

INSPECTION REPORT

PRINCE ALBERT JUNIOR & INFANT SCHOOL

Aston, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103154

Headteacher: Mr J D Brodie

Lead inspector: Mr Sean O'Toole

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 6th November 2003

Inspection number: 257228

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	709
School address:	Albert Road Aston Birmingham
Postcode:	B6 5NH
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Hussain
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Located in Aston, a suburb of Birmingham, it is much bigger than most primary schools and is oversubscribed. Almost all of the 709 pupils (314 girls and 375 boys) speak English as an additional language and a fifth are at an early stage of learning English. The most common languages spoken are Sylhetti, Mirpuri and Malay. The area in which pupils live is amongst the most deprived in the country. Over half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals (well above average). On starting school almost all pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are well below those expected for their age and their knowledge of English is extremely low. The school has identified about 14 per cent of pupils as having special educational needs, and three have statements. Most of these pupils have difficulties including speech and communication. The school has received national awards for achievement, has the Basic Skills Quality Mark and is a school of excellence for cricket. It is involved in several initiatives including Excellence in Cities, an Education Action Zone and the Pathfinder Project on workforce remodelling. The TILE project (Towards Improving Learning and Employability) lies at the heart of the school's programme of improving pupils' personal, academic, social and emotional development.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20891	Sean O'Toole	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology; Design and technology; Physical education.
14178	Patricia Willman	Lay inspector	
20911	Judy Dawson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum; History; Music.
23453	Carole Cressey	Team inspector	English as additional language; Mathematics; Art and design.
30842	June Turner	Team inspector	English; Geography.
22884	Sandra Sutcliffe	Team inspector	Special educational needs; Science; Religious education.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Several excellent and many very good features make this an effective school. It is **highly inclusive** and, through effective teaching, a very good curriculum and very strong leadership and management, it provides well for its pupils. The school offers **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher promotes confidence in the staff and pupils and inspires them to succeed
- Pupils of all abilities achieve well in most subjects, although girls are generally more successful than boys in national tests
- About a third of the lessons seen were very good or excellent
- Although pupils achieve well, standards in English could be better
- Pupils achieve very well in information and communication technology (ICT)
- The curriculum is innovative and challenging
- Behaviour and attitudes are very good; relationships are excellent
- More work is needed on tracking individuals' progress
- The school is highly effective in involving parents and the community

Improvement since the last inspection in March 1998 has been very good. The school has worked hard to raise standards although there has been a dip in the most recent national test results. The issues raised in the previous inspection report have been dealt with and have brought improvements in ICT, music and design and technology. Teaching and leadership and management have continued to improve and contribute much to creating a harmonious and purposeful community. **There is very good potential for further improvement.**

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

There are several significant barriers to learning. Pupils start school with well below average levels of skills, knowledge and understanding and most come from very poor socio-economic backgrounds. The impact of taking extended holidays, especially in Year 6, has a detrimental effect on learning. Most pupils come from homes where English is not generally used and their limited understanding of English hampers their success in national tests. The school compensates well for these factors.

Pupils in the Foundation Stage make good progress and achieve well but few attain the expected goals for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematical and creative development, although most are on course to attain them in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and personal, social and emotional development. Inspection evidence shows that progress and achievement for the different groups of pupils is good in almost all subjects, although achievement in English could be better especially in writing in Years 3 to 6. Achievement in mathematics and science is good overall. National test results and inspection evidence show that by the end of Year 2, the pupils attain above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics when compared with schools with similar intakes although reading is well below the national average and writing and mathematics are below average. There has been slow but steady improvement since the previous inspection and achievement in mathematics and science is very good in Years 1 and 2.

In spite of the recent dip in standards in English, mathematics and science in the Year 6 national tests, there has been some improvement since the previous inspection and the trend has been broadly in line with national improvements. Inspection evidence shows that standards are below average in English, mathematics and science. In the tests, girls are more successful than boys; the gap has been particularly wide in writing. The use of ICT is proving especially effective in motivating boys and improving their writing and research skills. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. Pupils at an early stage of learning English receive much support and achieve very well. The school identifies and supports gifted and talented pupils effectively although the more able pupils are not always challenged enough. Pupils achieve very well in ICT, art and design, music and some aspects of physical education. Achievement in religious education is good and satisfactory in design and technology.

The ethos of encouragement very successfully creates an environment in which pupils thrive. The pupils are very well behaved and have very positive attitudes. Relationships are excellent. **The school promotes pupils' personal, social and emotional development very well. Its fostering of a sense of community with common and inclusive values contributes excellently to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.** The school council plays a significant part in voicing pupils' opinions. The school has met with substantial success through excellent systems to reduce absence, and attendance is well above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good; the school is particularly effective in nurturing pupils' gifts and talents. **Teaching and learning are good.** Very good planning, excellent use of ICT to stimulate learning and very good subject knowledge are strong contributors to learning. Although much of the teaching of English is good, teachers' use of assessment is not sharp enough. The teaching of mathematics and science is mostly very good. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Pupils are keen to learn and work hard although they do not show enough pride in the presentation of their English work. The school's very good curriculum sparks enthusiasm among pupils and is enriched by excellent extra-curricular activities which stimulate success and achievement in sport, music and ICT. Pervading the school is a sense of care for individuals; staff are highly ambitious for their pupils. The school has exceptionally effective ways of involving parents. Extended services and educational/support programmes are excellent.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is very clear about its objectives because the outstanding headteacher leads with vision and flair, supported excellently by the deputies and senior staff. **Very good leadership and management** have created a vibrant team willing to try innovative approaches to raise achievement. Subject leaders play a pivotal role in developing and managing the curriculum. Administrative systems are very efficient and involvement in initiatives have reduced teachers' workload and freed time to concentrate on improving achievement. The school sets ambitious targets through the good use of data and research but this process should be sharpened up through more focused tracking of individual performance. Very good use is made of funds. The school's involvement in several major projects is raising pupils' achievement. The very good governors play a key part in school improvement and in challenging the staff; they provide excellent support.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils are immensely proud of their school. Parents are highly satisfied with the school and speak glowingly of all it does.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in English
- Be more rigorous in monitoring each pupil's progress and setting challenging work

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well. Although standards are mostly below average in English, mathematics and science, they are rising; girls tend to be more successful than boys in national tests. Pupils achieve very well in those subjects that are less dependent upon English language skills. Achievement in Years 1 to 5 is better than in Year 6. There has been good improvement in most subjects since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well, although few attain the expected goals for their age by the start of Year 1
- Standards in English are low in national tests
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve very well in mathematics and science
- Standards in ICT are well above average and achievement is very good
- Achievement in music and art and design is very good

Commentary

1. There are significant external barriers to learning in this school.
 - Attainment on admission is well below average and very low in language and literacy
 - Almost all pupils have English as an additional language and a fifth start school with very little or no English; many pupils come from backgrounds where the language relies on oral rather than written traditions
 - The area around the school is among the most socio-economically deprived in the country
 - A fifth of Year 6 pupils took extended holidays before the national tests in 2003 and about 10 per cent of these pupils joined the school after Year 3
2. The school provides substantial help to enable pupils to overcome these barriers
 - Family learning has helped to raise the proportion of parents speaking English and their understanding of how to help their children learn
 - Initiatives to improve attendance have been highly successful
 - Pupils have access to the school's laptop computers at home
 - The school's initiatives in mathematics, ICT, physical education, art and design and music have substantially improved achievement
 - Extended opportunities for learning are excellent and have resulted in high levels of motivation among boys and girls
 - Research at the school has identified significant features that inhibit the development of reading and resulted in a successful programme of improvement
3. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and achieve well. Their most significant gains in learning are in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and personal, social and emotional development and achievement for boys and girls in these areas of learning is very good. By the end of the reception year few attain the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical and creative development but most attain the goals in physical personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world.
4. The rate of progress through Years 1 and 2 is good for all pupils regardless of ability and background. The pupils achieve well overall and very well in mathematics, ICT, music and art and design. Results of national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002 showed that standards were well below average in reading and science, and below average in writing and mathematics. Comparisons with similar schools showed that pupils attained above average standards. New initiatives and changes to teaching have led to improvement and inspection evidence shows that standards in science are average and are below average in reading, writing and mathematics.

Over the last five years girls have attained slightly better results than boys but this gap has narrowed in the last few years and inspection evidence shows little variation in performance in the classroom.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.6 (14.5)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	13.6 (14.4)	14.4 (14.3)
Mathematics	15.6 (15.4)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 90 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. Tests results at the end of Year 6 improved between 1998 and 2001 but declined in 2002 and preliminary indicators show that they have remained low in the 2003 tests. Nevertheless, since the previous inspection, standards have improved overall, although more remains to be done to repeat the school's success of 2001. Inspection evidence shows that the school's initiatives are working and standards are rising but remain below average in English, mathematics and science. The most rapid gains in learning and highest achievement are in mathematics because of strong subject leadership and the extensive use of ICT. Good plans are in hand to follow similar practice in English. In the tests in 2002 standards in English, mathematics and science were well below the national average but average in English and science and above average in mathematics when compared with similar schools. Test results show that girls do much better than boys in English, especially in writing, and that boys tend to achieve a little better in mathematics and science. The school has successfully targeted boys' writing through the extensive use of ICT and this has raised levels of motivation and is having a positive impact on standards. More remains to be done to develop English skills but a good start has been made. The most significant aspect that hampers pupils' success in English is their limited comprehension of complex language and ideas. The school is working hard to improve this through teaching technical vocabulary for each subject. ICT is used excellently to support learning in other subjects. Evidence in pupils' history and religious education books shows that literacy skills are used well to enhance learning. Pupils make good use of numeracy skills in design and technology, science and art and design. The school analyses the performance of different groups and uses the information to set ambitious targets. It is currently on course to achieve them; although the preliminary results in 2003 show that they fell short by some way.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.0 (26.7)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	25.4 (25.8)	26.7 (26.6)
Science	26.3 (27.8)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 91 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

6. Inspection evidence points to higher levels of attainment among younger pupils where the impact of initiatives, such as family learning and raising attendance, has been greatest. Pupils in Years 3 to 5 are currently achieving better than Year 6. The school is tackling this by substantially increasing the level of teaching and classroom support for the pupils in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support; they achieve very well and make most gains in practical and creative work; a particular success is their very good achievement in ICT. Pupils at an early stage of learning English benefit from high quality specialist support and make very good progress. In many year groups there are teachers or support staff who speak a range of languages. Bi-lingualism is encouraged and valued and this gives the pupils confidence so that they make very good progress. The school provides well for gifted and talented pupils and they

make very good gains in areas such as sport, music and art and design. More able pupils are challenged effectively in some lessons but more needs to be done with assessment to ensure that targets are sharply set to increase the rate of progress. Value added data shows that the pupils make good progress from one stage to the next especially given their poor understanding of English.

7. Inspection evidence shows that standards in mathematics at the end of Year 6 are below average but achievement is now good due to increased specialist support. Standards are higher than this in Years 3 to 5, being closer to average. Standards in science at the end of Year 6 vary too much and pupils could achieve more if the curriculum was better balanced. Standards in ICT are well above average throughout the school; in music and art and design they are above average. Achievement is very good in these subjects. Pupils attain average standards in religious education and design and technology and achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils love coming to school and their **attendance in the last year was very good**. This reflects their very good attitudes to the educational and personal opportunities that the school offers. Parents and pupils support the **excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural values promoted by the school**. Pupils' **behaviour and overall personal development are very good**. This represents an improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' interest and involvement in all aspects of school life are excellent
- Relationships, based on mutual respect and courtesy, are harmonious
- Pupils are very appreciative of all that their teachers and other members of staff do for them
- Pupils have high aspirations and are very well motivated learners
- The high level of participation in the excellent range of out-of-school activities, day and residential visits makes a strong contribution to pupils' very good personal and emotional development
- There was an outstanding improvement in attendance in the last year

Commentary

8. Pupils are very proud of their school. Attendance is well above average having previously being very low. This improvement is having a positive impact on learning. A few parents take their children on extended holidays and this, particularly for Year 6 pupils prior to the national tests, places them at a disadvantage and they do not always achieve as well as they could. Pupils are mostly punctual and the school day and lessons start promptly.

Example of outstanding practice

The school has raised attendance significantly since the previous inspection

The pupils' attendance for the year to July 2003 was better than that found in most primary schools, with a quarter of pupils achieving 100 per cent attendance and two-thirds with attendance above 96 per cent. This is the result of the excellent systems to monitor and promote good attendance and the hard work of the home/school teacher. The use of the TILE project (Towards Improved Learning and Employability) does much to raise parental awareness of the importance of regular schooling and provides a spur to learning as pupils develop very good self-esteem. As a result, almost all parents now contact the school promptly about absence and the staff follow up any absences immediately. The level of trust between the home/school teacher and parents, and the programme of workshops and opportunities for parents to learn new skills have significantly enhanced parents' understanding of the benefits of regular attendance. The school investigates suspicious absences and involves external agencies quickly. The daily tracking systems ensure that senior staff have a grip on what is happening and the learning mentors are quick to visit pupils' homes. When necessary the staff collect pupils. The very popular breakfast club has contributed to improved punctuality. A significant contributory factor in raising attendance has been the rich and vibrant curriculum and emphasis placed on personal responsibility.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003 (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	2.7
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.0
National data	0.5

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

9. Pupils are very enthusiastic about all aspects of school life. They enjoy lessons and, because they want to learn, they work hard and try to do their best. Behaviour throughout the school day is generally very good, although when teaching lacks interest and challenge, a few pupils become restless and do not learn as much as they should. There have been no exclusions. Parents and pupils have no concerns about bullying because they trust the school to deal effectively and fairly with any unkind behaviour. Because pupils have been fully involved in developing the class and school rules, they understand and respect them. Pupils are friendly and interesting individuals. They grow in confidence and self esteem because they are consistently encouraged and praised for their achievements.

10. Pupils' spiritual awareness is developed very well on many different levels. They are encouraged to explore their feelings about music, art and literature. The poetry in Years 3 and 4 about the experience of a roller coaster shows imagination and excitement. Assemblies provide opportunities to reflect on spiritual and moral issues and to learn about the lives of others less fortunate than themselves. The school makes excellent provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development. The pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong because they are consistently encouraged to make the right choices. Pupils learn to collaborate with each other in their lessons and enjoy the benefits of teamwork in their very successful sporting endeavours. The school council is very effective in representing the pupils' views and acting on their ideas. Through their personal, social and health education lessons, pupils learn a range of life skills for dealing with difficulties many encounter both in and out of school. Through their studies in religious education, pupils learn about the beliefs of others which effectively promote tolerance and understanding. The school makes excellent provision for cultural development. Pupils' backgrounds and experiences are shared, celebrated and valued. They learn to appreciate and enjoy a range of European music, art, history and literature and the range of visits and visitors expands pupils' cultural awareness. The children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development. They listen carefully and try hard to please their teachers. The children are encouraged to work and play constructively and happily together and to make sensible choices. They behave well.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	
White – British	
White – Irish	
White – any other White background	
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	
Mixed – White and Asian	
Asian or Asian British – Indian	

No of pupils on roll
6
2
2
4
1
13

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	225	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	269	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	11	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	13	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 quality of education provided by the school is **good** and there are several significant strengths. **Teaching and learning are good.** The school's **very good curriculum is enriched excellently** through extra-curricular activities. The standard of **care for pupils is of high calibre.** Links with parents and the community are excellent.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning range from excellent to unsatisfactory but are good overall. Assessment is satisfactory. The good quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good emphasis on developing basic skills
- Planning is very good
- Pupils are attentive, hardworking and productive
- In some lessons, especially English, the work is not challenging enough
- Pupils with special educational needs are taught very well
- Staff are very effective in supporting pupils who are at an early stage of learning English

Commentary

11. Excellent relationships underpin much of the teaching and help to create purposeful classrooms where pupils can concentrate and learn effectively. A significant contribution of the teaching is the way in which pupils grow in confidence and make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils' enthusiasm for school and thirst for learning contribute much to harmony and purpose in the classrooms. They are well motivated and keen to do well and please their teachers. The staff make very good use of homework to promote learning. Pupils respond very well to these challenges and homework has a significant impact on achievement. The school ensures that pupils have equal opportunities to use computers for research and at home and school, by sending laptops home, and this has fostered good improvement in independent learning since the previous inspection. Pupils comment very positively about their teachers and other staff, and feel that they are taught very well. Parents also support these views. Teaching meets the needs of the pupils well and staff use their very good subject knowledge to plan lessons which are interesting and stimulate a desire in pupils to learn. Bilingual skills are used well to assess pupils' attainment levels when they first enter school. This enables staff to build effectively on what children already know and can do.
12. In the Foundation Stage staff use their skills well to help children settle into school and to enable them to access the Foundation Stage curriculum. In the nursery and reception classes the teaching is good and achieves a balance between practical work and teacher directed activity. The children learn successfully because of well focused support and the very good use of resources. The teaching of personal, social and emotional development is especially good as staff focus on encouraging children to feel confident about what they can achieve. There is good teaching of communication, language and literacy although staff sometimes answer for the children rather than waiting for a response. Mathematical development is taught well and includes a good balance between practical work, learning rhymes and frequent opportunities to count and repeat numbers. Staff have a thorough knowledge of the areas of learning and how young

children learn. They carefully track the individual's achievements and plan work based on the information this assessment provides. This ensures that learning moves on well.

13. In Years 1 to 6, class teachers, learning support staff and support teachers work very effectively together to ensure that pupils have good access to the National Curriculum. Subject knowledge is very good and staff use a very good range of methods to plan lessons which move learning on. Staff are very prudently deployed to ensure pupils learning English as an additional language have effective support within the class or in time limited small groups, which has a positive effective on their achievement. Teachers and support staff are used well to explain vocabulary and concepts to those children whose level of English language limits their knowledge and understanding. Similarly there is very effective support of those with special educational needs as specialist teachers focus specifically on targets in individual education plans so that learning proceeds smoothly and consistently. The teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics is mostly very good. Emphasis is rightly placed on supporting pupils' development in literacy and numeracy skills but support is also available for pupils to fully extend their thinking and understanding in other subjects, such as art and design and history. In one excellent English lesson in Year 2, literacy skills were greatly enhanced as the pathfinder lead professional used role-play as an imaginative vehicle to develop pupils speaking, listening and writing skills. By the end of the lesson pupils had not only gained knowledge and understanding about Guy Fawkes but had been introduced to a wide range of new vocabulary, the skills in spelling and sounding out words by identifying initial and final phonemes and developing accuracy in punctuation and grammar.
14. Staff have adapted the guidance in the national strategies for literacy and numeracy very well. The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall. A wide range of methods is used to capture the pupils' interest and most lessons are well structured to include opportunities for discussion, practising skills and reviewing what has been learned. There is good emphasis on encouraging pupils to work hard and complete a good quantity of work. However, in English teachers do not insist on sufficiently good presentation and pupils are often careless in handwriting, spelling and punctuation, which leads to work that is below standard. Most lessons have good pace and in some the learning moves on briskly. In an excellent cricket lesson the teacher set demanding challenges for the pupils, gave expert guidance and reviewed learning frequently; as a result, progress and achievement were very high for all, and those with disabilities made excellent strides in learning. However, in a few lessons the pace is too slow and teachers talk too much so that the momentum is lost and some pupils, usually boys, become distracted. Usually behaviour management is good and pupils understand the clear expectations of the staff.
15. Support staff play a significant part in learning especially in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. They are briefed very well and several have had much training. The staff make very good use of resources to support achievement. This is especially the case in using ICT in a range of subjects. Teachers and their colleagues have a very good understanding of ICT and are imaginative in its use. For example, the assessment of ICT skills is very good and pupils are involved much in identifying their own strengths and weaknesses. However, in other subjects, in spite of some good marking, the teachers do not make sufficient use of assessment in planning. This means that pupils are not always clear about what to do to improve. Although targets are set they are not usually specific enough and few pupils are able to explain what they need to do to improve. Conversely, the assessment procedures for pupils at an early stage of learning English and those with special educational needs are good. Detailed assessments and records are maintained, indicating pupils' performance and their progress in the acquisition of English or progress towards targets in individual education plans. These are used rigorously to set individual targets to move learning on and target additional support in order to improve pupils' fluency in English and enable pupils to move quickly to independent learning. Staff carefully monitor the progress of different ethnic groups in order to highlight any differences in attainment between ethnic groups in the school to further refine support.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 76 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (4 %)	23 (31 %)	31 (41 %)	16 (21 %)	2 (3 %)	0(0 %)	0 (0 %)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages.

The curriculum

The quality of **the curriculum is very good** and is supported through a good range of resources. Opportunities for enrichment, including the provision for extra-curricular activities, are excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The planning of the curriculum and the use of information and communication technology are skilful and highly effective
- The school's inclusivity and provision for personal, social and health education are very good
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils at the early stages of learning English is very effective
- The range of out of school activities is outstanding

Commentary

16. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught and the curriculum is well balanced and broad. The schools' involvement in a number of government initiatives has been very influential in creating a rich and vibrant learning environment which emphasises pupils' academic and social development. The highly imaginative and innovative use of information and communication technology is a most efficient and effective tool for planning. It reduces teachers' workload, provides an excellent framework for teaching and learning and provides teachers and pupils with access to a limitless world of information and learning. This innovative curriculum generates a tangible enthusiasm for learning among pupils, which has a progressive impact on their achievement. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is very good. There is a strong focus on developing children's personal, social and emotional skills through an interesting and challenging curriculum that includes very good opportunities for learning through play.
17. There is a very clear commitment to inclusion and this is obvious in the flexible way the school is organised and the successful way pupils' personal, social and health education is promoted. The school fully reflects the cultural diversity of its community and this is mirrored in the displays, resources, tasks and activities provided. Home languages, cultures and religions are recognised, valued and celebrated. Considerable effort goes into ensuring that all pupils receive the support they need to access the curriculum. Support staff are deployed prudently to ensure that those pupils whose needs are the greatest receive the most support. The provision for special educational needs is very good. The generous number of well trained staff, both teachers and assistants, contribute very effectively to the pupils' achievement. There is much innovative practice and the school makes very good use of research to inform its work. Pupils who need support in learning English are provided with very good additional specialist teaching to help them acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to access the National Curriculum and achieve well.
18. Arrangements for pupils' personal, social and health education are very good and are underpinned by the school's caring ethos and values. The agreed policies for health, sex and drugs education are sensitive to the religious and cultural heritages of the pupils and their families. The school's success in implementing the TILE programme (Towards improved learning and employability) is evident from discussions with Year 6 pupils. Pupils demonstrate very mature

attitudes to learning, enjoy sensitive and supportive relationships and ooze confidence and self-esteem, culminating in very high aspirations for their futures.

19. Over 24 clubs operating at different times of the day meet the interests of girls and boys and are very well attended. A wide range of activities, including morning, evening and Saturday clubs, provide pupils with additional opportunities for learning to enable them to achieve as well as they can. Pupils eagerly arrive at school long before the start of the official school day to work on computers while enjoying a substantial breakfast to set them up for a rigorous day of learning. All staff give their time very generously to extend pupils' interests and skills and, as a result, individuals and groups of pupils have been very successful in gaining local recognition for their skills in areas such as sport and chess. Residential trips, which are available for Years 2 to 6, are highly effective in deepening pupils learning as well as developing independent and social skills. Pupils value these trips and talk animatedly about their experiences and what they have learned.
20. There are a generous number of well-qualified teachers to meet the needs of all ability groups within the school. There are a significant number of teachers with specialist skills who are well deployed across the whole school. The high quality of co-operation between teachers and support staff plays a significant role in identifying and nurturing the abilities all groups of pupils. Support assistants are well trained, hard working and committed to the education and welfare of the pupils. The accommodation is satisfactory overall for the large number of pupils and the plentiful, colourful displays ensure a warm, welcoming environment. The many small rooms are used effectively but some of the classrooms are very cramped. Whilst the playground has been developed imaginatively, it is very small for the number of pupils. Resources are mostly good and they are excellent in ICT.

Care, guidance and support

All pupils are very well cared for and have access to **very good personal support and guidance**. The overall educational support and guidance for individual pupils are not yet as good as they should be. Pupils' views are sought regularly and taken seriously. The overall quality of the care provided is better now than at the time of the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The kindness and commitment of all staff ensure that parents and pupils feel confident that any problems will be handled fairly and effectively
- Child protection procedures are excellent
- The provision made for the care, guidance and support of those pupils with special educational needs and for those at the early stages of learning English is very good

Commentary

21. The procedures to maintain a safe and healthy environment are very good. The school is clean, warm and welcoming. Emergency evacuation is practised regularly and, despite the complexity of the building, is effective. Provision for first aid is good and the midday staff are well trained. The limitations imposed by the size of the playground are managed well by staff and pupils and supervision is very good. The buddies and prefects keep a watchful eye on the younger pupils during playtimes to ensure that everyone is included in the games and activities.
22. Pupils say that they trust their teachers and know that they will help them if they are unhappy or worried about something. There are very good systems for encouraging and rewarding good behaviour which are fairly and consistently applied. Pupils say that they try to work hard and behave well because they value the praise and recognition of their peers and teachers. The Behaviour Improvement Programme supports a small number of pupils who have particular difficulties controlling their behaviour. Whilst this is a long term strategy, there is some evidence that the multi-agency support available for these pupils is effective. Pupils' on-going personal development is also monitored through the Circle Time sessions. 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. The school records information about pupils' individual progress in lessons, but does not always use this information to plan the next step at a suitably challenging level for each pupil. As a result, the educational support and guidance for each pupil is not as good as it should be. There are excellent induction arrangements for new arrivals that enable both parents and children to be confident of the high standard of care provided by the school.

23. The involvement of pupils in the decision making process in school is excellent. Their views are regularly sought on a wide range of issues. The school council is a very effective body whose ideas and views are taken very seriously by all involved in the management of the school. Pupils know that their views matter because many of them have a positive impact on school life. For example, all pupils now have access to drinking water and the requested judo club has just started.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a very successful and highly effective partnership with parents. Links with the community and other schools are excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a high level of mutual trust and respect between the school and parents
- The school is very active in encouraging and welcoming 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

Commentary

24. The school provides very good information for parents about its activities and the progress of their children. The annual reports on pupils' progress give parents very good information about their children's strengths and weaknesses and many include a statement about attainment. Consultation evenings are well attended and teachers are always willing to give parents any further information they may require. Translation of written information is provided on request and interpreters are made available when required. Parents respond very well when asked for their views and many contribute ideas that are taken into account when planning future developments. They are very supportive of the work of the school, and value highly the educational and personal opportunities the school provides for their children.

25. There are excellent links with the local community which facilitate and support the outstanding opportunities provided for parents, not only to learn skills to help their children at home, but also to enable them to access help and advice when encountering difficulties. Business partnerships have enabled the school to draw on a wide range of funding and resources and raised the profile of the school in the area, having a beneficial impact on achievement.

Example of outstanding practice

The excellent support for family learning is having a significant impact on standards.

The school has appointed an innovative and hard working home school liaison teacher who has sought funding for and introduced a wide range of family learning programmes to support the needs of parents. She has been very successful in encouraging parents to take advantage of these opportunities for the benefit of their children, by reassuring them and developing their own self-confidence. The *Inspire Workshops* equip parents with skills to have fun learning with their children. These attract a large number of participants and have had a very significant impact on parents' confidence in helping their children. Other more formal courses teaching Family Literacy and Numeracy and "Keeping up with the Children" are run over longer periods. They have impacted well on the parents' competence in speaking English. Teachers identify families with children who struggle with some aspects of learning and focus support on these parents; this is handled with great sensitivity and parents have responded very well. Many parents are now equipped to help their children with reading and writing at home. The increased presence of parents in the school has improved communication at all levels and many parents have been empowered to become active partners in school life and in the learning of their children. Another benefit has been the greater involvement of pupils in extra curricular activities and homework which has brought about improvements in standards in physical education and the development of basic skills.

26. There are very good transition arrangements with secondary schools and parents comment that their older children settle quickly into this new environment. Links with other schools and educational establishments are excellent. For example, the lack of any outdoor sports facilities has been overcome by establishing an excellent arrangement with a nearby secondary school. This has enabled the pupils to participate in a wide range of sporting activities at which they are extremely successful. The school also benefits from contact with other primary schools. The quality of the school's partnerships is better than it was at the time of the last inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The outstanding leadership by the headteacher, the deputies and other senior staff has brought about much improvement since the previous inspection. The school is managed very well. **Governance of the school is very good.** There are substantial external barriers to raising achievement which the leadership and management confront realistically and successfully.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and direction by the headteacher is inspirational
- All staff have high levels of commitment to improvement
- Innovative management practices ensure staff development and reduce workload
- Strategic planning is very effective
- Data is used well to set ambitious targets
- Excellent delegation empowers staff working with parents and the community

Commentary

27. The headteacher and senior staff are highly committed to providing the best possible education for pupils at the school and provide inspiration for all associated with the school. The deputies make a significant contribution to the leadership and management especially as the headteacher is sometimes involved in initiatives which take him out of school. This is seen in the hard work and high levels of co-operation between all staff and the success in raising achievement in some significant areas. The parents and pupils hold the staff in high regard. A particular success in leadership has been successful delegation and empowerment of staff to take a lead in curriculum development. This success has brought improved teaching and learning and achievement in physical education, ICT and music and has done much to enhance pupils' self esteem through extended services in personal, social and health education. The headteacher believes in his staff and his dedication and commitment not only benefits pupils but also contributes much to the adults' professional development.

28. Subject leaders have well developed skills and use them to improve standards. There has been good use of data to pinpoint trends in attainment and the senior staff set ambitious targets. The school is rigorous in self-evaluation and has a realistic view of its strengths and weaknesses. However, the use of data to set individual targets is underdeveloped and this leads to some lack of challenge especially for more able pupils in some lessons. Performance management is highly effective in this school because of the challenges set for staff and the way in which the management ensures that targets can be met through additional support or funds.
29. All aspects of the school are managed very well. Highly effective teams manage the subjects and aspects of school life. There is very good management of the provision for pupils with English as an additional language and also for those with special educational needs. The effective deployment of teachers and learning support assistants has a significant impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school has a very clear educational direction to ensure very good provision for all pupils and resources are carefully directed towards those pupils in greatest need. It meets its aims very well. The school's very positive ethos contributes much to purposeful learning and pupils' successes.
30. The governors play a very effective part in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and provide much support and challenge. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities very well, especially in ensuring that the school has inclusive policies and practices regarding special educational needs, race, equal opportunities and disability. The governors meet regularly and review how well the school is doing in meeting its targets. There is no sense of complacency but a deep understanding of the challenges facing the school and the vision to overcome difficulties. They have been especially effective in promoting learning through the use of ICT and this has contributed much to improved standards.
31. Underpinning the school's financial arrangements is a very good approach to securing best value not only in purchasing supplies and services but also in developing the curriculum. Success is measured against the impact on standards and governors hold the school to account for its decisions. The school manages its finances very effectively and there are robust systems to check on spending and the impact it has on standards. The headteacher and governors have a very clear understanding of strategic financial planning and have well developed plans to ensure continuity of education as additional grants run out. Funds for specific purposes are used exceptionally well. The school benefits much from substantial additional funding for new initiatives as well as some funding through the Education Action Zone. These funds have been used exceptionally well to make an impact on pupils' learning and are beginning to raise levels of achievement. A highly successful project has involved developing ICT throughout the school as a means of motivating pupils and involving parents and has resulted in improved standards in several subjects. Governor and staff commitment to this project and the management of resources including staffing have brought significant benefits. The exceptional links developed with parents and the community are the result of the appointment of a family learning teacher who has broken down barriers and raised self-esteem among parents, who are now much better equipped to support their children's learning. The school's involvement in the Pathfinder Project has brought many benefits in reducing teacher workload and in equipping other educators to take a full part in supporting pupils in school. This project is still at the early stages of development and is having most impact on achievement in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2,171,932
Total expenditure	2,086,566
Expenditure per pupil	2,942

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	18,748
Balance carried forward to the next	66,618

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

SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

32. The curriculum is very good across the Foundation Stage. The six teachers, support teacher, nursery nurses and teaching assistants make very effective teams, providing children with the security of small groups in which to learn and a stimulating and challenging range of activities, enabling the children to achieve well. Teaching and learning are good, helping children to make a good start at school and to achieve well. There is a strong focus on developing the children's personal, social and emotional development and on helping the children to develop their spoken English, as many join the nursery with little or no English language. There is a very good induction programme and close links are established between school and home, helping children to feel secure and giving guidance to parents and carers about supporting their children at home. There is a good range of resources to support the curriculum although the newly established outdoor area has limited space. The organisation and management of the Foundation Stage is very good. In the nursery the children move freely between the different areas that are focused on the six areas of learning. The teachers and nursery nurses work and play with the children as they select their activities and monitor individual progress towards the early learning goals. In the reception classes the teachers and teaching assistants work with small groups of children, teaching and consolidating new skills, often after whole class teaching sessions.
33. Parents speak highly of the provision made for their children and are confident to approach the teachers knowing that, if needed, an interpreter will be provided. The Thursday afternoon club for adults and Foundation Stage children has firmly established the school as an integral part of the community and disperses any barriers between home and school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Independence is promoted very effectively as children are expected to make choices
- Family groups give children security and confidence
- Children are encouraged to respect and care for each other

Commentary

34. Many children join the nursery with very little experience of children or adults outside their families and many have little or no English language. The small family groups ease children gently towards life in the larger community. All adults play alongside the children so they feel secure and valued. After a few weeks in school the youngest children are already playing confidently and amicably alongside each other and soon interact with new adults in the class. In the reception class the staff show how pleased they are with acts of kindness, sharing and taking turns so children respect each other and behave very well. The independence, encouraged from the first days in school, stimulates curiosity and a desire to learn. By the end of the Reception year, children are likely to meet the expected goals for their age in most aspects of their personal, social and emotional development. Their poor English language skills inhibit some children's ability to express their opinions and feelings although they have a good understanding of and respect for the diversity of the school community.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good
- Children achieve very well in their acquisition of English and make good progress in reading and writing
- The teaching of letter sounds and reading is very good
- Adults speak very clearly to demonstrate new language but do not expect the children to practice their speech or allow time for them to express themselves often enough

Commentary

35. Most children enter the nursery with little or no knowledge of English. The school provides very good mother tongue support staff to aid communication with both children and their families. The children listen well and soon understand much of what is said to them. The adults model language very well when introducing vocabulary relating to the children's learning and in everyday speech. Sometimes, however, the adults do not give the children time to think of what they want to say, or to practice new vocabulary. In the reception classes children are taught the sounds that letters make, linking them to hand signals to aid learning, and many already write their names and other simple words. In the nursery children learn to enjoy stories and books. Two three-year-old boys spent some time sharing a pop-up picture book together after discussing it with their teacher. Very good displays with labels and captions in both English and mother tongues stress the importance of the written word. Writing materials and equipment that develops writing skills are readily available and the children's efforts are valued and encouraged. The curriculum is planned very effectively to link stories and writing with creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world so that reading and writing become an integral part of children's learning. By the end of the Foundation Stage the children have made good progress in communication, language and literacy and very good progress in their acquisition of English but many do not achieve the early learning goals.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is effective and leads to good achievement
- Basic number skills and mathematical vocabulary are reinforced at every opportunity
- Adults are deployed very effectively to reinforce learning and play activities reinforce mathematical skills

Commentary

36. Although the children lack the English vocabulary to talk about mathematics, assessments carried out in their mother tongues show that children have some understanding of counting and matching in the nursery. The adults encourage counting and matching objects as children play and in group times. Number songs and nursery rhymes reinforce counting skills. In the reception class children know the names of common shapes, add small numbers together and count in sequence, some accurately beyond 20. Positional vocabulary is stressed very strongly during activities in the nursery. Children making chocolate apples, for example, are encouraged to dip their apples into the chocolate and to put them on top of the cupboard. More formal teaching, for example, using the interactive whiteboard for counting and adding spiders reinforces number concepts. Teachers set challenging tasks that extend learning well, but sometimes the tasks involve numbers that are beyond the understanding of the least able pupils and those with special educational needs. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage although few attain the early learning goals for mathematical development by the time they join Year 1.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is very good, making learning fun
- The rich curriculum builds on the children's own experiences with well structured and interesting activities
- Knowledge and understanding of the world permeates throughout the curriculum and is very closely linked to the children's personal, social and emotional development.

Commentary

37. Most children enter the nursery with very limited experience of the world beyond their immediate families. The nursery teachers and nursery nurses gently consolidate the children's understanding of families and their position in the family, then the class and school. Everyday activities such as shopping, cooking and caring for babies lead to, in the reception class, an understanding of materials, past events, the locality and the natural world. Computer skills are promoted strongly and children exceed the early learning goals in this aspect at the end of their time in the Reception classes. Although children have a very limited vocabulary, they understand, for example, the way mixtures change after cooking, the properties of malleable materials such as dough and how things change over time. Their independence, encouraged from the beginning of the nursery, enables them to select suitable materials and tools to work with and show curiosity to find how things work. They have a good understanding of festivals and significant events. Most children achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year and achieve very well.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The planned activities and the teaching to support the children's manipulative skills and coordination is very good
- Daily access to outdoor activities promotes enjoyment of physical activities well

Commentary

38. The exciting environment that greets the nursery children daily encourages them to try things out, developing hand eye co-ordination and necessitating fine movements and control. They are taught to cut, stick and position objects with care. This is continued in the Reception classes and the children's good concentration and patience enables them to achieve well. Many have not had access to outdoor play before joining the nursery. Careful management of the outside area ensures that they soon develop an awareness of each other's space as well as beginning to successfully control balls, beanbags and tricycles. Reception children are beginning to work together, for example, to control the parachute or kick footballs to each other. Most achieve the early learning goals for most aspects of the curriculum by the end of the Foundation Stage, although outdoor skills are less well developed.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide a wide range of opportunities to promote creative development
- The peripatetic music teacher provides the nursery children with very good musical experiences
- Imaginative play is a central part of the curriculum

Commentary

39. Some children need encouragement to draw and paint when they join the nursery and the teachers encourage them gently, providing an interesting range of materials for the children to use. The basic skills are taught well, giving the children confidence to try for themselves. Dough, bricks and other toys like the train set as well as the theme areas such as the home corner, the shop and kitchen encourage imaginative play. Adults join in, giving security and value to the activities. The charismatic music teacher draws the children towards the very good range of instruments and encourages rhythmic accompaniments to his singing so children carry on when he leaves. In the reception classes children are encouraged to select materials independently and they do this well. However, not enough is done to encourage the children to extend their skills, for example by developing pattern and discrimination when selecting colours as they stick materials on their party hats. The children make good progress in the Foundation Stage but few attain the early learning goals for creative development by the end of the reception classes.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**. There has been improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is mostly good and there is very good teaching of basic skills
- Pupils at an early stage of English are supported effectively and achieve very well
- There is not enough challenge for the most able in reading and writing especially in Years 3 to 6
- Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2
- The subject leaders have a clear understanding of how to improve standards

40. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English are improving but are below average overall and well below average in writing at the end of Year 6. There is very good support for those with special educational needs and these pupils achieve very well. Some initiatives regarding speaking and listening are beginning to work but sometimes teachers talk too much and this inhibits language development. There is very good emphasis on subject vocabulary which is helping pupils to improve their speaking skills especially in mathematics, ICT and science. The use of bilingual support and specifically targeted intervention in developing basic skills enables those at an early stage of English to succeed well because of very good teaching where time is given to correcting work and the skills are integrated. Pupils enjoy reading. Seven-year-olds have a good knowledge of phonics and can read simple texts fluently. However, pupils' achievements in reading and writing could be better if the work set was more challenging. For example, some reading books are too easy and teachers do not place sufficient emphasis on developing pupils' spelling, handwriting and presentation, which results in some careless work. Overall, in Years 1 and 2 the pupils achieve well, make good progress in reading and writing and are developing a competent range of skills. The impact of family literacy is having a beneficial effect on standards among these pupils. Staff work hard to compensate for the pupils' limited range of vocabulary. The very good use of research to identify why some pupils have difficulty in reading is being used well in programmes designed to raise pupils' self-esteem and to compensate for gaps in their early learning.

41. Pupils in Years 3 to 5 achieve well because of focused intervention and initiatives. These have yet to have a significant impact on achievement in Year 6, which is hampered by some poor presentation and lack of attention on accuracy. Nevertheless, the leadership and management have introduced additional support for these pupils that is beginning to have an effect. Although planning is thorough and identifies the needs of different groups of pupils, it does not include sufficient reference to challenge for more able pupils and sometimes the work for these pupils is too easy. The school has focused very well on improving writing, especially for boys, and this is working well as they develop different styles of recording work. Notably is the impact of ICT, which has raised the levels of motivation in writing and is making a good impact on standards.
42. Teaching and learning are mostly good, although they vary from unsatisfactory to very good. Where teaching is very good there is pace and challenge in the work and pupils are expected to apply their skills. There is skilful questioning and pupils' answers are modelled and extended. In these lessons speaking and listening, reading and writing are closely linked. Teachers have good subject knowledge and receive much support from the subject leaders and guidance through the school's schemes and plans. A strength, especially in Years 1 and 2, is the use of support staff who have a clear understanding of what needs to be taught and their role in developing skills. The school has worked hard on improving question and answer sessions and is achieving moderate success, but more consideration needs to be given to extending the length and depth of pupils' answers. The teaching of writing and drafting could be better in Years 3 to 6 as pupils do not have the opportunity to change their work and act upon the very thorough marking and good comments made by the teacher. Another strength in the teaching is the use of ICT to promote reading and writing skills. Pupils are taught well to use their English skills for research and have access to a good range of books in the library and other information on the Internet. Pupils mostly work hard and productively but do not present their work well and this detracts from the quality of the finished product. For example, handwriting in most classes lacks fluency and a consistent, joined style. In lessons the pupils respond very well to the teachers' expectations of good behaviour and most show good levels of concentration and motivation. In all classes strong relationships and mutual respect for others reflect a positive ethos for learning.
43. Subject leadership is very good. Much work has been put into the standardisation of planning and the development of key resources particularly for the average and least able pupils. The two leaders have a clear view of what needs to be improved and they have the skills to bring about further improvement. The school's development of a media centre, including the well run library, is having a beneficial impact on pupils' research skills.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

44. Generally literacy skills are used well to support other subjects. There are examples of the very good use of language and literature across the curriculum in the excellent teaching of note taking in history and science and the inclusion of speaking and listening as a central part of this. Pupils record their evaluative comments well in design and technology using technical vocabulary effectively. In religious education they discuss issues sensitively showing an understanding of others' beliefs and values.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of pupils achieve well and are enthusiastic about mathematics
- Teaching and learning are very good and are enhanced by the use of ICT
- Numeracy and problem solving are successfully given a high priority
- Leadership and management are very good
- Assessment is not used as effectively as it should be

45. Although the results of national tests show that standards are below average by the end of Year 2 and well below average by Year 6 the majority of pupils are achieving successfully. Inspection evidence and school data indicate that standards are rising and moving closer to those expected nationally, although standards in the current Year 6 are still below average. The school has set ambitious targets for the national tests and is implementing a number of strategies to enable pupils to achieve as well as they can. Pupils with special educational needs and those at the early stage of English are given very good support enabling them to participate fully in lessons and achieve well. There is no significant difference or trends between the achievement of boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic groups.
46. Achievement is good and sometimes very good due to consistent and very effective teaching and high expectations, which push learning on at a good rate, resulting in pupils having high aspirations. Over 70 per cent of teaching seen was very good. Teachers use a variety of imaginative methods to teach mathematical skills, including effective whole class mental sessions and probing question and answer sessions, which are used very well to assess the pupils' understanding and extend their thinking. Interactive white boards and challenging ICT programs are very effective tools in promoting pupils' enthusiasm and high achievement in the subject. Clear explanations and very good demonstration and reminders of mathematical strategies contribute well to pupils' success. Across the school, teachers place considerable emphasis on ensuring pupils understand and use precise mathematical vocabulary when answering questions or discussing their work. Lessons include regular opportunities for mental arithmetic encouraging pupils to become competent in the quick and accurate recall of numbers.
47. In an excellent lesson in Year 1 imaginative and inspiring teaching moved pupils learning on at a rapid rate, enabling young mathematicians to make rapid gains in partitioning sets of number to ten, developing considerable confidence and accuracy in counting and recording their discoveries. Discussions with Year 6 pupils indicated that although the number of pupils achieving the expected levels is lower than the national average, individual pupils were very competent at tackling a whole range of mathematical problems, including area, perimeter and probability.
48. The subject is very well managed by a team of enthusiastic and highly skilled professionals. They provide very effective support for their colleagues, which have been successful in raising the standard of teaching and learning across the school. Data is analysed annually to identify strengths and weakness in the curriculum and to identify groups of pupils who are not achieving the expected standards. However, the school's termly assessments are not used as effectively as they could be to track and measure pupils' progress to ensure they are making the progress expected of them.

Mathematics across the curriculum

49. Displays and resources around the school indicate the very high priority the school gives to the subject. Work displayed is of a very high quality, displays are interactive and useful teaching aids show that all aspects of the subject are covered in depth. Pupils have very well planned opportunities to use, consolidate and extend their mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, Year 1 pupils developed data handling skills as they conducted a traffic survey, while older pupils used their problem solving skills to record their observations about microbes in their science lessons.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good** in Years 1 and 2 and **satisfactory** in Years 3 to 6. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve very well in Years 1 and 2 due to good teaching and excellent use of resources

- Achievement in Years 3 to 5 is good but satisfactory in Year 6
- All pupils have many opportunities to make independent investigations
- There is insufficient coverage of some aspects of science in Years 3 to 6
- Assessment is not used well enough to ensure all pupils are moved on quickly enough

Commentary

50. Standards at the end of Year 2 are just below the national average but analysis of pupils' work last year indicates pupils achieve well, especially the more able. At the end of Year 6 standards are below average as few pupils achieve above average levels. Analysis of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6 indicates good understanding of some areas of science taught but the curriculum is narrow with some significant gaps. Areas of science such as forces, electricity or light are taught to younger pupils but not in Years 5 and 6. Consequently, older pupils have poor understanding and knowledge of these areas of study. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as they receive well planned tasks which are matched to their needs.

51. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good with some very good features. Teachers clearly explain the work in an interesting way. Resources are excellent with large caves and tents being constructed in the classroom to help pupils investigate light and dark. Pupils are excited by the lessons and bubble with enthusiasm. The recording of work is good with pupils completing charts, tables, diagrams and graphs as well as much independent writing. Pupils with different abilities are given different levels of support but are encouraged to aspire to high standards. As a result all pupils achieve very well. There is very good support for those pupils at an early stage of learning English so that they participate fully in lessons and their understanding is enhanced through much practical work.

52. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to complete many scientific investigations and they are very keen to complete the tasks and talk about their results. There is good emphasis on new scientific vocabulary and this is constantly reinforced to extend language with many opportunities being provided for pupils to discuss their findings or try to explain results in a scientific way. Occasionally, however, teachers do not effectively draw together the conclusions of an investigation at the end of a lesson with a crisp, concise statement therefore leaving pupils confused about what they have actually learned. Because assessment is not focused on the ability of individual pupils and is not being used to ensure each one is working to their maximum capability, there is some lack of challenge for the more able. Since the previous inspection the school has made many improvements that have had a positive impact on teaching and learning and achievement. They include much greater emphasis on providing opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations, emphasis on extending pupils knowledge of scientific vocabulary and use of language and consistent planning throughout the school with very clear objectives.

53. Subject leadership is particularly good in Years 1 and 2 where there is a sharp grasp of the priorities and needs but it is not as focused further up the school and this has resulted in some gaps in the consistent development of skills, knowledge and understanding for older pupils. Monitoring has been more effective in Years 1 and 2 than in other parts of the school. Resources are well chosen and good use made of interesting outside visits. Although generally good use is made of ICT the school has a programme to extend these opportunities to impact on learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **excellent**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well and attain well above average standards
- The innovative curriculum is excellent
- Teaching is very good
- Subject leadership is outstanding

Commentary

54. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are significantly above those expected and pupils are about two years ahead of those of a similar age. Progress is rapid in developing a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding and pupils' competence in all aspects of ICT is at a high level. Pupils with special educational needs make substantial gains in ICT and this contributes very well to learning and the use of English. For example, they access the Internet and use a series of tools and equipment to enable them to word process their texts to include correct spelling, grammar and punctuation. Pupils at an early stage of learning English benefit from high quality support from class teachers as they work alongside the subject leader during lessons; this approach ensures inclusion and raises the pupils' self esteem and level of skills very well.
55. Pupils are highly enthusiastic and work hard and at a very good pace. They have an excellent understanding of what they have achieved because the system of self-assessment is of high quality and their assessment is monitored by the staff. Pupils have a very good understanding of the use of computers for a wide range of tasks and are very skilful at control and modelling. They competently use spreadsheets and data handling programs to enhance their work. A particular strength is the use of the Internet to research information and this is having a significant impact on the development of their independent learning skills and the quality of work in history and geography.
56. Teaching and learning are very good. Staff have very good subject knowledge and the use of technicians to support teaching means that no time is wasted on mending computers and lessons are used productively. Explanations are very clear and pupils are left in no doubt about what to do. Pupils are very effective learners; they keenly explore new programs and use their imaginations and skills very well. Lessons are planned excellently to provide the right challenge to each ability group and very effective use of support staff and class teachers enhances learning. Questions are framed effectively to check on pupils' understanding and staff insist on the use of correct terminology in answers. Extra-curricular activities contribute significantly to pupils' achievements. Homework is also used very well and the school ensures that, if necessary, pupils have access to computers at home, often by using the school's equipment. Teaching and learning are also successful because the school has involved parents extensively in this aspect of the curriculum.
57. The subject leader has an excellent understanding of ICT and inspires her colleagues. Monitoring of standards and assessment are of high quality. The school's vision to equip pupils' for employment is partially being achieved through its innovative practice in ICT. The school is at the forefront of using ICT as a means of raising standards across the curriculum.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

58. The subject makes an excellent contribution to the pupils' work in other subjects. The high standard of equipment, highly effective guidance from the subject leaders and support from technicians ensures that class teachers and pupils are able to access excellent resources to develop their learning in a wide range of subjects. ICT is used especially well in mathematics and in English and is having a positive impact on the quality of writing, especially for boys. Pupils make very good use of the Internet and access to high quality, up-to-date resources enhances pupils' learning in science, history and geography.

Example of outstanding practice

The school's excellent use of funding, training and opportunities for the subject leader to mentor and develop the ICT skills of all staff and pupils has a significant impact on attainment and achievement.

The staff, governors, parents and pupils see the development of ICT as the most significant aid to raising standards and innovative use of staff and resources ensure that pupils have excellent opportunities to improve. ICT is used excellently to reduce teachers' workload through on-line planning and availability of a huge range of resources. The employment of technicians has reduced teachers' workload and ensured that the technology is always available for use. Excellent training and strategic planning have enabled the school to draw on expertise from a wide range of sources. Governors make a significant contribution, bringing expertise and also setting challenging targets for the school. All staff and governors see the use of ICT as a means to improve the standards achieved, especially in literacy, and indicators are that this strategy is having a good impact. For example, there is a marked improvement in boys' writing and all pupils keenly work independently on research. Pupils have excellent opportunities to take laptops home and this has helped to raise the profile of the subject with parents as well as contributing to improved standards. A very strong emphasis on teaching basic skills as early as possible means that even from Year 1 pupils are using ICT as a tool for learning in a wide range of subjects and contexts. Assessment is sharp and pupils' competently review their own skills and understand what they need to do next aided by incisive and challenging teaching.

HUMANITIES

Five lessons were seen in religious education but none in history and geography. In addition, inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, examined teachers' planning and talked with the subject co-ordinators and pupils about the school's work in humanities.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a good understanding of their own and other religions
- Teaching is good overall; teachers have good subject knowledge
- There are effective links with other subjects
- ICT is used well to support the subject
- Pupils' presentation of work could be better

Commentary

59. Standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection and are in line with those expected in the syllabus followed by most schools in Birmingham. Across the school pupils of all abilities achieve well, particularly when discussing comparative religions or expressing their own beliefs. The concept of spirituality is well developed amongst older pupils who are able to discuss the 'unique images' created by Christian and Muslim works of art. Pupils enjoy religious education and many animated conversations take place as they compare their own religious rituals with those of other religions.

60. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and the amalgamated SACRE and Qualifications and Curriculum Authority document ensures a very comprehensive and full coverage of the subject. Teaching is often brisk and animated with teaching points clearly made throughout. Very good use is made of the ICT facilities and, through the interactive whiteboards, pupils experience the awe and splendour of Wells Cathedral, appreciate the beauty of religious works of art such as Raphael's 'Crucifixion', or watch a vibrant video tour of Eid celebrations. The subject contributes much to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the school. Whilst standards of pupils' knowledge and level of discussion are good, too often the written recording is rushed and teachers' expectancies of the quality of presentation and pupils'

work are not high enough. As a result much written work is poor and does not help to raise the standard of English. Planning is good, as is progression, throughout the school.

61. Co-ordination of the subject is currently being reviewed. The school has an adequate range of resources but some are in need of replacement or refurbishment. There is no monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Assessment is informal and not used to guide pupils on the next step in learning.

History and geography

62. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 show that they have a lively interest in the subject and are knowledgeable about all aspects of the National Curriculum requirements. During the inspection several literacy lessons and information and communication technology lessons used history as their focus. In an English lesson in Year 4, for example, pupils wrote an account of the Romans' use of the baths, concentrating on the use of extended sentences, connectives and interesting vocabulary. In Year 6, pupils created multi-media presentations, learning to insert hyperlinks. Their source was a history website and their subject evacuation in World War 2. Pupils' books clearly demonstrate that the teachers use history as a stimulus for writing in a wide range of styles such as lists, bullet points, accounts, debate, reports and empathetic writing in the first person. There is an interesting and rich curriculum, developed by the school and very effectively linked to other subjects. The wide range of local visits enable pupils to study architecture, artefacts and reconstructions of the past. In their geography work the pupils in Years 1 and 2 study maps of the local area and are able to write and locate their address on maps of different scales. There is an extensive programme of trips and visits which enhances their knowledge of the wider world, and these activities contribute much to personal, social and emotional development as well as geographical knowledge. ICT is used very effectively in both subjects. The subjects make a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Subject leaders are very knowledgeable and make good use of budgets to provide stimulating resources. They ensure that the curriculum is covered well and provide very good support through planning and subject guidance.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

A wide range of evidence was collected about the school's work in these subjects including analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning and discussions with the subject leaders and pupils. Three lessons were seen in design and technology, five in art and design, six in physical education and seven in music. Inspection evidence shows that there has been good improvement in all of these subjects since the previous inspection.

Art and design

Provision for art and design **is very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6
- The curriculum is well planned and teaching is very good
- The subject is led and managed very effectively

62. Pupils achieve very well in the subject because teachers are very proficient in providing pupils with the skills they need to become confident artists and designers. Pupils work co-operatively, share ideas and appreciate the work of others. Teachers provide a wide range of opportunities, resources and a variety of exciting stimuli to catch pupils' imagination and interest. They provide very clear and precise explanations and demonstrations to enable all pupils to build well on what they already know and can do. Design skills are enhanced as pupils use sketchbooks to build up detail and confidence before embarking on working with different mediums, such as clay. Younger pupils are shown how to use different types of pencils to create shade and texture as they carefully build up skills in observational drawing in readiness for a self-portrait. By Year 6 pupils have a very good understanding of line, shape and form and use these to very good effect

as they use a wide range of media to produce very high quality designs. Links with other subjects stimulate pupils' interest and deepen their knowledge and understanding. For example, older pupils develop an understanding of art in context of an historical period as they design and make Tudor tapestries and Egyptian jewellery.

63. Pupils work keenly and their enthusiasm is well targeted at creating high quality work that also enhances the general environment of the school. In consequence, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those at the early stages of English, work with high levels of interest and produce quality pieces of art.
64. The subject leader is very experienced, skilled and enthusiastic. She works closely with staff to raise their confidence in the teaching of art. This has a very positive effect on pupils' achievement and the high standards reached.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good
- The subject is led well
- There is some above average work in Year 5
- There are some inconsistencies in developing skills, knowledge and understanding

Commentary

65. Standards at the end of Year 6 have improved since the previous inspection and are set to rise further as the enthusiastic subject leader sets out new plans and initiatives. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily and attain standards that are appropriate for their age. Those with special educational needs take a full part in lessons and achieve as well as their peers. Because of the practical nature of the work pupils at an early stage of learning English are fully engaged in lessons and benefit from opportunities to work alongside more confident pupils. Sometimes the use of the pupils' home languages proves effective in explaining what needs to be done and the pupils achieve successfully. The school has recently focused on improving pupils' technical vocabulary and competence in writing evaluations of their work. These initiatives are working and resulting in good gains in pupils' understanding of design and technology.
66. The teaching is mostly good and pupils learn effectively. The curriculum is satisfactory and there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn skills and techniques and apply them. The most successful work seen was in Year 5 where pupils produced well crafted models of cranes and made effective use of cams, axles and cogs. Pupils throughout the school especially enjoy food technology and this links very well with the school's programme of personal, social and emotional development. Pupils understand about healthy eating and work with care following recipes accurately in making biscuits, pizzas and salads. They often record their work using their numeracy skills well to make graphs and charts. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly to meet the needs of pupils. Subject knowledge is generally good and staff find interesting ways of motivating the pupils, for example, in Year 1, the pupils tasted a range of foods before deciding on their own sandwich fillings. Pupils enjoy design and technology and work hard in lessons. They take care of tools and equipment and are good at co-operating on large projects.
67. The subject leader is keen to extend the work in design and technology. The staff make good use of on-line planning and resources. There are sufficient resources and the very good business links are used well to help pupils understand about building and engineering.

Music

Provision for music is **very good** and has improved significantly since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a challenging curriculum so that several year groups attain higher than average standards and achieve very well
- The teaching by the subject leader and the peripatetic music teacher is very good
- ICT is used very effectively as an integral part of the curriculum

Commentary

68. Pupils in Year 2 perform simple clapping patterns and adjust their speed when clapping the beat to accompany a song. By Year 3 pupils understand that music can be made up of layers of sound and they build up their own compositions using untuned percussion. Older pupils add tuned instruments consisting of notes that sound pleasing together. Year 5 learn of the structure of music, using introductions and codas and repeated phrases or *ostinato*. They take a pride in using the Italian musical terms for changes in music such as a *crescendo*. The Year 6 curriculum is challenging, exploring and using scale systems and the present Year 6 do not have a sufficient understanding to cope with this as the improvement in the provision was not in place earlier in their school career. The very good curriculum successfully builds on the pupils' knowledge understanding and skills from year to year.

69. The role of the specialist teacher has changed to enable him to work alongside the class teachers. This has been very effective in improving the teachers' expertise so that they can continue the series of lessons themselves. The subject leader in Years 3 to 6 skilfully enables his pupils to have a pride in their performance, to evaluate the outcomes and, above all, to enjoy their lessons. Pupils in Year 3 effectively use a musical program to compose their own music on the computer and Year 5 pupils program keyboards to play introductions and codas and adjust the pace and volume. Subject leadership is good and has ensured that achievement has risen since the previous inspection and that the quality of teaching and learning are much better. The quality of the provision and the very good resources ensure that the pupils achieve very well.

70. Music plays a significant part in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The very successful, award winning choir is an example of the pupils' enjoyment of singing. They perform in six languages including Hebrew, many styles, often in several parts, always with vigour, rhythmical accuracy and absolute enjoyment. This is a tribute to the skilful teaching of the peripatetic music teacher and the responsibility and commitment of the pupils. Some pupils in Year 4 learn to play the tabla and there are strong links with the Birmingham Royal Ballet.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Boys' and girls' achievement is good overall and very good in sport
- Teaching and learning are good, with some excellent practice
- Subject leadership is excellent
- Opportunities for participation in extra-curricular activities are outstanding

Commentary

71. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are average overall and this is an improvement since the previous inspection which is due largely to the innovative way the leadership and management have provided for extended opportunities for pupils to take part in physical activities and the support provided through the subject leader. Pupils are keen participants in sport and very proud of their success against other schools in cricket, football, athletics and golf. Standards in these games are above average. Progress for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds is very good. Pupils with

physical disabilities are supported especially well and those with special educational needs take a full part in the school's programme. Pupils also achieve well in dance, gymnastics and swimming. Most attain the expected standard in swimming by the end of Year 6. There are pockets of very good work in dance; in Year 5 the teacher inspired the pupils and challenged them to produce imaginative and expressive movements. Gymnastic skills are promoted well and in Year 2 the teacher skilfully encourages less confident pupils to try different movements over large apparatus encouraging balance and agility and also challenge the more able to extend basic movements and form a sequence.

72. Teaching is at least good and there is some excellent practice. The subject leader leads by example and sets high standards for pupils and staff. There has been highly effective monitoring of teaching and support provided to bring consistency throughout the school. Excellent training has boosted teachers' subject knowledge and confidence and led to rising standards in the subject. Pupils are highly motivated and concentrate very effectively through lessons. They are enthusiastic participants in extra-curricular activities. The subject is used very well to promote equal opportunities and inclusion. Following a survey of attendance at extra-curricular activities the staff realised that girls were in a minority, so they developed new opportunities for girls which meet their needs very well. Teachers expect and get good behaviour from the pupils. Lessons have good pace and challenge and pupils are kept active. The subject is used very well to promote healthy lifestyles. Literacy and numeracy skills are used well and there is much focus on extending pupils' spoken language as they evaluate their work. ICT is also used very well to record using digital photography series of sequences and to provide guidance for staff on planning lessons. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal, social and emotional development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social, health and citizenship education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- TILE (Towards Improved Learning and Employability) has a positive impact
- Pupils develop very good levels of confidence and awareness of their responsibilities
- The school's programme makes pupils ambitious for success

Commentary

73. Very good emphasis is given to promoting pupils' self awareness and the staff are clearly ambitious for the pupils. Their positive approach does much to help pupils to make the most of their abilities, prepare for the next stage of their education and for life as responsible citizens. The provision meets statutory requirements for education about drugs, sex and relationships. The pupils achieve very well in this aspect of their work and have good skills in expressing their own thoughts about issues that affect them. They set themselves ambitious goals and understand their own responsibility in achieving them. Pupils take an active part in decision making at the school and the school council is highly representative. Pupils take pride in their school.

74. The teaching is very effective and impacts well on learning. The school also provides good information about healthy lifestyles and the extensive programme to encourage healthy eating and exercise is having a very beneficial impact on the lives of pupils and their success in sporting competitions. Pupils also understand the rich cultural diversity in the locality and their position within it. Through the good use of circle times, when pupils discuss issues in small groups, the pupils learn to listen to other's views and to compromise. The planning for personal, social and health education is very good and staff have clear guidelines within which to develop pupils' understanding. The highly professional co-ordination of personal, social and health education and related courses contributes much to making the school a purposeful and vibrant place in which all are valued and their views are respected.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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

