, social and health education. The use of the Diocesan programme for sex education and drugs awareness together with the consultation with parents makes for an effective link between home and school in this sensitive area of the curriculum. There are good opportunities for pupils to talk about their concerns and to begin to take responsibility, such as Year 6 mentoring Reception children. There are satisfactory opportunities for enrichment, including extra curricular activities. The school offers a limited range of extra curricular activities although the football club is very popular among boys and girls. There is good use of visits to enhance learning for example in history and visitors bring their own expertise to share with pupils. There are few opportunities for pupils to extend their interests in art and music beyond the normal curriculum.
18. There are sufficient well qualified teachers. The high quality of the cooperation between teachers and support staff and volunteers plays a significant role in the maintenance of good standards. Although there are few support assistants they contribute much to learning. The teachers and classroom assistants are very hardworking, appropriately trained and committed to the welfare and education of their pupils. They work cooperatively very well. The accommodation and resources were good before a fire destroyed the accommodation and resources for the reception and Years 1 and 2 classes. The school community has managed, by a combination of ingenuity and exceedingly hard work, to retain satisfactory standards of accommodation and resources until rebuilding and repurchasing can be completed.

Care, guidance and support

All children and pupils are well cared. Staff know the pupils well and this ensures that each individual has access to very good personal support and guidance. The school places a high priority on ensuring the welfare of the pupils and the quality of this care has been maintained well since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good relationships between pupils and staff ensures that parents and pupils feel confident that any problems will be handled fairly and effectively
- The provision made for the care, guidance and support of those pupils with special educational needs is very good
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to be involved in decision-making in the school

Commentary

19. Since the fire, all the staff have worked very hard to ensure that the school is a clean and healthy environment for the pupils. The difficulties arising from using the hall as classrooms have been managed well by both staff and pupils. Pupils are well supervised at playtimes and during the

mid-day break. They learn about good hygiene and healthy eating and younger pupils are encouraged to eat the fruit provided.

20. The school effectively ensures pupils care, welfare, health and safety, especially through very good child protection procedures. However, though risk assessments are carried out regularly, the recording of them is not as comprehensive or as rigorous as it should be.
21. Pupils say that they trust their teachers and know that they will help them if they are unhappy or worried about something. The climate of mutual respect between the staff and pupils facilitates open communication and the ability for staff to support and guide each pupil as appropriate. Pupils receive a good level of educational support and guidance in English, mathematics and science. The information gathered from assessment of their work in other subjects is not of sufficiently high quality. There are very good induction procedures for new arrivals that enable both parents and children to be confident of the good standard of care provided by the school. The formal and informal support provided for those pupils with special educational needs is very good.
22. The school has no structures or procedures to involve pupils in the day-to-day development of the school. Conversations with pupils indicate that they have many good ideas to improve school life and have much to offer the school community. This situation is unsatisfactory and is an area for development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a very successful and effective partnership with parents, which has a major impact on the work of the school and pupils' enjoyment of school life. There are very good links with the local community and liaison arrangements with other schools promote very effective transition. The strong partnership with parents has been maintained well since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very positive views of the work of the school
- The school encourages and values parents' involvement in school life and in the learning of their children
- Parents bring their children to school regularly and on time and help and encourage them with their homework
- The parents' association is very well supported and raises substantial funds
- There are very good mutually beneficial links between the local church the surrounding community and the school

Commentary

23. The school provides good information for parents about the school, the progress of their children and the activities taking place. Annual reports on pupils' progress give parents a great deal of very good information about their children's strengths and weaknesses. Consultation evenings are well attended and parents are able to make appointments to speak to teachers at other times should they wish for more information. Several parents help regularly in classrooms and a recent visit by a Hindu parent enhanced pupils' understanding of Mendhi patterns. Many parents volunteer to help with visits. Their views on school life and future development are canvassed each year. Parents and members of the community are very supportive of the events organised by the parents' association and the funds raised are put to very good use supplementing resources. Parents play an

important role in helping and encouraging their children with their homework and this has a significant impact on the standards they achieve.

24. The school is very much a part of the surrounding community. The Jubilee celebrations organised by the school were a particular highlight and support from the community after the fire has been highly valued by the staff. Local businesses generously provide raffle prizes for the parents' association functions and the Birmingham Partnership provides regular reading support in school. This has a good impact on pupils' skills. There are very strong links with the parish community that very effectively support pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Visitors are invited into school to talk about their jobs which give pupils a good understanding of how the outside community functions.
25. Nursery schools pass the children's records on to the school and these are supplemented with the comprehensive induction procedures. As a result, most of the children settle happily into the reception class. There are good liaison arrangements with secondary schools, which ensure effective transition. Local schools have been very supportive in the aftermath of the fire, providing resources and practical help that have helped to minimise the disruption for the pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school has been very successful in promoting high standards in English, mathematics and science. Overall leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides firm direction and particularly emphasises pupils' attainment. The school is managed well. The governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of test data to set ambitious targets in English, mathematics and science
- Staff share common aims and work together very well
- The commitment of the headteacher and staff and the capacity for further improvement are good
- The governors know the school well and are very supportive
- Monitoring of English, mathematics and science is good but it has not been rigorous enough in other subjects
- Financial management is robust and linked well to the school's priorities

Commentary

26. The headteacher provides clear vision and sense of purpose, together with high aspirations for the pupils, which have resulted in improved standards, good teaching and effective learning. An example of the headteacher's successful leadership is the way in which she galvanised staff, parents and governors into action after the fire, ensuring that the minimum disruption was caused to the pupils' education. The strong focus on English, mathematics and science lies at the heart of the school's success. Issues raised in the previous inspection report have been tackled and there have been improvements in the provision for art and design although more remains to be done in this subject to raise achievement further. The school now makes good provision for pupils' cultural development. Statutory requirements are met fully. The school is well placed to build upon its academic success.
27. The leadership of the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics and science is good. Leadership of other subjects is more variable and there is a weakness in managing assessment in these subjects to ensure the consistent development of skills, knowledge and understanding. There has been some monitoring of teaching and learning but this has lacked rigour in some cases; for example, work that is too similar for different ability groups has not been challenged. The leadership and management of the provision for special educational needs are good. The

special needs coordinator is very skilful and has been instrumental in producing well focused individual education plans that are used effectively to promote learning. A good feature of this aspect of the school's work is the early intervention and support given to pupils who, although not on the register of special educational needs, nevertheless have some problems with learning. Systems for keeping and updating paperwork are well organised and used effectively.

28. The governors of the school are justifiably proud of the school and have a good grasp of its strengths. They participate fully in setting priorities and understand and use performance management to measure how well the school is doing. This helps them to shape the direction of the school and to plan ahead to meet its needs. They provide good support to the headteacher and staff and some are regular visitors and helpers in the school which helps them to understand the decision making process. The school's good development plan is the result of effective consultation with staff, parents and governors and provides a focus for further improvement. The governors fulfil their statutory duties. They are clearly committed to inclusion and ensure that there are appropriate and effective policies for race equality, special educational needs, disability and equal opportunities.
29. The good staff handbook underpins the principles and practice in the school. Staff are encouraged to further their skills through training and there is good guidance and support for staff new to the school. All who work in the school embrace the school's aims and mission statement. Overall, subject leaders have a satisfactory understanding of their work and provide some guidance for their colleagues. This is not always focused enough in some of the foundation subjects because monitoring and assessment are not used with sufficient rigour. This means that levels of achievement in art and design, some aspects of ICT and design and technology are not as high as they should be. The strong commitment to evaluating performance in English, mathematics and science now needs to be included in the evaluation of pupils' performance across the board.
30. Day-to-day management and administration work well and help to ensure that the school runs smoothly. These systems have proved very effective through the difficulties caused by the recent fire. Staff have shown very good adaptability and willingness to cope and to continue to provide good quality education.
31. Financial planning is good and the governors have effective financial oversight of the finances and budget. The school makes good use of the funds available and staff and governors have ensured that the level of resources are good and meet the pupils' curricular needs well. In pursuit of best value the headteacher and governors analyse the school's needs and make decisions on contracts based on reliable evidence and efficiency. This good practice is also apparent in the way in which the school uses data to track pupils' performance against other schools and to set ambitious targets.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	494,397
Total expenditure	502,376
Expenditure per pupil	2,426.93

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	35,000
Balance carried forward to the next	7,979

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING,

SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

32. The curriculum is good and the Reception class teacher and support assistant work very well together to make activities interesting and challenging. Teaching and learning are good enabling the children to make a good start to school and to achieve well. The staff achieve a good balance of activities and the main focuses are on developing the children's personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy skills. Currently the resources are rather light due to the destruction by the recent fire and the children are taught in a small classroom but the staff make the most of opportunities and work very hard to meet the needs of all children. The provision has improved since the previous inspection. Children start in the Reception class at the beginning of the year in which they are five. There is a good induction programme and as a result the children settle quickly. On admission to the school most children are in advance of those of a similar age; the vast majority have benefited from some pre-school educational provision. The management of the Foundation Stage is good. The teacher, ably assisted by the support staff, has a very good understanding of how young children learn and shows much determination in developing the provision.
33. Parents speak highly of the provision made for their children and it is clear from talking to the children that they feel at ease at school. A particularly beneficial initiative is the way in which pupils from Year 6 "adopt" a Reception child. The older pupils are very supportive, they write letters to the parents of the youngsters and keep a watchful on them at lunch and play times. Although all of the resources, records and assessments were lost in the fire the teacher has been quick to re-establish systems and there is good assessment and recording of information about attainment which the staff use to plan work.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children are confident and keen to learn
- Teaching is consistently good and the children achieve well.
- Classroom routines are well established
- Personal, social and emotional development is an integral part of the work in the Reception class

Commentary

34. The staff inspire confidence in the children who thrive. The children are already forming firm friendships and working well together. They understand the rules and routines and take part enthusiastically in activities, sharing toys and equipment. The staff use much praise to stimulate positive attitudes and the children respond excitedly and are very keen to please them. They listen attentively and take much pleasure from their own and others' achievements. The good teaching of personal, social and emotional development permeates all activities and the consistent approach does much to help the children to be successful learners. By the end of the Reception year they are likely to exceed the expected goals for their age

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good
- Children achieve well and make very good progress in reading and writing

Commentary

35. The children are good at speaking and listening and the staff build on these early skills very well to promote reading and writing skills. This is done through good opportunities for role-play and formal opportunities to listen to stories and practise writing. By the end of the Reception year the children are about a year in advance of those of a similar age and exceed the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy. Children achieve well and make rapid progress in their learning. The staff seize every opportunity for the children to communicate. They successfully combine teaching basic skills such as writing names with opportunities for the children to retell stories like *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* in their own words and using early attempts at forming letters. The staff encourage the children to share these jottings with the class and many glow with pride as they read aloud. Another strength in the teaching is way in which instructions are clearly given and vocabulary carefully developed. Good displays of books and opportunities for the children to read at home promote a love of stories. At just the right point the staff introduce letter sounds and encourage the children to have a go.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is effective and leads to good achievement
- Basic number skills are reinforced at every opportunity especially through practical work
- A wide variety of activities are provided to help children learn

Commentary

36. Children enter the Reception class with mathematical skills that are above those expected for their age and they make good progress. By the end of the Reception year most are likely to exceed the early learning goals in this area of learning. The staff have a very good understanding of how to develop early mathematical skills and include a wide range of activities to promote successful learning. The children enjoy learning rhymes and counting. They recognise and correctly name a variety of shapes. In their sand play they talk competently about different sizes of containers and use correct mathematical vocabulary to compare shape and size. The staff keep a watchful eye and record the children's achievements, using the information to plan the next activity. There is a good balance between child chosen activities and direct teaching by adults. The staff are careful to make sure that no-one misses out on formal activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**. (Currently there are some restrictions on activities due to loss of equipment.)

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good
- This area of learning is also used well to develop the children's social and language skills

Commentary

37. Most children enter the Reception class with a good general knowledge. The teacher plans a good range of activities and experiences to enhance the children's knowledge. Staff are often involved in practical work such as developing the children's cutting skills and awareness of textures by rolling and cutting play dough. Good language came out of this activity as the teacher encouraged

the use of interesting vocabulary. The children are keen users of the computer and willingly experiment with different keys and functions. Lessons are well planned and good use and the support assistant is fully involved in leading activities. The adults ask good questions to stimulate curiosity. The initial theme of the year is helping children develop an awareness of themselves and others and fits well with developing personal, social and emotional skills. The staff use the topic as a springboard for children to express their ideas. By the end of the Reception year most children are likely to exceed the early learning goals in this area of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good

Commentary

38. Children enter school with the physical development expected for their age and are on target to exceed the early learning goals in physical development by the start of Year 1. The teacher has a very clear understanding of the needs of young children and plans a wide range of activities to promote physical skills. This includes developing hand eye co-ordination in the classroom, practising cutting and sticking to improve dexterity and a broad range of outdoor activities through which the children play together and develop strength and stamina. The children run around energetically and are well aware of others so they avoid collisions and when steering wheeled vehicles exercise good control. They run, jump and exercise their bodies and are taught the importance of warming up and cooling down. Some activities are held out of doors when the weather is suitable. Malleable materials, simple tools and construction materials are readily available to help children develop control over smaller movements.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good
- The children achieve well

Commentary

39. Children enter Reception with good skills in creative development and enjoy taking part in the well planned activities in the class. They respond very well to opportunities for imaginative play such as pretending to be the Three Bears and excitedly add growling voices as they speak to one another. The staff teach well and provide a good range of activities either supervised or for free choice. The children are good at making choices and often stick at a task for extended periods, joining in well with their friends. The teacher and support assistant are good at helping the children to use their imagination. Children have many opportunities to develop their creative skills through art, music and construction activities working individually or with others.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in all classes is good overall and often very good in Years 2 and 6

- The pupils' work is carefully marked and the results analysed carefully
- The teaching of English is carefully monitored to ensure consistent standards
- Pupils with special educational needs in English are very well supported
- High quality literacy is promoted in other subjects of the curriculum
- Some of the literacy sessions are too long both to keep learning efficient and to maintain the balance of the curriculum

Commentary

40. Standards are very high standards in writing, reading as well as speaking and listening throughout the school and have improved since the previous inspection. English is well planned using the national literacy initiative guidelines and the school sets challenging targets. The pupils' achievement in English is good; they make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from very good support and grow in confidence in all aspects of the subject. Those with English as an additional language also make good progress and achieve well almost all attaining national average test scores. Test results are carefully analysed and teaching is targeted effectively to where areas of possible improvement have been identified, for example, writing has been improved. While girls still do slightly better than boys in English the extra efforts made by staff have resulted in the boys more closely attaining the standards achieved by the girls. There is little significant variation in the performance of different groups.
41. Pupils of all ages speak with confidence and clarity; this encourages their personal and social development well. They take a pride in their work; standards in handwriting are good as is the presentation of work. The teachers' marking encourages the maintenance of high standards so that the pupils' self-confidence and sense of self-worth is enhanced. Pupils are articulate and confident in speaking in a variety of situations. Their reading skills are promoted well through regular practice and involvement of parents in home reading. Pupils read accurately and with expression showing a love of books. They are good at reading for information and competently extract information, sifting it for relevant points. Their written work is well presented. The school's emphasis on developing writing skills has led to good achievement and even higher standards than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils write imaginatively and accurately for a variety of purposes. They have a very good grasp of grammar, spelling, punctuation and handwriting.
42. The teaching of English is carefully planned, using good resources. It engages the pupils' interest and motivates them very effectively to succeed. Introductions are clear and pupils are instructed carefully on what to do so that they start work confident about what is to be achieved. In a few cases, lessons go on too long and the momentum for learning slows. Pupils work hard and are keen to succeed. They apply their basic literacy skills well to producing well crafted work which is a pleasure to read. Pupils' behaviour throughout lessons is good and the teachers make clear their expectations for behaviour and performance. Homework is a regular feature of the teaching and learning and pupils say they enjoy it and that it helps them to improve. Marking is mostly good and in the best cases there is specific guidance for the pupils on what to do to improve.
43. The subject leader has a good grasp of the standards achieved and provides helpful guidance and challenge to her colleagues. There is regular monitoring of work and use of data to set targets; this analysis of data was used well to provide the recent focus on improving writing and has brought about good improvement. Staff are kept up to date through a programme of in-service training matching the needs of the subject well. The support staff are trained effectively and cooperation with teachers is well planned.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

44. The application of pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum is a contributory factor to their success in subjects such as science, history and geography. Staff encourage pupils to use their research skills well and the very good standards achieved in reading contribute much. Pupils are very competent at extracting information from a variety of sources and assimilating evidence. They present their ideas well and this was very effective in some historical writing in which pupils compared different views of the same event before drawing their own conclusions. Pupils use a variety of methods to present written work. In science and ICT they often use bullet points for effect and write in short snappy sentences to convey meaning.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above the national average and pupils achieve well
- Teaching is good overall with very good teaching in Years 2 and 6
- Pupils have a love of mathematics, work hard and want to do well
- The subject is well led and managed
- Above average pupils could achieve even more in the use and application of mathematics

Commentary

45. The school has been successful in building on the high standards identified at the time of the previous inspection. By the end of Year 2 and 6, standards are well above the national average in number, shape and space and data handling. In the use and application of mathematics, standards are above average. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is also well above the national average. These standards are reflected in the 2002 National Curriculum tests. Boys have tended to do better than girls in national tests over the past three years but there was no evidence in the inspection to suggest any significant difference in their work. Pupils enter school with above average standards and leave with attainment that is well above average. This represents good overall achievement. In their understanding of number, all pupils achieve particularly well. No pupils have been identified as having special educational needs in mathematics but good extra support is given to the below average pupils and this helps them achieve well.
46. By the end of Year 2, almost all pupils have a very good understanding of place value (how the position of a number affects its value). Most pupils are adept at using mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to twenty, have a good understanding of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes and use standard measures accurately to weigh and measure various objects. They extract and interpret information in simple tables and graphs, for example, in Year 2 work on favourite fruits and pets. By the end of Year 6, pupils continue to build very well on these strong foundations and show impressive understanding of number; for example, average and above average pupils check calculations by approximate estimations and inverse operations. In a Year 6 lesson pupils quickly and successfully use effective written methods to multiply, for example, 567 by 45. Above average pupils extend this work to involve decimals. Pupils have a very good understanding of negative numbers, ratio and proportion and draw and extract information from a variety of mathematical tables and graphs
47. Teaching is good overall with very good teaching in Years 2 and 6. The teachers' enthusiasm for the subject successfully encourages pupils to develop a love and enthusiasm for the subject. The high expectations of the teachers have resulted in high standards of behaviour and a very good work ethic. The structure of the National Numeracy Strategy is well embedded in the teaching and leads to a good consistency of approach. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and introduce and consolidate the correct mathematical vocabulary. Mental skills are developed well through short sharp lesson introductions. Group work is largely successful. Where it is best, the teacher spends good quality teaching time with a target group while keeping a good overview of the groups working independently. Tasks are matched well to the different needs of the pupils so that pupils of all abilities are suitably challenged. In a small minority of lessons and in some of the work across all year groups in the scrutiny, this match of work to pupils' abilities is not always so effective and the pace of learning slows to a satisfactory level. Teachers use homework effectively to consolidate and extend learning.
48. The subject is well led and managed. The coordinator is knowledgeable and in her own teaching, leads by example. Through good analysis of pupils' performance in national tests, she has identified a relative weakness in pupils' use and application of mathematics to problem

solving. Above average pupils do not often suggest their own strategies for solving a problem or follow their own line of enquiry. Given their very good skills in other aspects, their achievements could be even better in this area. Teachers have rightly focused on this aspect of the subject and are providing more opportunities for all pupils to develop this aspect of learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

49. Pupils' very good mathematical knowledge and skills are used effectively in support of other subjects. In science, pupils read Newton meters and thermometers and use graphs in support of science investigations. In a Year 3 science topic on shadows, pupils plot graphs and use measuring skills to investigate the movement of shadows. Tallying, surveys and other forms of data analysis and measuring skills give good support to work in geography and design and technology. In ICT pupils produce a variety of graphs and charts on football statistics and pie graphs on the distribution of songbirds in Britain. In general, computers could be used more in investigative work

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above the national average and pupils achieve well
- The teaching is at least good and with some very good features
- The subject is led well
- More able pupils are capable of achieving even more in initiating and planning investigations

Commentary

50. Since the previous inspection the school has successfully built on pupils' performance in national tests and an increased percentage of pupils now attain high levels. This success has been through enhancing teachers' skills, providing more resources and the support of a published scheme which offers good levels of challenge. There has been some monitoring of the subject and this has helped to bring consistency to teaching and learning. Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed consistently because there is a useful system to record their attainment and staff make use of the information when planning lessons.

51. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are well above the national average in all aspects of science. Boys have tended to do better than girls in national tests over the past three years but there was no evidence in the inspection to suggest any significant difference in their work. Pupils have a very good scientific knowledge and vocabulary and use their wide general knowledge to good effect. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic about science and boys in particular show high levels of interest. All pupils enjoy the practical aspect of the work and carry out experiments carefully and accurately. A particular strength is in recording their work using charts and diagrams as well as in writing crisply and well crafted accounts. Sometimes these accounts are copied but mostly teachers allow for flexibility in presentation and this encourages pupils to think about interesting ways of recording evidence. Some good work was seen in books where pupils used bullet points and notes to highlight key points. This approach to extending literacy skills is a strength of the teaching and helps to produce effective learners.

52. The pupils achieve well because of the quality of teaching. Staff have a very secure knowledge of the subject and give plenty of opportunities for pupils to learn about all aspects of the subject. Lessons are planned well and instructions clear and sharp so that pupils understand what is to be done. Sometimes instructions and introductions are too long and this results in some loss of

concentration. The match of work is usually good but analysis of pupils' work showed that in some lessons pupils copy the same script and this does not stretch the more able sufficiently. Conversely, in a very good lesson in Year 4 about classification of organisms the teacher carefully structured the lessons to provide a sharp introduction, set timed tasks and reviewed what was achieved. She then went on to extend pupils' learning introducing them to using keys to sharpen up their skills in using scientific methods. Pupils achieved very well in this lesson.

53. The subject leader has a good grasp of the priorities for further improvement and provides good guidance for her colleagues. Monitoring and inspection evidence has shown that a useful way of raising standards even more would be to increase opportunities for the pupils to plan their own strategies for carrying out investigations. Teachers have begun to focus on this aspect of the subject. Another area for development is in making more effective use of computers. Pupils make good use of multi-media presentations to record their work on animals but there are insufficient opportunities to explore complex scientific processes through the use of sensors and control technology.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision is **satisfactory** and there are good plans to enhance the subject.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in control technology are lower than those in other parts of the subject
- Word processing is used effectively to support other subjects and pupils achieve well in this aspect of their work
- The subject is well led and managed
- In-service training has improved the expertise and confidence of the teachers
- Computers are not used enough to develop learning in some subjects

Commentary

54. The teachers are confident in developing pupils' word processing skills and this aspect of the subject is taught well. Skills are developed consistently and there is a good emphasis on encouraging pupils to draft and refine their work on screen rather than just copy text. Pupils become increasingly competent in cutting, pasting, editing and formatting their work using a good variety of the computers' tools. Teachers encourage the pupils to experiment with different forms of presentation and this contributes well to their literacy skills. Skills in data handling and using spreadsheets are average. Pupils in Year 6 make good progress in creating multi-media presentations and pay particular attention to making their work interesting and eye-catching to an audience. They add sound, colour, pictures and video clips. The Year 6 teacher encourages the pupils to further develop their work at home and the school makes good provision for pupils who do not have a home computer. Pupils have weak skills in using ICT systems to control events in a predetermined manner and to sense physical data; this was identified in the previous inspection report. Since then the pupils have had few opportunities to develop these aspects of their learning as the school has limited resources.

55. The quality of lessons observed during the inspection was mostly good although the impact of teaching over time is satisfactory. Teachers have good knowledge of word processing and teach the basic skills well. They have benefited from training and are confident in using computers to support literacy based subjects. Some teachers make good use of ICT when introducing lessons, such as science, and this helps to motivate the pupils. Pupils enjoy working in the computer suite and cooperate well. Teachers and support staff work well alongside the pupils and are quick to intervene with advice. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs.

56. Planning is satisfactory and the school uses national guidelines to give some continuity in developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. However, there is no assessment system

and this makes tracking and reporting to parents on pupils' attainment difficult. Although key skills in word processing are developed consistently this is not true of other aspects and has led to lack of development of control technology over a long period. The school now has plans to remedy this situation. The subject leader has a clear picture of what needs to be done to raise achievement and the school is committed to improving its resources and to ensure that all aspects of the subject are taught. The good action plan provides a focused way forward.

ICT across the curriculum

57. There is some good work in subjects such as English, history and geography where pupils use the Internet for research and also access CD-ROMs. This links very well with the pupils' literacy skills and enhances their writing, as they are often required to edit and redraft and combine a variety of information. The lack of resources for control technology and sensors places limits on how much pupils can use ICT to support their work in practical subjects such as design and technology and science. Some satisfactory work on pattern was seen where pupils used the computers' tools to create designs for bedspreads and younger pupils use drawing software to make pictures but these techniques are at a basic level and not extended sufficiently. Pupils in Year 6 use spreadsheets and databases to collect and collate information in mathematics. Overall, however, work of this kind is limited and computers are not used enough to support learning in some subjects.

HUMANITIES

History and geography

Provision is good overall. Two history lessons and three geography lessons were observed during the inspection. In addition, inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, examined teachers' planning and talked with the subject co-ordinators and pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses relevant to both subjects

- Standards are better than expected for pupils' age and pupils of all abilities achieve well
- Teaching is good overall with some very good teaching
- The subject leaders are knowledgeable and enthusiastic
- There is very good use of resources, including visits and visitors
- There are no formal written recording systems to track pupils' progress
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is not stringent enough

Commentary

58. The work across all the year groups is better than expected for pupils' age and pupils of all abilities achieve well. Pupils show increasing depth of factual knowledge and understanding of the history of Britain and the wider world. They select and organise information to produce structured work. In geography, pupils show good knowledge and understanding on a local and national scale and by the end of Year 6 can explain geographical patterns and physical and human processes effectively. This knowledge and understanding in both subjects is exemplified well in the recent project on Birmingham when meaningful links were planned between the two subjects. Pupils' work showed that they had acquired very good knowledge of what life was like in their city in Victorian times. In addition, using their geographical knowledge, pupils produced their own very good travel guides to modern Birmingham. These also illustrated pupils' pride in presentation. In a Year 2 geography lesson on the island St Lucia, pupils used secondary information from globes, maps, video clips and photographs to identify similarities and

differences between England and St Lucia. Pupils' enthusiasm for the topic had motivated them to find out information for themselves from home. In geography, good mapping skills are built up across the school as pupils have opportunities to work with globes, atlases and maps in various scales. Pupils' very good literacy and numeracy skills and their all round general knowledge contribute effectively to pupils' achievements in both subjects.

59. Across the school, teachers are highly successful at bringing the subjects to life for the pupils. This is achieved through the use of a range of visits and visitors. Pupils have had visits from local historians in connection with topics on the Tudors, Samuel Pepys and the Fire of London. These events gave pupils the chance to dress in the costumes of the time, examine artefacts and engage in role-play. In geography, pupils in Year 4 visit a local environmental education centre where they develop the skills of orienteering and begin to build up an understanding of environmental issues. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects and clearly enjoy teaching the subjects. They use good questioning to encourage pupils to think more deeply, for example, in a Year 2 geography lesson, the teacher asks; 'Why do you think the houses on this island are built on stilts?' Computers are used satisfactorily in support of both subjects. Planning is based on national guidelines and ensures a good level of consistency across the school. There are no formal written systems to track pupils' progress in the subjects. This makes it more difficult for teachers to plan lessons firmly based on what pupils already know. In a small proportion of the work seen, there is some unnecessary copying of the same work by all pupils.
60. Leadership and management of the subjects are satisfactory. The subject leaders are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They have been successful in maintaining above average standards since the previous inspection. They have successfully built up good resources and arranged very good curriculum enrichment opportunities for the pupils. There have been too few opportunities for them to monitor teaching and learning in their subjects in any rigorous way. This makes it difficult to bring about even further improvement in the subjects, for example, in sharing very good points from teaching, checking on any difficulties and scrutinising pupils' work to evaluate how well it is meeting pupils' different needs.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Two lessons in art and design and music were seen. In addition, inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, examined teachers' planning and talked with the subject co-ordinators and pupils about design and technology, art and design, and music. Due to the restrictions on the accommodation caused by the fire no lessons in physical education were observed.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**. Some aspects of the subject have improved since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6
- Given pupils' capabilities pupils' achievement should be better
- The teaching is satisfactory
- There are no formal assessment systems

Commentary

61. Pupils cover all elements of the programmes of study for art and design and the staff now ensure that they have opportunity to work in three-dimensions. There was some appropriate work in

Years 1 and 2 using clay and pupils made tiles incorporating variety of materials. They are working with a visiting specialist on creating a new collage for the school's entrance using clay tiles. The work shows perseverance and accuracy. Throughout the school the pupils record some of their observations in sketchbooks although they are used infrequently and to much better effect in some year groups than others. Teachers encourage the pupils to be accurate in their observations and this skill was enhanced when pupils were shown a set of objects which were then covered. Through this exercise the pupils learned the importance of focused observation. Pupils have limited recall of the names and works of a wide range of famous artists although it is clear from their work that they have worked in the style of Monet, Van Gogh and others.

62. Pupils have appropriate skills in mixing and using a variety of paints. They print using a variety of techniques. Older pupils are aware of perspective and some of their drawings show depth and distance. They also understand how to depict light and shadow and this links well with their work in science. Pupils are organised and tidy in their work and select suitable materials. Some of the work is over-directed by the teachers and opportunities for imaginative experiment are limited. There are examples of ICT being used in the subject for example in finding out about famous artists and in using drawing software but these opportunities are rather limited in scope.

63. Teachers have a satisfactory subject knowledge and make suitable use of national guidelines to plan work. Teachers build satisfactorily on previous learning of basic skills but pupils do not make sufficient headway in expressing mood and emotion in their work. Their progress is satisfactory overall but achievement should be better given the good start made in creative development in the Reception class. Pupils behave well in lessons and take pride in their work. They comment that they would like more opportunities for art and design. The subject leader has improved the provision and the school now provides a wider range of opportunities for pupils than at the time of the previous inspection. Some classes have visited art galleries and visitors to the school have shared their skills. However, the lack of an assessment system has led to the slow development of skills, understanding and techniques. In particular there have been insufficient opportunities to monitor teaching and learning.

Design and technology

64. No lessons were seen in design and technology, although inspectors looked at work across the year groups. On the basis of this evidence it is not possible to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching, although indications are that it is at least satisfactory. Standards in the work seen are similar to those expected for pupils' age. Pupils' good literacy and numeracy skills are reflected in good accounts of work covered and plans and finished products reveal good use of measuring skills. By the end of Year 2, pupils have had opportunities to sew and to design and make products, for example, clay diva lamps. Teachers have encouraged the pupils to evaluate the success of what they have made and to consider what improvements might be needed.

65. By the end of Year 6, pupils produce well-labelled plans and designs prior to making a variety of products such as pencil holders. They are taught to provide a specification and a written evaluation of their product. Pupils in Year 3 have investigated levers and made toys with moving parts. In Year 5, a school governor has helped pupils gain a good understanding of pneumatic systems. There is little evidence of computers being used in the subject or links made with the control aspects of ICT. There are no whole school assessment systems to track pupils' progress. This makes it difficult to guarantee that skills are developed progressively from year to year.

Music

66. The provision for music is currently hampered by the loss of equipment and space. Due to the limited range of evidence it is not possible to make an overall judgement on standards and teaching.
67. In the lessons seen the standards achieved by pupils were average. The pupils are keen to join in singing and listen well. Their general knowledge of composers and their works is limited although discussions with them showed that although they have good knowledge of musical terms and those who receive additional instrumental tuition also understand notation and use it with a good degree of accuracy. The teaching seen was good with staff sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm with the pupils. Lessons included a good balance of activities and pupils made good progress in both composing and making music with tuned and untuned instruments. The school provides appropriate opportunities for some pupils to learn to play instruments and the tuition by external staff is effective. Pupils clearly enjoy these opportunities and achieve well through regular practice at home. Those pupils who learn the guitar in the school club occasionally play for class led acts of worship. There is a good connection between the school club and the guitar group which plays for family services in the parish church. In seeking to improve the provision, the curriculum now includes opportunities for the pupils to attend concerts in the Birmingham Concert Hall to broaden their experience. There have also been visits by musicians sharing their expertise.
68. The subject leader is enthusiastic and committed to extending the range of opportunities for pupils. Currently there are no systems for assessing the pupils' attainment and development of skills, knowledge and understanding which makes tracking pupils' progress difficult.

Physical education

69. The teaching of the subject has been hindered by the effects of the fire. Planning shows that over the year the full range of activities will be able to be covered. A good range of games, gymnastic activities, games skills development and dance with swimming for the older pupils are taught and the response of the pupils is enthusiastic to what is provided. Boys and girls are enthusiastic about the football coaching received from a local professional club and they respond well. They engage in occasional football competitions with local schools. They are also enthusiastic about quick-cricket and rugby football for which in season they receive some coaching. The younger pupils respond well to the opportunities provided for "Tennis for Infants".

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

70. The school prides itself on its Catholic tradition but also successfully involves pupils with different beliefs in its life and work. There is a good programme of health education and pupils are taught sensitively about sex and relationships and the positive and harmful effects of drugs. Personal, social and health education is linked well to other subjects especially science and pupils' questions are answered fully and frankly. There are good opportunities for the pupils to share their concerns and worries in group times and these provide good opportunities for pupils to resolve conflicts. A particularly good aspect of the provision is the opportunity for Year 6 pupils to act as special friends to the reception children. This also includes contact between the Year 6 pupils and the younger children's parents and is beneficial in promoting mature attitudes and helps pupils to relate well to adults as they write detailed letters about the children in their care to the parents. The school does not have a formal mechanism, like a school council, for involving pupils in decision making.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	5
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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