

INSPECTION REPORT

PHEASEY PARK FARM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Great Barr, Birmingham

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104219

Headteacher: Mrs R Poyser

Lead inspector: Mr C Parker

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th November 2003

Inspection number: 257190

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	673
School address:	Wimperis Way Great Barr Birmingham
Postcode:	B43 7LH
Telephone number:	0121 366 6183
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Raymond Wright
Date of previous inspection:	27 th April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Pheasey Park Farm is a very large primary school with 715 pupils on roll; including 84 part time children in the nursery. There are three classes in each year group and four in Year 2. The number of pupils joining the school at times other than the start of the academic year is three times greater than the number who leave during the course of the year. However, the movement of pupils into the schools has slowed markedly now that the transformation from a two to a three form entry school is complete.

The majority of pupils are of white British heritage, but there are 22 pupils of Indian descent, 8 of Caribbean and 22 pupils of mixed heritage. About two per cent of the pupils come from homes where English is not the first language, but they are all fluently bi-lingual and do not require additional support. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including statements, is well below the national average; currently five pupils have statements. Taken overall, the children's attainment on entry is broadly average.

There is an on-site playgroup, "wraparound" care and various clubs before and after school. There has been significant improvement to the building since the last inspection. The accommodation is extensive and includes an ICT suite, art room, music room and swimming pool. All the classrooms have interactive whiteboards.

The school has an "Investors in People" Award and also received a School Achievement award in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11897	Christopher Parker	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector	
2818	Graham Warner	Team inspector	English, Art and design, Religious education, Special educational needs
27541	Pauline Goodsell	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, Mathematics, English as an additional language
29989	John Collins	Team inspector	Science, Design and technology, Physical education
8867	Rebecca Russell	Team inspector	History, Geography, Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very effective** school where the headteacher and teachers have developed an ethos in which the pupils can thrive. **The children are achieving very well overall** because **the teaching is good** and there is a strong commitment to high standards. **The leadership and management are excellent.** The school is constantly seeking improvement by making maximum use of all of its available resources. Consequently, it gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's high aspirations, excellent strategic planning and strong teamwork have combined very effectively to move the school towards its high ambitions and goals
- The good teaching interests and engages all pupils effectively. Consequently, they learn and achieve very well
- The very good assessment procedures, excellent analysis of data and precise targeting of support have been very effective in raising standards
- The school provides a rich and exciting curriculum that is well matched to the needs of all its pupils

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. It has very effectively improved the quality of the education it offers and the standards that the pupils attain. The key issues from the last inspection have been addressed very thoroughly. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is now very good, the curriculum is broad and interesting, the assessment procedures are very good, the analysis of performance data is excellent and the pupils' spiritual development and personal reflection are very evident in assemblies.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

The **pupils are achieving very well** and attaining high standards by the end of Year 6. The high levels of performance at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in 2003 are the result of a co-ordinated and very effective strategy to raise standards and ensure that all groups of pupils make rapid progress. Furthermore, there is an improving trend in the results.

The good provision in the Foundation Stage gives the children a good start, thereby enabling them to make good progress and achieve well. Most of the children achieve the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception, and some exceed them. By the end of Year 2, standards are well above average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. In the 2003 national tests, a very high proportion of the Year 2 pupils attained the higher levels in reading and mathematics. In the same year, the test results at the end of Year 6 show that standards have improved significantly and are now well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics. Moreover, a very high proportion of pupils attained the higher level in all subjects. When compared to similar schools the results in all three subjects are well above average and are in the top five per cent in

English. Across the whole of the curriculum standards exceed expectations. Standards in swimming are very high because the school makes full use of its excellent facilities and specialist teaching.

The school develops the pupils' personal qualities very well because **it makes very good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.** The pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and behave very well. The levels of attendance are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good. Throughout the school, the teaching is good, and it is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6. The lessons are thoroughly and carefully planned to meet the needs of all pupils. The teachers set the pupils challenging tasks, expect them to work hard and, as a result, they respond and learn well. Resources, notably the interactive whiteboards, are used very effectively to stimulate learning and motivate the pupils.

The school provides a rich and exciting curriculum that is well matched to the needs of all its pupils. It is considerably enhanced by the wide range of visits and visitors that enrich the curriculum for pupils of all ages. The accommodation and resources are very good. There are very good procedures for ensuring the pupils' care, welfare and safety. The pupils receive strong personal support and guidance and their views are valued. Their parents are kept very well informed and are given much positive encouragement to work in partnership with the school. The school's links with the local community and other local schools support the pupils' learning well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are excellent. The governance is strong and very effective in shaping the direction of the school and holding it to account. The governors give the school their wholehearted support, and are careful to ensure that every decision they take promotes further improvement.

The headteacher has created a caring yet ambitious ethos within the school which influences and inspires both staff and pupils. The teaching team has a common sense of purpose and a clear commitment to further improvement. Rigorous self evaluation based on comprehensive monitoring and extensive analysis of the performance data is the cornerstone of the school's excellent improvement strategy that reflects the school's high ambitions. The financial planning and management are excellent. The members of the administrative staff are very efficient, thereby allowing the senior management to focus on continuing improvement and the teachers to concentrate on raising the pupils' achievements still further.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The vast majority of the parents are very satisfied with the school. They feel their children are being well taught and are making good progress. Very few consider they are not kept well enough informed and a similar small number have concerns about the supervision at lunchtime. These concerns were not substantiated by the inspection team. The pupils like their school, enjoy the many opportunities provided for them and appreciate the many improvements that have been achieved.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school should maintain its pursuit of the highest standards of achievement, teaching and learning by continuing to implement its excellent improvement strategy.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are continuing to rise. In English and science, they are well above average and in mathematics they are securely above average. The pupils are achieving very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Across the whole of the curriculum, standards exceed expectations
- The children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and achieve well
- The pupils develop their language and literacy skills to a high level
- Competence in ICT accelerates rapidly in Years 5 and 6 to levels that well exceed expectations
- Standards in swimming are very high

Commentary

1. When the children start school, their attainment, although wide ranging, is broadly average. The good provision in the Foundation Stage enables the children to make a good start to school; they make good progress and achieve well. Most of the children achieve the early learning goals in all six areas of learning by the end of the reception year and a good proportion exceeds them.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.2 (17.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.9 (15.1)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.3 (17.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 77 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.5 (26.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.1 (27.2)	26.8(26.9)
science	30.3 (28.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 96 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. By the end of Year 2 in 2003, standards were well above average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. When compared to similar schools they were above average in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics. A very high proportion of the pupils attained higher levels in reading and mathematics. The results and the improvement trend have been either above or well above the national average for the last three years.
3. The results of the national tests in 2003 at the end of Year 6 show that standards have improved significantly and are now well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics. Overall, standards are well above average. When compared to schools with similar

prior attainment the results are well above average and in the top five per cent in English. A very high proportion of the pupils attained the higher level in all subjects in 2003.

4. In 2003, the high standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 and the improving trend in the results derive from a co-ordinated strategy to raise standards. Excellent leadership, extensive analysis of data, comprehensive improvement planning, targeted support for pupils, professional development and good teaching throughout the school have combined to bring about this success. There is a strong and shared commitment to raise standards to the highest level. This has an impact right across the whole of the curriculum, where standards exceed expectations. In swimming, standards are very high because the school makes full use of its excellent facilities and specialist teaching.
5. Throughout the school, the pupils are achieving well, but in years 5 and 6 their rate of progress accelerates. This is one of the key reasons for recent improvements and why so many pupils achieve higher levels. The extensive analysis of performance data undertaken by the deputy headteacher not only identifies the consistently good achievement of the pupils, but also highlights the significant effect of the targeted teaching of different groups of pupils. In some cases, these pupils have made three years progress in one year. Competence in ICT, although effectively developed throughout the school, also accelerates rapidly in Years 5 and 6 to levels that well exceed expectations.
6. The majority of the pupils with English as an additional language are fluently bilingual. They are experienced and confident speakers of English, and write competently in English for different purposes. They achieve very well.
7. The pupils with special educational needs are being well supported, and as a result they also achieve well and make good progress towards the targets set for them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils like their school. They have very positive attitudes to learning, very good behaviour and good levels of attendance. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attitudes to school and learning are very good and improve as the pupils move through school
- The pupils are very mature and confident due to the very good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Self-esteem and independence are strongly promoted throughout the school
- Attendance levels are steadily improving; the pupils arrive on time and are eager to start their lessons

Commentary

8. The pupils like their school. This was evident from their positive responses in almost all lessons and in the very good relationships that exist throughout the school. As they move through the school, the pupils gain an increasingly avid thirst for learning. From the nursery through to Year 4, their attitudes in lessons are generally good and become very good in Years 5 and 6. They concentrate very well, show a very good interest in their work and try hard to please their teachers. This was particularly evident in Year 5 during a challenging mathematics lesson on

plotting co-ordinates; the pupils bubbled with enthusiasm and interest, raising questions such as “Why do we call the axis x or y?” The pupils’ very strong motivation has a strong influence on their achievements in areas such as ICT, music, art and swimming.

9. In the Foundation Stage, all of the adults have high expectations that the children will behave, play and learn well, both alongside one another and together. Consequently, the children develop good relationships with the adults and with each other. They come into school happily and confidently and enjoy learning. They concentrate well and persevere to complete a task before they move to a new activity.
10. The school builds well on the pupils’ positive attitudes and the very good provision made for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development permeates the whole curriculum. The pupils show high levels of confidence and independence. In Years 5 and 6, they listen intently to the deputy headteacher’s description of the beauty of nature in assembly and reflect well on “hills in the countryside” and “the colour of trees”. One girl commented very thoughtfully, “I don’t very often find time to reflect on the beauty of nature.” During a “congratulations assembly” in Years 1 and 2, high expectations and pride in achievement were clearly evident as the pupils, watched by their parents, received attendance trophies and awards for soccer and swimming. The requirements of the pupils with special educational needs are being met effectively, and as a result their attitudes are also very good. They are active participants in all of the school’s activities.
11. The pupils are very thoughtful. One pupil wrote in relation to Anne Frank, “You would have to be a special person to do that.” The developing class councils give the pupils an outlet for their views on a range of school issues, for example, developing playground games. The pupils’ behaviour in lessons, around the school and at playtimes is very good. The good supervision, the wide range of activities and the seating available promote good playground behaviour. Any instances of bullying, racist or sexist behaviour are dealt with promptly and resolutely. This is confirmed by the absence of any exclusions over the last two years. The pupils know right from wrong and what to do if minor squabbles or accidents happen.
12. The consistent, positive approach to behaviour management and the quick, effective action on potential issues ensure high standards. The use of praise and rewards has a very beneficial effect on pupils’ behaviour and attitudes in almost all lessons. Relationships throughout the school are very good. The pupils are very co-operative, display very good independence and show their initiative well. They are very polite and well mannered, but not shy in their friendly, chatty, confident approach when talking to visitors. Standards have improved since the last inspection.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.2	School data	0.1
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.

13. Attendance levels have steadily improved over the last four years and in the current term are above the national average. Punctuality is very good. The rates continue to improve because of

the very high importance the school places on promoting attendance and the very thorough systems in place to record and monitor it. A contributory factor to absence levels is the number of parents taking children on holiday in term time but this has reduced due to the constant and strict efforts made by the school to discourage this practice.

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good and one of the key reasons why pupils are achieving well and standards exceed expectations right across the curriculum.

Teaching and learning

The teaching and learning are good. The assessment of the pupils' work is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers interest and engage the pupils effectively and as a result they learn and achieve very well
- The lessons are thoroughly and carefully planned to meet the needs of all pupils
- The resources, notably the interactive whiteboards, are used very effectively to stimulate learning and extend the pupils involvement in lessons
- The teachers set the pupils challenging tasks and expect them to work hard

Commentary

14. Throughout the school, the teachers have a shared commitment to providing all of the pupils with carefully tailored opportunities to learn and progress through interesting and stimulating activities. The high degree of consistency in the teaching styles and approaches is a strong testament to the effect of the pervasive school improvement strategy, effective professional development and the teamwork engendered by the senior management.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 85 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (4%)	22 (26%)	46 (54%)	11 (13%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	

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.

15. In the Foundation Stage, all of the lessons seen during the inspection were good and a few were very good. From year 1 to year 4, the teaching was predominantly good and very good lessons were observed in all year groups. In years 5 and 6 the teaching, was particularly strong; many of the lessons seen were very good and some were excellent. This is a key factor in the rapid progress currently being made by the oldest pupils. A few lessons were observed that were not as successful because they lost direction and the teacher did not re-establish the purpose needed for the pupils to achieve well. However, it is clear from the pupils' work that, in the context of a series of lessons, they are making good progress and that such instances are very infrequent.

16. The Foundation Stage teachers and their assistants plan the learning activities carefully to ensure that the child-initiated experiences and the direct teaching are challenging and well balanced. All of the adults help the children to feel secure, gain confidence and communicate with others. Although the planning is good, there is scope for greater integration between the nursery and reception to ensure rapid progress. The teaching assistants support the individual and group activities effectively and make a significant contribution by helping the children to behave and concentrate well.

17. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is particularly effective. The teachers use intervention strategies to target specific groups with the clear objective of making rapid improvements in the pupils' knowledge and skills. Closely focussed work to enhance reading and spelling, setting by ability in mathematics and the consistent challenging of pupils of all abilities underpin the drive for higher standards. The teachers expect the most of the pupils, and this is very evident in years 5 and 6 where the demands made of them are stretching them to achieve their full potential. Consequently, the work of the more able pupils is of a high standard. The very good achievement and progress of the pupils with English as an additional language result from the teacher's emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills and the effective teaching of writing skills. Similarly, the teachers' conscientious planning for the pupils with special educational needs is in line with their Individual Education Plans, and enables these children to achieve very well.
18. The relationships between the teachers and the pupils are very positive, and consequently the teaching and learning continue at pace without interruption. The pupils work hard, concentrate well and are very productive in lessons. The teachers encourage and promote enjoyment in learning and the pupils appreciate this. At the end of a mathematics lesson in year 1, for instance, a pupil offered his view of the lesson by saying, "That was splendid!" By encouraging the pupils to participate fully in lessons, the teachers are also enhancing their speaking and listening skills. A very good example was observed in a design and technology lesson where the year 5 pupils were encouraged to give their views on the packaging of biscuits, and some did so quite eloquently. Many of the tasks set for the pupils have elements that either encourage independence or promote collaboration. In both cases, the pupils respond very well.
19. The teachers mark the pupils' work in a manner that encourages improvement and indicates what they need to do next. This is aligned to precise target setting in English and mathematics and very good record keeping that allows the teachers to plan the next stage of learning in all subjects of the curriculum. Homework is also used well to promote learning. Some of the oldest pupils use secure internet messaging to contact their teachers about their homework.

The curriculum

The school provides a rich and exciting curriculum that is well matched to the needs of all its pupils. It is considerably enhanced by the wide range of visits and visitors that enrich the curriculum for pupils of all ages. The accommodation and resources are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is very well planned and effectively presented
- Equality of access and opportunity for all groups of pupils are very good

Commentary

20. The curriculum is very good and meets all requirements of the National Curriculum and the Foundation Stage and religious education. The school provides very well for the personal, social and health education of its pupils. Many opportunities are taken to raise the pupils' awareness of relationships and how feelings change as they grow. The school has appropriate arrangements for the teaching of sex education and for raising awareness of the dangers of drug abuse.
21. The long and medium-term planning have improved since the last inspection, and all subjects now have schemes of work. The teachers use these very well to plan work that builds on what the pupils already know and understand. They make very effective use of interactive white boards to

present imaginative and engaging lessons. The National Strategies for literacy and numeracy are very well established in the school and a consistent approach to their implementation has had a direct effect on the high standards being achieved. Where the pupils need either additional or specific support, the school utilises a range of strategies. For example, the use of a published literacy programme helps to develop the pupils' phonic skills. The pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are also applied and developed well in other subjects. The very good integration within the topics and themes enables the pupils to link their learning across a range of subjects, such as history and geography.

22. The school places a very strong emphasis on the inclusion of all pupils in all activities so that they have equal access to all aspects of provision. There is very good provision for the pupils with special educational needs through effective support by dedicated and well-trained support staff. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has developed a very well organised system of support that includes the Learning Base Support Teacher, who helps the pupils through a structured programme of language development. The pupils' Individual Education Plans (IEP) are precise and easily managed. Consequently, these pupils often make progress that is as good as their classmates. Those pupils who are gifted and talented are also very well supported by the planning and are provided with specific work to meet their needs. A good range of instrumental tuition and musical clubs, such as choir and recorders, caters for those who are musically gifted, while sporting clubs and activities extend the curriculum for talented pupils in sports.
23. The inspection findings corroborate the parents' views about the good range of interesting activities that the school provides. The curriculum is enhanced for a great many pupils through the excellent range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, visits and visitors to school. They not only help the pupils to develop skills in sport and music, but also widen their knowledge and understanding of their own and other communities. The Year 6 pupils benefit from a residential visit that helps them to develop their social skills of co-operation and working together.
24. The accommodation is used very well to provide a stimulating learning environment for all ages. There is an adequate outdoor play area for the nursery children and the reception children make good use of the challenging adventure playground which is also available for all classes to use. However, the lack of a covered outdoor area for the whole of the Foundation Stage allowing free flow from indoors to out has a restricting influence on the development of the children's independence and imagination in role-play situations and free choice activities that cannot be provided indoors.
25. The swimming pool and the excellent teaching by staff have led to the pupils achieving very high standards at a much younger age than usually expected. The resources are very good for all subjects and are used very well to help to raise standards across the school.
26. The school's good welcoming procedures enable new pupils to fully access the curriculum offered by the school and culturally relevant materials of high quality are available to support their learning.

Care, guidance and support

The school has very good and effective procedures to ensure the pupils' care, welfare and safety. The pupils receive strong personal support and guidance and their views are valued.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The procedures for child protection are very good
- Very good personal support and guidance are provided by all members of staff
- The educational support and guidance for pupils of all abilities are very good
- The school has very good arrangements for when the children start school

Commentary

27. A very strong and caring ethos is evident in the school. All members of staff demonstrate kindness and commitment to the children. The mid-day supervisors are very well trained and provide high quality care during the mid-day break by ensuring that the pupils are treated with fairness and good humour. The governors' health and safety committee, with the valued support of the caretaker, ensures that the premises are clean and welcoming and all matters of concern about the buildings are investigated and remedied as quickly as possible.

28. All aspects of the pupils' personal and academic development are carefully monitored in order that appropriate support can be given to enable them to achieve well. It is very evident that the pupils get on well with their teachers and have the confidence to ask for assistance when it is needed. The arrangements for welcoming the youngest pupils into the school are very good and, despite the size of the building, they quickly begin to find their way around and adapt to new routines with confidence. The parents are very positive that their children enjoy coming to school. There are good arrangements for the day-to-day exchange of information between parents, carers and the school staff and for the children to leave school safely in the care of a known adult.

29. The pupils with special needs are very well cared for by all members of staff who give sympathetic, well focused support that ensures that they behave well. They are particularly well supported by the work of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and the Learning Base Support Teacher in both class and withdrawal groups.

30. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in providing opportunities for the pupils to express their views in a more formal way. Class councils have been formed and the ideas put forward by the pupils have been given serious consideration and, where possible, acted upon. As a result, new benches have been installed in the playgrounds and the toilets have been improved. This progress has greatly enhanced the pupils' self-esteem and the children in Year 6 look forward to the formation of a school council with elected members.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a very good partnership with the parents. Links with the local community support pupils' learning well, and the liaison with other local schools is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Fund raising by parents provides considerable funds for the purchase of additional learning resources
- The school is very welcoming and accessible to parents
- The school provides very good information to parents
- There are very strong links with other local schools

Commentary

31. The pre-inspection questionnaire shows a high level of satisfaction amongst parents. They value and place a great deal of importance on their children's education. This is harnessed and encouraged by the school and is a strong factor in the pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and achievement. The parents ensure that their children attend regularly and promptly, and are keen to learn. They encourage them by assisting with homework and helping them to read. Some also provide very good help in the classroom. Their financial contributions through the Home School Association have been helpful in providing the school with additional resources such as benches in the playground.
32. The parents receive very good information to help their children further in their learning. Information about the curriculum is provided in newsletters and booklets; and the annual written reports give very good information about the pupils' progress, and achievements. They also include outline targets for improvement although some of these are not always as specific as they might be. The parents of the youngest children receive good information about the curriculum in Foundation Stage and useful suggestions as to how they can either extend or follow up their children's learning at home. These ideas are very much valued by parents and are often well carried out in ways that further promote the good progress made by the children.
33. The school is open to all parents and carers. The teachers are readily available at the end of the day, and issues are dealt with promptly, thereby generating high levels of satisfaction on the part of the parents. Another very positive feature is the way that the school invites and encourages the parents to attend the 'congratulation assemblies' in order to share their children's success. The school uses the local community well for visits and local visitors help in school. The local community makes good use of the school facilities on most evenings of the week. The partnership with the local schools, especially the main receiving secondary school, not only ensures that the pupils are very well prepared for and confident about their transfer, but also extends the curriculum by making French lessons available to the oldest pupils. The quality of these partnerships has improved well on those described in the last inspection report.
34. The parents of the pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in discussions, informed of progress and present at the regular review meetings. The records are passed on to the schools to which the pupils transfer. The outside agencies give efficient support when it is necessary and important to do so.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are excellent. The governance of the school is strong and very effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's high aspirations and vision are evident in all aspects of the school's work
- The analysis of the performance data is excellent; it is used very effectively to target support and resources and as a basis for performance management
- The governors are very effective in shaping the direction of the school and holding it to account
- The strategic planning is excellent and reflects the school's high ambitions
- The headteacher and senior managers engender a strong sense of team work and a common aim in constantly seeking improvement
- The management of finance and the use of resources are excellent

Commentary

35. The governors give the school their wholehearted support, and are concerned to ensure that every decision they take promotes further improvement. They rightly hold the headteacher in high esteem but are rigorous in holding her to account for the school's performance. They steer the work of the school in the best interests of the pupils and in pursuit of ongoing improvement. The curriculum leaders put their annual proposals for funding to support school improvement before the governors who question the headteacher, senior and middle managers before setting the priorities. Their influence on this process is very well illustrated by their response to the ICT co-ordinator's proposal to buy seven interactive white boards and locate one in each year. The governors used national research, the views of a consultant and key staff in the school, the reaction of parents to a presentation and the pupils' response to the one interactive white board the school was already using to reach the decision. Having been convinced that there would be significant benefit, they trebled the investment by locating one in every classroom and equipping every teacher with a laptop. This decision has given great momentum to the school's drive for improvement.
36. A comparison of the headteacher's photographic record of the school she inherited almost a decade ago with the present highly organised school with high quality displays of children's work on almost every wall is a testament to how much has been achieved. Despite this progress, the search for ongoing improvement to the building, the resources, the quality of education and the pupils' achievements remains undiminished and very strong. It is plainly reflected in the school improvement strategy that drives all of the key aspects of the school's work.
37. The headteacher has created a caring yet ambitious ethos within the school, which influences and inspires both staff and pupils. The school's motto, 'Aiming High', is on every child's sweatshirt. In assemblies, the headteacher encourages the pupils to 'try hard' in everything they do. Quotations such as, 'Nothing really great was ever achieved without effort' are located in the corridors as a constant reminder of the headteacher and teachers' high expectations. The senior management team has created a high performing team with a common goal. By appointing and thoughtfully deploying skilful teachers they continually influence and motivate their colleagues. Consequently, the teamwork is strong, with the middle management overseeing the curriculum and its development very effectively aided by strong subject leadership across the whole curriculum. The professional development of the whole staff adds to the common understanding and sense of purpose of the teaching team.
38. Rigorous self evaluation based on the comprehensive monitoring of the quality of the teaching and the pupils' work aligned with the deputy headteacher's excellent analysis of the performance data are the cornerstones of the school's improvement strategy. The evaluation of these activities provides the information that result in interventions such as the targeting of specific groups of pupils in order to rapidly improve their literacy and numeracy skills. This is achieved by the use of a variety of measures, including the use of a published literacy scheme, for example. As a result of these strategies and the overall drive for ongoing improvement, standards have risen considerably in the recent past adding to the very good overall improvement made since the last inspection.

Example of outstanding practice

Using performance data to set performance targets, focus interventions and raise standards

An extensive analysis of the data from national and optional tests by subject, cohort and individual child is used to produce a detailed report on the performance of each year group. The report sets out the spread of results and analyses them by gender, ethnicity and those who do not speak English at home. The key feature of this report is the comparisons it makes by class and specific groups against the average for the year group as a whole and against the school's own

expectations. The evaluations of what has been achieved and what could be done lead to the further setting of very precise targets for the cohort and for each class. These targets form a central part of each teacher's performance management. The senior management's review of the overall analysis of data leads to interventions to raise the achievement of targeted groups of pupils.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1 606 805	Balance from previous year	104 060
Total expenditure	1 615 038	Balance carried forward to the next	94 827
Expenditure per pupil	2 258		

39. The school has an excellent financial plan. In planning for the future in a prudent but developmental manner, full account is taken of all measurable and estimated factors, such as projected pupil numbers and costs of staffing. The plan provides a clear indication of the financial stability of the school and how finances may be allocated to educational priorities. A healthy budget surplus has resulted from strong budget management over a long period of time and is an integral part of future financial plans. It helps to provide a sensible cushion for fluctuations in numbers in various year groups and contributions towards building development costs. The principles of Best Value are applied rigorously in all areas of the school's work.
40. The day-to-day financial management is excellent and enables the governors and senior managers to carry out their monitoring functions most effectively. The administrative staff is very efficient, allowing the senior management to focus on continuing improvement and the teachers on raising the pupils' achievement still further.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for each of the areas of learning is **good**.

41. When the children enter the school, their attainment is wide ranging but taken overall it is broadly average in all areas of learning. The teaching is good and many strong features were evident in the lessons that were observed. As a result, the children achieve well and most of them reach the goals in all the six specified areas of learning. Moreover, before they move into Year 1 about a quarter of the children exceed these goals in their communication, language and literacy skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world. However, in their mathematical development fewer children exceed the expectations.
42. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The teacher in charge is working well with her colleagues to enhance the provision and development of the curriculum for the children. She has a clear vision of how the planning for the whole Foundation Stage can be further improved to promote the progress of the children. However, she has limited time available to monitor the teaching and learning in other classes.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers develop the children's positive attitudes to learning by setting out clearly what is expected of them
- There is a good balance of teacher-directed tasks and activities chosen independently by the children.

Commentary

43. The children are happy in school. They settle quickly and know the classroom routines well. The teachers and their assistants have high expectations of the children's behaviour and ability to take care of themselves. They provide them with good opportunities to work and play together and to reflect on the effect of their actions on others. As a result, the children's personal and social skills are developed well. The children behave very well, persevere with tasks and try hard to think things through for themselves. Good relationships quickly develop and the children are beginning to speak confidently to adults and each other.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of the basic skills of reading and writing is effective
- Assessment is thorough and used to plan the next steps in learning
- Very effective use is made of the teaching assistants to support learning

Commentary

44. The teachers have high expectations that the children will participate fully in the good literacy activities provided. This means that all the children make good progress overall in gaining communication, language and literacy skills, and they achieve well.
45. The children listen well and respond positively to the adults in all of the classes. They are given good opportunities to respond to events in stories. A good range of role-play situations enables the children to use and develop their speaking and listening skills and helps to extend their vocabulary. For example, in the nursery an adult leads the play when the children are learning to look after babies.
46. The teachers develop and build the children's early reading skills through the sharing of books and stories and the systematic teaching of phonic skills (the sounds of the letters and syllables of words). By the end of the reception year, most are able to retell the stories they have read and some of the children read fluently. They particularly enjoy sharing their library books and explaining to a partner what they like about the books.
47. The teaching of writing is very good because the children are encouraged to use their developing knowledge of letter sounds and shapes to help them begin to write unfamiliar words for themselves. Throughout the Foundation Stage the children are provided with a good range of opportunities to write for different purposes and this promotes good levels of achievement. In the nursery, for instance, the children approached the task of writing invitations to their grandparents to join them for a day in school with confidence and enjoyment.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching of numeracy skills takes full advantage of the children's natural enthusiasm for counting and using numbers

Commentary

50. The teachers provide a good variety of activities and resources to make the learning fun. For example, the reception children love to point out to the teacher numbers that are either missing or the wrong way round as they count confidently to twenty and beyond. They all want to have a turn at describing the properties of hidden, two-dimensional shapes. By the end of the reception year, many of the children can write number sentences to record their working out for simple addition and subtraction sums. They have a good vocabulary to describe mathematical features, such as taller, shorter and longer, and they are beginning to tell the time in hours. The assessment of the children's progress provides clear information, which is used well to plan the next steps in learning and to promote good progress and achievement.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve well because the teachers plan the learning activities carefully
- They are making good progress in learning to use computers

Commentary

51. The teachers and their assistants ensure that there are good opportunities for the children to work in each of the different strands within this area of learning. Visits and visitors enhance their experiences, for instance, when the children visited a local supermarket and when a paramedic talked to them about his work. The children use the computers to support their learning and know how to control the mouse to point and click and can drag objects into a picture with confidence. They also have good opportunities to learn about the faith and customs of Christianity as well as other religions, cultures and traditions. They have a sense of their own identity as part of a family or a class and have regular opportunities to reflect, for example, about what makes them happy or unhappy.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children have good opportunities to develop both fine and large movement skills through a range of activities

Commentary

52. In the nursery, the children use wheeled vehicles to learn to steer and pedal. The reception children have very good opportunities to climb and balance using the adventure playground and make good progress in doing so. Overall, the children make good progress and achieve well because the teachers and their assistants plan the learning activities thoroughly. In the indoor lessons, the older children explore movement and body shapes by moving to Bhangra music. They enjoy these lessons and show a good awareness of space. They can follow and interpret instructions, and respond well when asked to move in a variety of ways. The reception children can dress and undress independently. They use paintbrushes, pencils and scissors with care and precision and have many opportunities to develop fine manipulative control by completing jigsaws and using construction kits.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The resources are very well prepared and provide a wide range of activities
- Occasionally, opportunities are lost because of the limited access to outdoor play

Commentary

52. The teachers provide a very wide range of creative experiences that the children greatly enjoy, for example, in art, story and imaginative play. They also have good opportunities to listen, participate and respond to a range of music. The youngest children enjoy making up dances using silk scarves and soon learn to perform in action songs competently and enthusiastically. The children know a good range of colours and they paint with enjoyment, confidence and skill using techniques such as drizzling and splattering paint. Materials such as sand and water are available for the children to explore. Generally, the children enter imaginatively into acting out stories, such as Rama and Sita as part of their topic on celebrations. However, the reception children do not have free flow access to the outdoor area and this limits their opportunities to make choices in their creative play.

ENGLISH.

The provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and well above average at the end of Year 6
- The teaching is good overall throughout the school and very good in Years 5 and 6
- The pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills are very well developed
- Their writing skills are continuously improving and are very good in Years 5 and 6

Commentary

53. The pupils achieve very well over their time in the school and make very good progress. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. The children who have special educational needs benefit from the extra, invaluable support that they are given. Most of them are extremely well supported through the structured language programme that is an effective feature of the school's provision. The support teacher and support assistants work sensitively with these children to ensure that they achieve as well as all other pupils.
54. The pupils' reading skills are built up systematically and well supported by the parents, so that by the end of Year 6 the pupils achieve very well. Reading is a daily feature in all classes and the pupils' progress is tracked very carefully. As a result, the pupils generally read with accuracy and confidence by the time they move from infant to junior classes. The older pupils find pleasure in their reading and talk with ease about favourite authors and books.
55. The pupils speaking and listening skills are fostered and encouraged skilfully right across the curriculum. The teachers give the pupils chances to learn from one another through active participation in discussions and debates. They use open-ended questions very well so that the pupils have to think carefully before they make responses. The pupils grasp these opportunities because they are interested and eager to contribute.
56. The school has focussed a great deal of attention on developing the pupils' writing. Consequently, the pupils are not only performing very successfully in the extended writing lessons, but also using these skills in all other subjects across the curriculum. There is a good variety in the forms of writing being developed. The pupils generally write with care, paying appropriate levels of attention to spelling and handwriting. The different levels of tasks set by the teachers mean that the more able pupils are being well challenged to write more perceptively.

Example of outstanding practice

Using a very imaginative presentation of poetry to stimulate Year 5 pupils to write rhythmical sentences to describe the movement of animals.

A number of pupils were encouraged to share their very evocative descriptive writing with one another. The teacher chose the examples very carefully in order to elicit similar standards of writing from all pupils. The pupils were absolutely absorbed in the teacher's visual demonstration of movement relating to phrases, captioned on cards. This stimulated a discussion and the creation of high quality sentences, and the setting of a challenging task. The pupils accepted the challenge not only because they were so involved, but also because of the excellent relationships which allow the teacher and pupils to work in partnership. The pupils made excellent progress in producing descriptions of animals' movements. They made powerful word choices, for example, describing a leopard's movements as, 'sleek and silent'. The pupils produced eloquent three line poems because they were so fascinated by the task. The lesson concluded as the teacher, with great good humour, shared a number of the beautifully composed poems with the class.

57. The teachers have a very sound knowledge of how the pupils develop their literacy skills. They implement the National Literacy Strategy very imaginatively and well to extend the pupils' learning. The pupils' work is carefully assessed and analysed to ensure they are challenged to make very good progress and that they are achieving as well as they possibly can. However, the teachers' marking is not entirely consistent in helping all of the pupils to improve upon their work. The teachers plan methodically to give all pupils equal opportunities to achieve to the best of their ability. They teach with good levels of confidence that promote confidence amongst the pupils to work at higher levels. The co-ordinator efficiently supports work in English throughout the school by providing a scheme of work and resources that help all teachers to stimulate interest and enhance the learning. Consequently, the class teachers support reading and writing

development and library skills very effectively. The library is a good resource for research and developing the pupils' enjoyment of reading. A part-time librarian gives the pupils good support by arranging an efficient system that makes it easier for them to locate books.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. The pupils make very good use of their literacy skills in other subjects. For instance, they record their thoughts and feelings perceptively in subjects such as religious education and history.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in mathematics are above average and are improving at a fast rate
- The pupils are making good progress and achieving well because the teaching is good
- The teachers use the interactive whiteboards imaginatively

Commentary

59. The good start made by the pupils in the Foundation Stage is built on effectively when they enter Year 1. As they move through the school, the pupils continue to do well because the teaching of mathematics is well organised. For example, the pupils are grouped according to ability and this enables the teachers to match the work closely to their needs. The subject is well led and managed and this is having a positive effect on the improving quality of the provision. The enthusiastic and positive attitudes the pupils have for mathematics are impressive, and the teachers foster these very well during the lessons.

60. Throughout the school, the pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of numbers and the number systems. Their mathematical vocabulary is effectively developed. There is a strong emphasis on mental mathematics and overall the pupils have a good recall of number facts. They develop speed and accuracy in their calculation of numbers and have a good understanding of place value. On occasions, progress is slowed because some pupils do not know all of their multiplication tables by heart and have to spend time either working them out or looking them up. Investigative tasks are an integral part of the curriculum and challenge the pupils' mathematical thinking. This was evident, for example, when Year 6 pupils were asked to identify sequences using patterns such as square or triangular numbers and decimals to two places using positive and negative numbers.

61. The overall quality of the teaching was good and some very good teaching was seen throughout the school. The teachers present their lessons in competent and interesting ways, for example by making good use of the interactive whiteboards. There is a strong commitment to the achievement of all ability groups. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher ensured that all of the pupils were involved in the activities throughout all the sections of the lesson, and this resulted in the pupils achieving well in learning to use co-ordinates in all four quadrants. There is a good balance between whole-class, group and individual teaching strategies. Generally, the tasks are carefully and appropriately set for all pupils, but on a few occasions the lessons were not so successful because they lost direction and the teachers did not re-establish the purpose needed for the pupils to achieve well enough. In most lessons, however, the teachers make the learning objectives very clear to the pupils and have high expectations that they will work hard and achieve well. The older pupils know the levels they are aiming for, but it is not always made clear throughout the school what the pupils need to learn next and what their targets are.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. Throughout the school, the pupils have good opportunities to use and develop their mathematics in other subjects and consequently develop an appreciation of the practical uses of the skills they have learned. For instance, they use graphs and tables to record data in geography and science and they measure materials in design technology. A good example of this was seen when the Year 4 pupils accurately measured parts of the human skeleton and recorded their findings in graphical form. The Year 5 pupils employed their weighing skills for cooking and designed packaging for their biscuits by using mathematical nets.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6
- The teaching and learning in science are good overall, and very good in Years 3 to 6

Commentary

63. As the pupils move through the school, their scientific investigation skills are being well developed. In a particularly good lesson in Year 6, for instance, the pupils were challenged to devise their own experiment to answer a question about how quickly a sweetener dissolves in water at different temperatures. They made very good use of the measuring skills acquired in their mathematics lessons and recorded their results in the form of both graphs and written accounts. In this and other lessons seen, most pupils achieved very well in developing their knowledge and understanding of science.

64. A particular strength of the teaching is in the marking of pupils' work, which has improved and now clearly shows them how well they have done and what they must do next in order to improve further. The activities are well planned and the resources are used well to interest and engage the pupils. In their planning and presentation of all their lessons, the teachers make very good use of interactive computer whiteboards to enable all pupils to focus on what they are being asked to do. They are used very effectively to stimulate learning and extend the pupils' involvement in lessons. This results in the overwhelming majority of pupils working with enthusiasm and perseverance. They are attentive to what the teachers have to say and listen well to each other's points of view. All teachers have high expectations of good behaviour and the pupils respond well. The work is planned for either small groups or pairs, which helps to develop the pupils' sense of co-operation and collaboration. It contributes well to the pace of learning that is a characteristic of so many lessons. Homework is also used well to promote learning.

65. The school has very good systems for monitoring the attainment and progress of its pupils. For example, it became apparent that more able pupils in Year 2 were not achieving in science as well as they did in English and mathematics. Targets have now been set for this group of pupils and a scrutiny of their current work shows that more appropriate levels of challenge are being set. In a lesson on how materials can be changed by heating and cooling, for instance, the pupils were well motivated and most were able to make sensible predictions about what would happen. The more able pupils were able to identify why some changes are reversible and some are not.

66. The leadership and management of science are very good. The co-ordinator has a clear view of standards and monitors the teaching and learning across the school. The resources are very good and are being used well to help to raise standards. Since the last inspection, the school has made very good improvement in its provision for science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, standards well exceed the expected level
- ICT is playing an increasingly important role in the teaching and learning across the school
- The curriculum leadership is excellent

Commentary

67. From the sample of work seen and the skills and knowledge displayed by pupils early in Year 3, it is clear that standards are above those expected by the end of Year 2. The pupils achieve well in most lessons, and samples of their printed work indicate that they make particularly good progress in Years 5 and 6. Around the school there are many examples of work showing that the pupils' ICT skills are developing at a good rate as they move from class to class. The work includes, for example, the presentation of their ideas in newspaper articles and the results of science experiments in the form of graphs. By Year 6, standards well exceed the expected level.

Example of outstanding practice

Using the internet to communicate information and question its reliability with Year 6 pupils.

The pupils had downloaded news stories from the internet, created succinct summaries as a literacy exercise and presented them with a catchy headline and photograph. Following a snappy introduction that clearly identified the purpose of the lesson, the pupils uploaded their news summaries onto their own web page. They then eagerly set a question for debate related to their news story to which other pupils responded maturely. To solve any problems they encountered, they used a messaging system to contact their teacher. When they had contributed to a number of debates an electronic vote was taken before the teacher raised questions of bias and reliability of information on the internet. This issue was brought home to the pupils when he claimed to have been to the moon and projected a photograph of three astronauts one of whom appeared to be him. The pupils contributed fully to this short, but illuminating discussion.

68. The teaching is good overall, but ranged widely in the sample of lessons observed. In the best example, the teaching was excellent and the pupils' demonstrated competencies and confidence beyond their years because the lesson was set firmly in a curriculum context, had a very rapid pace and the very knowledgeable teacher challenged the pupils throughout. For the most part, the lessons were well planned, well managed and resulted in the pupils achieving well. However, in one poor lesson there was a lack of purpose and direction to the task set by the teacher and consequently the pupils did not achieve nearly enough or learn anything new.

69. The introduction of interactive whiteboards to every classroom and personal laptops for all teachers has not only raised the profile of ICT in teaching and learning, but also increased the teachers' confidence and ability to harness the technology to interest the pupils and raise the standards they attain. This is a key factor in the significant improvements made since the last inspection.

70. The co-ordinator is giving excellent leadership that is not only improving equipment and resources, raising standards and extending the range of the pupils' experiences, but also making a major contribution to the school's current development and its future vision. His knowledge, skill, enthusiasm and support for his colleagues have transformed the provision made for ICT. Under his leadership the school is very well placed to make even broader use of ICT in both teaching and learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. The school makes good use of ICT across the curriculum, and is now seeking to broaden further the opportunities for its pupils. There are good examples of ICT being used, for example, in art, English, mathematics and history.

HUMANITIES

72. Three religious education lessons were observed, and discussions were held with the co-ordinator and a group of pupils. In history six lessons were observed and discussions were held with the humanities co-ordinator. No geography lessons were seen. The pupils' previous work was scrutinised in all three subjects. In history and geography, the work covers common topics and themes and is recorded in the same exercise book. Consequently, it is possible to see the extent to which the two subjects are taught through an integrated approach which enhances the pupils' learning. There is also a strong emphasis on cross-curricular links with English through written accounts, mathematics in measuring and mapping and art in the variety of drawing and illustration. The teachers regularly mark the work and add helpful comments.

History

The school's provision for this subject is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good curriculum with strong links to other subjects
- Lively and informative teaching fires the pupils' interest

Commentary

73. The pupils show a keen interest in and greatly enjoy their history lessons. Consequently, they achieve well. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and standards are now above those expected at the end of Years 2 and 6.

74. The lessons often begin with interesting discussions that stimulate the pupils and engage them in historical enquiry. In Year 2, for example, the pupils eagerly discussed the way in which the Great Fire of London was allowed to spread so quickly and were able to sequence the information provided for them by the teacher in order to write a coherent account of events. In a very good lesson in Year 5 on the changes in Britain since 1948, the teacher's challenging questions encouraged the pupils so that they became absorbed in finding reasons for some of the changes which they had identified, and a lively debate followed. The pupils learn to keep an open mind when interpreting information and views of all participants are given careful consideration. They are encouraged to use their literacy skills to write accounts of their research. The good links in the teaching of history and geography are well illustrated in the study of Ancient Greece, where the voyages of Greek mariners to Africa provided opportunities for mapping sea routes and measuring the distances involved. An understanding of chronology is developed well throughout the school.

75. The quality of the teaching is good overall and the pupils achieve well. The teachers have high expectations and demand a high standard of presentation in the pupils' work. The school's very good system for assessing the pupils' progress enables the teachers to plan work that is relevant to the needs of all children in their class. The resources for teaching are very good. The interactive white boards in all classrooms are used well to stimulate the pupils' interest. Furthermore, the

school makes very good use of the local libraries, museums and places of historical interest, such as Wroxeter Roman City and Shugborough Hall, to add colour and depth to the topics. The coordinator of history leads the subject very effectively.

Religious Education

The provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards exceed expectations and the pupils achieve well

Commentary

76. The pupils with special needs are well supported and achieve as well as all other children. The more able pupils are challenged by the different level of tasks planned by their teachers and make good progress in their achievements. In discussion with pupils, it is clear that they have good recall of what they have learnt from their religious education lessons. Overall, the provision has improved since the last inspection.

77. The teachers' planning covers the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus and has been carefully aligned to national advice and guidance. This develops the pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and a wide range of other world faiths. In Year 2 classes the pupils begin to consider the contrasts as well as the similarities in religions. Although fuller consideration is given to Christianity and Judaism, Islam and Hinduism are also introduced. This prepares the pupils well for in depth studies of these religions in the junior classes. The assessment system is used effectively to track the pupils' progress. Throughout the school, the teachers regularly engage their pupils in focused discussions in order to develop learning from religion as well as about religion.

78. In a good lesson in Year 5 the pupils reflected maturely on forgiveness through their consideration of the story of the Good Samaritan. They worked in partnerships before sharing their perceptive views with the whole class. The sensitive intervention of a support assistant meant that a pupil with specific needs was able to take a full part in the discussion. The class teacher adeptly involved as many children as possible in the opening discussion and all spoke confidently and listened thoughtfully. As a result of this good practice, the religious education lessons make a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

79. The co-ordination of religious education is being skilfully managed by an experienced teacher. The resources are well matched to the pupils' current needs, but ICT is not being used fully to extend and enhance learning in religious education.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

80. Four lessons in design and technology, three in art and two in music were observed. A wide range of completed work in art and design and design technology was inspected.

81. Two lessons were seen in physical education, consequently it was not possible to make a secure judgement on the overall quality of the teaching and learning. However, an excellent swimming lesson was observed and it is clear from this why the school achieves such high standards. The evidence from discussions with the co-ordinators and a scrutiny of the teachers' planning shows that all the requirements of the National Curriculum are met well. The subject is very well led by the co-ordinators, who monitor the teachers' planning and the standards of the pupils' work across the school. The resources are very good and have a direct impact on the good progress

made by most pupils as they move through the school. Since the last inspection, the school has made very good improvement in the provision, leadership and management of physical education.

82. The pupils' work in art and design is of very good quality throughout the school. They have opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of a wide range of art techniques. From the evidence available, it is clear that the pupils achieve well when working either individually or as a group. They have the great advantage of being able to work in either a specialist room or the classroom. In the specialist room, they are able to use malleable material such as clay, and are delighted to see the changes in the colour of a glaze after it has been kiln fired. The pupils have a good understanding of the process of designing and making something from clay because of the many opportunities planned for them. They co-operate well to produce, for example, displays of batik work in central areas of the school that add much to the stimulating environment. They use a good variety of materials and fabrics effectively to create textures of high quality, including some that emulate the environmental art of Andy Goldsworthy. When working in the classrooms, the pupils are given appropriate opportunities to use and develop their painting and drawing techniques. In Year 2, they are fully engaged in adding detail to a model of a hand puppet. In a Year 4 class, they listen carefully to a story and then make imaginative pencil drawings of events and characters in their sketchbooks. The subject promotes the pupils' spiritual and cultural development as they work in the style of different artists from a range of cultures.

83. The teaching in both the music lessons seen was very good and the pupils clearly enjoyed making music. The school has very good resources for the teaching of music, including a well-equipped music room and ample supplies of percussion instruments on trolleys that can be wheeled into the classrooms. Various visiting instrumental teachers and a new subject co-ordinator have considerable musical expertise. The newly appointed co-ordinator is already influencing standards in music throughout the school.

Design and Technology

The quality of the provision for design and technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards exceed those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6
- The pupils' skills in designing artefacts are systematically developed and improved as they move through the school.

Commentary

84. Standards have improved since the last inspection. A scrutiny of last years' work shows that the majority of the pupils achieved standards above those expected and the current inspection provides evidence that this has been maintained. For example, conversations with Year 5 pupils show they have a clear understanding of the purpose of evaluating their products with a view to making improvements. They listen carefully to the teacher and respond with enthusiasm and interest. Good use is made of homework to extend the pupils' learning. A good lesson in Year 2 developed the pupils' understanding of the design process in the making of a paper mock-up of a finger puppet. Similarly, the current work in Year 4 on designing a money container shows that most pupils can make a template of their intended work and evaluate its design features with a view to further improvement. A scrutiny of the pupils' previous work shows that all groups systematically develop their skills in design and making as they move through the school.

85. The teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now consistently good across both key stages. The lessons are well planned and the activities interest and motivate the pupils to learn. They respond with enthusiasm to the challenge and expectations of their teachers as was seen in a Year 5 lesson on developing a package for the biscuits that they had made. Expectations were high, the task was demanding and the pupils responded very well. All teachers are careful to ensure that pupils of all abilities have equal opportunity to be involved and to contribute to the lesson. They also link the activities to the work in English by further developing the pupils' speaking and listening skills and by providing good opportunities for them to use the skills of accurate measurement that they have acquired through their work in mathematics.
86. The leadership and management of this subject are very good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and has helped to raise the profile of the subject in the school. She regularly monitors the teachers' planning to ensure continuity of learning and the progression of skills, and a new system of assessment is enabling her to build up a clear picture of how well the pupils are progressing. The current resources are good and are being used well to help raise standards across the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

87. During the inspection no personal, social and health education lessons were seen. However, the school has a well-developed programme of units of work that is carefully planned and co-ordinated with the topics and themes studied in religious education. Discussions with the co-ordinators show that not only is the programme of work well established, but also that it is regularly reviewed to take account of developments such as the class and school councils. The school encourages the use of drama particularly with the younger pupils when, for example, they are focussing on good playground behaviour. The purpose of the whole programme is to promote respect, confidence and self-esteem. The positive attitudes and the respect the pupils show for their peers and their teachers indicate that this programme of work is very effective.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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