

# INSPECTION REPORT

## REDNAL HILL INFANT SCHOOL

Rednal

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103249

Headteacher: Mrs Di Slater

Lead inspector: Mrs Chris Field

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> April 2004

Inspection number: 257296

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	238
School address:	Irwin Avenue Rednal Birmingham
Postcode:	B45 8QY
Telephone number:	0121 453 2636
Fax number:	0121 453 7134
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Jon Allison
Date of previous inspection:	April 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school, which is bigger than most infant schools, is located in Rednal and shares a site with the junior school. It serves a local community comprising private and social housing with many parents employed at the Longbridge car factory. The school is involved in the Excellence in Cities initiative and a neighbourhood renewal programme.

Currently there are 148 pupils from the age of 5 to 7 on roll together with 19 children attending part-time and 16 attending full-time in the nursery, and 65 in the reception year. The nursery and reception years are known as the *Foundation Stage*. The profile of children's attainment when they start in the Foundation Stage is below average but covers a wide span of ability. Most pupils are from white British backgrounds with a few from different backgrounds and all speak English. A broadly average proportion of pupils have special educational needs that cover a range of learning difficulties; four pupils have statements.

The school has been accredited with a government Achievement Award for raising academic standards for the last three years in a row.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
9479	C Field	Lead inspector	Personal and social education and citizenship.
9428	J Butler	Lay inspector	
20326	P Clark	Team inspector	Science, art and design, design and technology.
15414	D Carrington	Team inspector	Mathematics, history, geography, information and communication technology, religious education, physical education.
8710	J Moore	Team Inspector	Special educational needs, areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage, English, music.

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The school is an **effective**, friendly, happy and purposeful place of learning in which good teaching enables pupils to achieve well. Parents hold the school in high regard and for many it is the school of first choice. The school is effectively led by the headteacher in successful partnership with the deputy headteacher, senior staff and governors. The school gives **good** value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school is well led by the headteacher with very positive support from the dedicated and hard working team of staff and governors.
- Children in the Foundation Stage are enabled to make a flying start to their education because of good provision.
- Good teaching is enabling pupils' good achievement over their time in school, particularly in speaking, listening, reading, mathematics and science.
- Writing standards are not yet high enough, especially for higher attainers.
- Marking lacks sharp focus on points for improvement and targets are not used well enough to support pupils' next steps in learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for and learn successfully.
- The staff take good care of pupils who feel safe and well looked after in school.
- Good attention is paid to developing pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral and social development and they are well prepared for the next phase of education
- Assessment systems are not yet in place in most non-core subjects.
- Links with local schools make a very good contribution to pupils' education, especially in ICT.
- Subject leaders are doing a good job but have not yet had time or opportunity to develop fully their monitoring and evaluation roles.

There has been **good** improvement overall since the previous inspection in 1998. Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is no longer a weakness and standards have been improved from unsatisfactory to a satisfactory level. Subject policies have been written and implemented well. Day-to-day assessment to help plan future work is satisfactory in English, mathematics and science but is limited in other subjects. More work remains to be done in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning across subjects. The school is clear about where future improvement lies and has set measurable targets in its good action plan.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	C	B	D	C
Writing	A	B	E	D
Mathematics	C	B	C	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average*

The table above shows that Year 2 pupils reached well above average standards in the 2003 national tests in mathematics, average standards in reading and below average standards in writing when compared to the standards achieved by pupils in similar schools. The school's trend in raising standards fell below that seen in other schools. Results were lower in 2003 than in 2002 in all tested subjects. The school has taken a hard look at why this was the case and is implementing effective improvement strategies in writing that are showing a good impact on standards in Year 1 in particular. Current standards are judged to be average in speaking and listening and reading but

below average in writing by the end of Year 2. Standards are average in mathematics, science, ICT and religious education and all the other subjects that were inspected.

Pupils' achievement is **good** over their time in school. Most children start with in the nursery with well below average levels of skills and knowledge and make good progress before they transfer into Year 1 despite not reaching the levels expected for their age in literacy, numeracy and physical development. By the end of Year 2 most pupils, including those with special educational needs, continue to make good progress and reach standards that are typically average for their age. Pupils with learning difficulties do well because of the close attention paid to supporting their specific needs and targeting the next steps in learning. Pupils who are high attaining are not as consistently well provided for. The levels of challenge in the work they are set varies between subjects and this is limiting their achievements.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are good. Pupils enjoy school, they try hard with their work and behave well. Relationships are very caring and the school is a happy community. Attendance levels are similar to those found in other schools. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is **good**.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. Classrooms are settled and productive places of learning. Significant strengths lie in the consistently high expectations for good behaviour and the use of teaching assistants and resources. Marking, target setting and the use of assessment to inform planning are weaker aspects that require improvement. The curriculum meets requirements and offers worthwhile experiences for the pupils with some beneficial enrichment through a well-conceived visits and visitor programme. Pupils receive good care and support. They are very well looked after during the school day. The provision for their personal and social development ensures the pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The school has a good partnership with parents and its community and has forged very strong links with other schools to the benefit of pupils.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership, management and governance are **good**. The headteacher provides good educational direction and has clear vision for taking the school forward. The deputy is a positive influence in helping shape the school and in motivating staff. A senior leadership team is working effectively and provides a very good role model for others. Subject leaders have developed good quality action plans and now need time and opportunity to monitor and evaluate the quality of standards, teaching and learning in the subjects for which they are responsible. Governors are good critical friends of the school. They are expanding their oversight of the curriculum through links with subjects and classes. They hold the school fully to account and ensure that best value principles are applied.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents hold positive views about the school and quite a few travel some distance to bring their children to school. A very few raised concerns about behaviour and feel that bullying in school is not detected early enough, but accept that once it is known about it is dealt with very well. Pupils are happy at school. They say they like their teachers and feel safe and well looked after. Some of the pupils do not like the way others behave at play and lunchtime. The school is very alert to parents' and pupils' concerns and is currently looking at ways to promote more positive play.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Continue to raise standards in writing; especially the achievement of higher attainers.
- Ensure teachers' marking shows pupils clearly how to improve their work, and make better use of targets to support pupils' progress and involve them in regular self-review.
- Enhance the role of subject leaders and particularly in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.
- Establish assessment systems in subjects where there are none and ensure that teachers make consistent use of assessment data to inform lesson planning geared towards accelerating learning and raising achievement.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

Pupils' achievement is **good**.

NB Pupils' achievement in music and the standards attained were not inspected due to the focus and shape of the inspection.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievement is good over their time in school, particularly in speaking, listening, reading, mathematics and science.
- Writing standards are not yet high enough, especially for higher attainers.
- Pupils with learning difficulties do well because of the close attention paid to supporting their specific needs and to targeting the next steps in learning.

#### **Commentary**

1. Pupils' achievement is good over their time in school, particularly in speaking, listening, reading, mathematics and science. The school has been successful in tackling the weaknesses in information and communication technology (ICT) standards flagged by the previous inspection. Standards in ICT are now average and there is good indication that they are on the rise.
2. Most children start in the nursery with well below average levels of skills and knowledge and make good progress before they transfer into Year 1 despite not reaching the levels expected for their age in communication, language and literacy, numeracy and physical development. Children achieve well because they experience a wide range of well-chosen activities and they are well taught. The youngest children in school achieve especially well in their personal and social development because of the very good support they receive from the dedicated early years teaching team.
3. By the end of Year 2 most pupils, including those with special educational needs continue to make good progress. The majority of pupils reach standards that are typically average for their age. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well because of the good quality of individual education plans, regular review of their progress and the good use made of assessment in planning suitable future work that secures good progress. Pupils who are high attaining are not as consistently well provided for. The levels of challenge in the work they are set varies between subjects and this is limiting their achievements. The school is not using individual targets well enough to support good advancement of writing skills for this group of pupils. A good proportion of high attaining pupils reach the standards of which they are capable in mathematics and this shows up consistently well in the National Curriculum tests.
4. Year 2 pupils reached average standards in the 2003 national tests in mathematics, below average standards in reading and well below average standards in writing. Standards were well above average in mathematics, average in reading and below average in writing when compared to the standards achieved by pupils in similar schools. The school's trend in raising standards fell below that seen in other schools. The table below shows that results were lower in 2003 than in 2002 in all tested subjects. The school has taken a hard look at why this was the case and has worked successfully to bring reading standards back up to scratch. Effective improvement strategies in writing are showing a good impact on standards in Year 1 but have yet to be lifted to the standard expected in Year 2. Current standards are judged to be average in speaking and listening and reading but below average in writing by the end of Year 2. Standards are average in the core subjects of mathematics, science, ICT and religious education and in the non core subjects of art and design, design and technology,

geography, history and physical education. An over-use of work sheets is capping the potential for extending writing in some subjects, for example religious education and this requires review.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.2 (17.0)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.4 (14.9)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.7 (17.6)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils like coming to school, behave well and have **good** attitudes to learning. They make very good progress in their personal development in the early years, and learn to be well behaved, polite and considerate. As they grow older, they develop **good** personal qualities and mature into helpful, trustworthy children who are well prepared for their junior education. Attendance is now **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils say how much they like school, and value the opportunity to learn alongside friends.
- From their entry into the Foundation Stage at a well below average level, most children make good progress in their personal development.
- Pupils listen well and try hard to do their best in lessons.
- Very good, caring relationships are a strength of the school.
- Pupils respond very well to the good role models provided by staff and the rewards for good behaviour.
- Behaviour in lessons and at play is good for the great majority.
- A few pupils have difficulty in developing self-control and can be annoying to their peers at lunchtime, although the school manages these pupils very well.
- Attendance has improved and is now only just below the national average for primary schools.

### **Commentary**

5. This aspect is a strength of the school and creates the framework within which pupils are able to learn well and make good progress. Pupils say they like the school and can think of few ways in which to improve it, although some think that it would be better if everyone kept the school rule "to use only kind hands and feet". The staff monitor and manage behavioural problems very well and have responded to the pupils' concerns by introducing a new system of playground mediators from year 2 who have just begun their training. During the inspection these pupils were seen helping a pupil at the playground 'friendship stop' to find some playmates.
6. Overall behaviour is good, and pupils learn to be polite, trustworthy, helpful and self-controlled. The promotion of good behaviour is a very overt feature of lessons and assemblies and pupils are very proud of their successes. Exclusions are very rare and used only to reinforce the message that aggressive anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
7. Attitudes to school are good. Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy the opportunity to take an active part in lessons and assemblies. For example, in a music lesson in a reception class, pupils were entranced by the idea of adding the sounds of different instruments to the

teacher's magical musical box, and all treated the instruments with care and respect. They listen attentively and tried hard to follow instructions, and to do their best.

8. From a well below average starting point, children make leaps forward in their personal development in the nursery and reception classes. They respond very well to the consistently high expectations and rewarding of positive behaviour. They learn to be considerate of others, develop in confidence, and are given the opportunity to think about how they feel, and how others might feel too. As they grow older, they mature into helpful children with a love of learning which prepares them well for their junior education. Their cultural awareness is well promoted and they enjoy the opportunities to meet and work alongside visiting artists, like the tree sculptor, or the story-tellers from Pakistan. Multi-cultural education illustrated by the head teacher's first-hand experiences in Uganda provides an exciting introduction to living in a multi-ethnic society.
9. In the last school year attendance was well below the national average for primary schools but this year there has been a marked improvement.

***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)***

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

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

10. Attendance is now satisfactory and this is due, at least in part, to the reduction in length of absence taken for illness in some families. In partnership with the educational social worker, the school is actively seeking ways to encourage parents to place a higher value on regular attendance. The attendance figures for the first two terms of the current school year show that attendance in this infant school is only barely below the national average for primary schools, and punctuality is satisfactory.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided is **good**.

Teaching and learning are **good**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good and assists pupils in becoming effective learners, though more focus is required in developing marking and assessment systems and targeting pupils' self knowledge and review of their learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and learn successfully.
- All teachers manage behaviour very effectively.
- Teaching assistants are a skilful group who work in good support of both teaching and learning.

**Commentary**

11. The quality of teaching and learning has been improved since the time of the previous inspection and this is reflected in the pupils' good achievement. The school is a friendly, happy and purposeful place of learning in which good teaching enables pupils to learn successfully, especially in reading, mathematics and science. Teaching is occasionally very good with two lessons of this quality observed in mathematics in the nursery and in Year 2. A

sample of pupils' work completed during the last two terms was scrutinised by inspectors and this bears out the good quality of teaching and learning found in lessons. The school's strategies for improving teaching in ICT have had a positive impact on pupils' learning and there is good capacity for learning in ICT to become even more effective.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2 (5%)	32 (80%)	6 (15%)	0	0	0

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

12. The very youngest children in the Foundation Stage are learning well because of the highly effective team teaching approach. Teaching is of consistently good quality in both nursery and reception years. The children build their learning and grow in maturity and confidence because of an imaginative curriculum, well prepared activities and the very good assessment of on-going individual achievement. The majority of children in the Foundation Stage are helped to become independent learners and are well prepared for the transfer to Year 1, even though many will not reach the academic targets set for children of this age.
13. Pupils with learning difficulties are given very good levels of support to help them learn well. They have well-written individual education plans with specific targets in place to help them aim high. Teaching assistants who work in specific support of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, are a highly effective group who between them add considerably to the quality of teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties receive considerable additional support in literacy and to a lesser extent in numeracy to help them achieve well. Pupils with behavioural needs benefit from good guidance and support including intervention programmes that are helping them to cope and manage their own behaviour. The deputy headteacher, as the person responsible for the provision for those pupils with gifts and talents, is currently working on implementing a newly agreed policy that encompasses the best practice being developed in the school. Satisfactory provision is made for the highest attainers overall but there is potential for this to be better, especially in English.
14. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn well and build their skills, knowledge and understanding at a good rate in speaking, listening, reading, mathematics and science and at a steady rate in all other subjects. The school is tackling the need to improve writing skills satisfactorily, though there are missed opportunities for extending personal and creative writing opportunities in subjects such as religious education.
15. Very good relationships between adults and pupils, and between pupils themselves, underpin the successful learning taking place in all classes. Lessons are well resourced, interesting and move at a good pace. Behaviour is managed very positively and pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and act accordingly. Teachers use a range of effective methods to stimulate the pupils' enthusiasm and good application. The marking of work is well focussed on praising effort but is less well geared towards setting out points for improvement and this is a missed opportunity.
16. In the very best lessons, teachers share learning objectives with pupils at the beginning of lessons and then return to them in the closing session to check up on the progress being made. Teachers use plenary sessions well on the whole to reinforce key learning points but not all take the time to involve pupils in reviewing their own progress and identifying the next step for improvement. These features are the missing links in otherwise good lessons. Most teachers' are assessing how well pupils are learning through a variety of methods but now need to inject more rigour into how they record pupils' achievements, especially in non-core subjects and how they target improvement. The use of homework is satisfactory with good use of the *Comments*

*books* to support reading. The annual written pupil report is a vehicle that could be used to share targets with parents and engage them in more effective support for pupils' learning at school and home.

## The Curriculum

The curriculum is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is good in the Foundation Stage and for older infant pupils; enrichment is provided through a well chosen visits and visitor programme that enhances pupils' experiences.
- The school is truly inclusive; equality of access and opportunity is good for boys and girls from different backgrounds, though the needs of higher attainers are not consistently well met.
- The school makes good provision for those pupils with learning difficulties and emotional needs.
- Accommodation though used to best advantage by the staff does have its limitations.

### Commentary

17. The curriculum provides worthwhile experiences across all subjects and for the full age range of pupils from nursery to Year 2. The provision made for religious education fulfils the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Planning sets reasonable expectations and usefully takes on board national guidance that outlines the work to be covered by pupils of different ages. The school is effective in providing additional work, for example phonic and spelling strategies, for slower learners in Year 2, but is not giving the same levels of attention to ensuring that planning, provision and resources drive forward the achievement of higher attaining pupils at a consistent pace, particularly in writing.
18. Children in the Foundation Stage and older pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a wide range of experiences in the creative and aesthetic aspects of the curriculum. For example, as part of their scientific work on mini-beats, reception children have made insects from pipe cleaners, card and junk materials such as egg boxes, that are beautifully decorated. Year 1 pupils have designed and created pictures of the main characters from the *Three Little Pigs* story that they have studied in their English lessons. Fire safety posters provide good health and safety warnings and were inspired by Red Watch's visit to school. In Year 2, drawings of the minarets on Islamic Mosques are detailed and colourful as are the tie-dye T-shirts hanging from the line stretched across the classroom ceiling. Both show the importance of symmetry in design and reflect the work pupils have been doing in mathematics. Visiting musicians have included the CBSO Little Big Band and Sweet Dancer Jazz Fusion workshop.
19. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements. The school draws well on external expertise to assist these pupils make progress against their personal targets. Carefully planned programmes of work are tailor-made to enable these pupils to achieve successfully. Good quality individual behaviour plans are in place to support pupils to manage their own feelings and to combat personal anxiety and anger. The use of stickers and rewards supports the school's strong ethos of valuing everyone's efforts and hard work.
20. There is a good range of visits and visitors to school that enhances pupils' experiences. The extra-curricular programme that includes recorders, PE club and an orienteering club is due to restart after May bank holidays. Later this term an adventure company will be visiting the school to offer climbing and archery activities amongst others. For many years pupils have experienced a residential visit but this has not taken place this year because the cost was prohibitive. Pupils are given opportunities to share their creative talents in assemblies and the school has enjoyed watching judo experts, Irish dancers and a pianist this school year.

21. Accommodation is well maintained and provides a bright and stimulating setting but is short on space. The staff make best use of what is available to ensure that the curriculum is delivered effectively. For example, support work for pupils with special educational needs takes place in the staff room or corridors, and this is not ideal. There is no library resource base for learning. The Early Years Unit has a super outdoor environment that includes gazebos for quiet, reflective times, well planted sensory areas, a maze, willow sculpture for play, as well as a wide range of play equipment and wheeled toys. However, internally the space is not generous for the number of children who use it. Additionally, the fabric of the building is in poor shape despite good attempts at bright and cheerful decoration and the display of children's work. The playground for older pupils is in need of re-surfacing but plans that involve pupils' own designs, are well in hand for this.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Pupils receive **good** care and support.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils and their needs are well known to staff, and there are very good relationships between all members of the school community.
- Careful attention is paid to monitoring the practice and procedures which ensure health and safety.
- There is very good monitoring and promotion of good behaviour.
- There is successful monitoring and promotion of good attendance.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well.
- Pupils' views are sought regarding aspects of school life.
- Induction and transfer procedures are good.

### **Commentary**

22. The school is a caring and supportive community in which good attention is paid to the welfare, health and safety of pupils. The needs of individuals are well catered for and pupils feel they always have an adult to turn to should they ever have a problem. The school analyses the achievements of pupils effectively in core subjects, and seeks their opinions about day-to-day matters successfully.
23. Parents value the conscientious way in which the school cares for their children. High priority is given to safety and teaching safe practice, and there are good procedures to deal with any accidents or emergencies which might occur. Child protection procedures are all in order and rigorously follow local area guidelines.
24. There are good procedures to ensure a smooth induction into school life, and close links with the neighbouring junior school help provide a seamless transition into the next phase of education. Pupils feel confident that they can seek help from adults on any issues be they personal or academic. The guidance given for personal development, especially behaviour, is particularly good, but aspects of academic guidance could be developed further. Many pupils are unclear about exactly what they need to concentrate on to improve their own work, and this sharing of targets is an area for improvement.
25. There is a good working partnership with a range of social, educational and medical support agencies which benefits individual pupils and helps them to be more included in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and achieve successfully. Their needs are assessed early on and good provision made in all years. The special needs coordinator typically works daily with small groups of pupils to guide their development towards specific targets, but due to staff illness during the inspection, he was teaching full time in Year 2.

26. The school seeks pupils' views about aspects of school life and has fired their imaginations about improvements to the playground environment. Although there is not a formal school council in place, many pupils feel that their views are taken seriously, and they contribute suggestions to try to create a more harmonious playtime.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school has a **good** partnership with parents and has forged strong and effective links with other schools and its community to the benefit of pupils.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Communication with parents is good.
- Parents are welcomed into school and give good support to events.
- Very strong links with other schools and the community extend curricular experiences to the benefit of pupils.

### **Commentary**

27. The links with parents have been sustained well since the time of the previous inspection and the school enjoys a good reputation locally. Parents hold the school in high regard and many say it is the school of first choice.
28. The school gives good attention to ensuring that communication with parents is regular and useful. The prospectus is a well-written and lively publication that includes all required information. The governors' report to parents includes "cameos" written by the headteacher and chair about the work of committees with useful profiles on each member of the governing body. Notice boards are placed at strategic points around the school and this ensures that parents have the information they need about the school's life and development as well as details about the curriculum being taught. The weekly newsletters are very well received by parents as is the website. The school canvasses parents' views via an annual questionnaire with the most recent issued in Spring 2004. The returns showed that most parents are happy with all aspects of the school and they raised nothing of significant concern. The questionnaires issued by inspectors also show an overwhelming positive response except in one respect; a few raised concerns about behaviour and feel that bullying in school is not detected early enough. These parents also said that once it is known about it is dealt with very well. The headteacher is alert to parents concerns and is working to extend the very positive approach to managing behaviour in classes to lunchtimes too.
29. The school is very committed to securing parents as co-educators and is meeting with success in the Foundation Stage in particular. A parent link worker is on the staff with the key role of helping build partnerships and she is meeting with success. A number of in-school events are organised to involve parents, for example weekly assemblies, stay and play mornings and *Inspire* workshops. The comments book system enables parents *to talk to* teachers about homework and this is working well. A Friends Association is active in support of the school. Parents hold the school in high regard and for many it is the school of first choice.
30. The school has built very effective partnership with other schools that include ICT partnerships and an *Inclusion Network* in which the special needs coordinators of five schools meet to share best practice. The link has also enabled pupils from special and mainstream schools to work alongside one another experiencing drama, dance and music. Close ties have been made with the junior school that shares the school's site, including a good quality induction programme to support Year 2 transfer. A very strong partnership with *Connexions*, the local Education Business Partnership, is helping forge good business and community links. Assemblies are regularly taken by representatives from the locality, for example the

Lickey rangers, fire officers, local clergy, librarians and police officers, who are willing to share their experiences with pupils. All of this adds positive value to the quality of education provided.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management, including governance, are **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership by the headteacher is good; she gives committed and successful direction to the school and has high aspirations.
- Other senior staff, including the hard-working deputy headteacher, are equally successful in their leadership roles, and are very good role models for other staff.
- The governors work well; they make close checks to ensure that the school is performing well.
- The target setting and tracking process is not fully focused on what pupils need to do next to improve.
- Monitoring and evaluation systems lack sharp focus on supporting raised achievement, particularly in non-core subjects.
- Financial control and management is good.

### Commentary

31. Rednal Hill Infant School is a happy place of work, which is in no small measure due to the effective leadership and management given by the headteacher. She provides a good steer for school improvement and has been responsible for building a united and effective staff team who are very good role models for each other and for the pupils. The headteacher is ably assisted by the deputy headteacher, who is hardworking, self-critical and an affable leader who commands respect and loyalty, in common with the headteacher. He has led the successful improvement of ICT and as special needs coordinator is responsible for leading a team of skilled support staff who between them add measurable value to the good provision made for these pupils. Other senior staff carry out their responsibilities with assurance and success and are making effective use of data to help analyse the schools' performance.
32. High aspirations are a trademark of the headteacher and this has been communicated well to the other staff. All subject leaders work hard and have had good collective impact on the task of raising standards and improving the quality of education. Thus, improvement since the previous inspection has been good overall and good school effectiveness is evident. Core subject leaders have generally had more opportunities than their colleagues to monitor and evaluate the work in their subjects in all classes and, because this work has been of good quality, have been influential in ensuring provision is of good quality. Other leaders have not had this chance; they are ready and willing to undertake such work and have the skills to complete it well. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is good.
33. The system for performance management is dovetailed well to the process of school improvement and targets are chosen that are entirely appropriate and contributory to the good improvement to the overall quality of education and pupils' achievement that has been the case in recent years. Staff development is tied closely to the school improvement priorities and has good impact, as in the improving provision in the Foundation Stage and ICT, for example.
34. The governors are working effectively for the good of the school. They are led by a very effective chair who ensures that the work of governors is focused where it matters, namely on the evaluation of performance. Governors are developing well their work to check and challenge that pupils are doing as well as can be expected and they are ensuring that the principles of *Best Value* are followed. Governors have good understanding of the strengths



and areas for improvement in school, they ensure statutory requirements are met and they are influential in school development planning. They are currently building curriculum links to assist with their oversight of this aspect of provision.

35. Financial management and control is good and the school has had a positive recent financial audit. Office staff undertake their duties in relation to the everyday management of finance in a cheerful and effective way. The school budget is managed prudently and funds are carefully matched to priorities. The balance shown below looks high but the carry forward has been planned carefully to enable the costly playground upgrade and to maintain staffing levels in the face of a dip in the forecasted intake next year. The good quality level of financial transaction influences positively the school's good value for money.

***Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	714,020
Total expenditure	617,293
Expenditure per pupil	2,627

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	56,834
Balance carried forward to the next	96,728

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

36. Provision the Foundation Stage which comprises nursery and reception aged children is **good** and is a strength of the school.
37. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught in the Early Years Unit which is satisfactorily resourced and has adequate accommodation that enables staff to meet the needs of the three to five age group successfully. Children receive an effective start to their education in the nursery. They have an interesting and imaginative curriculum, as they do in the reception classes. Teaching is never less than good and children's skills are promoted well. When children join the nursery their skills and understanding are much lower than those of many children in other schools across the country. Personal and social skills are well below the level expected for their age, as are their communication and mathematical skills. The good teaching enables the children to achieve well, so that by the time they move into the reception classes their skills have improved significantly. This good achievement continues in the reception classes and the children are given a great deal of extra support which ensures that their learning progresses successfully. Detailed, regular and very effective assessment of how well the children are doing enables staff to pitch tasks at the right levels so that their learning does not lose its momentum. The school has acknowledged that the next stage is to provide greater challenge for the small but significant group of potentially higher attaining children. The school has begun to address this by encouraging higher reading skills and a few children are reaching levels in excess of that expected for their age because of the very good provision being made. Parents are fully involved in helping and supporting their children, and communication with them is good. The Foundation Stage is led very effectively by a hard working and influential manager who motivates the skilled team to work happily together in the best interests of the children.

### **PERSONAL SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have good levels of independence because of the well-structured, warm and friendly atmosphere.
- Relationships are very good and this boosts children's confidence.
- Children with special educational needs have good support that enables them to achieve well.

#### **Commentary**

38. Children enter school with immature skills in their personal, social and emotional development. By the time they leave the reception classes many children are on course to achieve their targets<sup>1</sup>. Daily routines in both the nursery and reception classes enhance the children's confidence and self esteem. Adults are good role models and the children copy them to good effect. Behaviour is good, children regularly take turns and show respect for each other. Many of them cooperate together well when sharing a game or a toy. Nursery children are expected to take an increasing personal responsibility when dressing, clearing away or selecting their next activity, and they rise well to the challenges set for them. Reception children develop their independence further when they get ready for physical activities, either outside or in the hall. The class pets inculcate a love of animals, as well as developing a growing awareness of the needs of their pets. Staff take every opportunity to

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<sup>1</sup> These are known as the early learning goals.

extend and develop children's personal development; this is the main reason that achievement is good for children of all capabilities.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are boosted successfully in both the nursery and reception classes. Children's achievement is good overall and very good in reading.
- Teaching assistants work closely with children who need extra help. This enables them to make good gains in learning.

### **Commentary**

39. The well-structured activities in the nursery successfully stimulate children's interest in reading. In both the nursery and reception they have many opportunities to handle books, to look at them and to talk about them, enjoying the antics of the characters as the story develops. Early reading skills continue to be developed very successfully in the reception classes as the children learn words by sight as well as the letter sounds and names. The well-equipped book areas are inviting to the children, encouraging them to spend time looking at books. Standards improve rapidly, and many of the small but significant group of higher attaining children are on course to exceed their targets in reading by the end of the reception year. Most of the others are not yet expected to achieve the targets. Attractive writing areas capture children's attention straight away in the literacy area, and the reception groups are well on the way to writing for themselves. Well-focussed teaching makes learning fun, as in one session where the reception children had a range of games and writing activities outside in the playground. The interesting and challenging activities held the children's interest well, and the good support from teachers and their assistants meant that every child achieved well. Children find it difficult to master writing skills and few of them will achieve their targets. The strong focus on developing speaking and listening skills in the nursery and reception classes is paying dividends. Speaking skills fall well short of expectations when the children start school, but the good teaching ensures that children progress well. However, there is some way to go before they reach the targets expected for their age.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good planning and effective assessment means that children achieve well in both the nursery and reception classes.
- The strong focus on mathematical language extends children's understanding well.

### **Commentary**

40. Nursery and reception staff take every opportunity to develop the children's understanding of number, shape and space. They do this by having good systems that check out the children's understanding at regular intervals, and then using this information to plan the next stages in learning. Teaching is good across the board. Practical activities are matched well to children's ability, such as when they are making porridge in the nursery and using the correct language to describe which bear had the largest bowl, which one had the middle sized bowl and which one had the smallest bowl. Children's language skills were developed very well in this activity, alongside their understanding of the comparative sizes of the different bowls.

Number rhymes, songs and games actively encourage all children to join in counting and ordering activities, making them fun for the children. These activities are extended in the reception classes, and many children can count to 20 with a fair degree of accuracy. Achievement is good, and a significant minority of children are on course to achieve the targets set for them by the end of the reception year. Nevertheless most children will not reach their targets by the time they transfer to Year 1.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Well-planned opportunities extend children's knowledge and understanding in a wide variety of areas.

### **Commentary**

41. Children's curiosity is constantly extended by the interesting and challenging activities in both the nursery and reception classes. Their growing understanding of the world about them is successfully extended by their observations of living things, caring for the class pets, designing and making models, and using the computer well. Teaching is good in both the nursery and reception classes, and children achieve well. In one session, a group of reception children worked in pairs to control programmable toys. They were adept at this, taking turns to program the simple instructions, and the very good relationships ensured that there was a purposeful working atmosphere, with good gains in learning. Most reception children are on course to achieve their targets in this area of learning.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A good range of activities promote children's learning well.
- The outside play area is of high quality and provides many exciting opportunities for the children to run, jump and play imaginatively.

### **Commentary**

42. When children join the nursery their physical skills are limited. The many exciting opportunities that are planned for them means that their skills of running, jumping and climbing are extended well. They learn to climb over and through the large apparatus, as well as to use small apparatus such as bats and balls. Children also learn how to use pencils, crayons and paint brushes successfully. Their dexterity is promoted well through well-chosen activities such as threading different size edible foods onto liquorice thread as they make necklaces for the Teddy Bears to wear at the picnic planned for after the inspection. They handle constructional toys and games, as well as jigsaws, all of which promotes good gains in their physical development. These activities are extended and developed well in the reception classes. Children have a growing awareness of the space around their bodies, and their physical activities in the hall successfully promote their physical skills and dexterity. Teaching is good, and the children achieve well. Most of them are on course to achieve their targets by the end of the reception year.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because they experience a wide range of creative activities and they are well taught.

### Commentary

43. Children's creative work is well displayed in the Early Years Unit and this lets the children know that their work is valued and respected. Some super paintings of Noah's animals going into the Ark show well the effective cross-curricular links built up with the science topics as part of knowledge and understanding of the world and religious education. The children work with a wide range of different media in both the nursery and reception classes, and many children are on course to achieve the targets set for them by the end of the reception year. Teaching is good and enables good achievement. The focus on imaginative role-play extends children's imagination very well indeed, as they act the roles of Goldilocks and the three bears. Music is enjoyed and has a significant role in the day-to-day life of the Early Years Unit. Children sing enthusiastically and tunefully and they express great pleasure when playing instruments. They learn new words well when they are put to music and repeated. The weekly input from a specialist musician adds value to the children's experiences when they compose, play and perform music together.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Boys' and girls' achievement is good in speaking, listening and reading.
- Teaching is good, and this is why pupils' learning is effective.
- Writing standards are not yet high enough, especially for higher attainers.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support, and this enables them to achieve well against their personal targets.
- Pupils' progress and attainments are well tracked and charted.
- Teachers' marking does not always identify what needs to be done if standards are to improve in writing.
- The subject leadership is effective and there is good capacity for future improvement.

### Commentary

44. The school has made good progress in improving the provision for English since the time of the previous inspection, despite the results in National Curriculum tests dipping last year in writing. The achievement of boys and girls from different backgrounds is good overall. By the time they are seven the standards reached are broadly average in speaking, listening and reading. Achievement in writing is satisfactory but standards are below average overall. The higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough in their writing activities and a lower proportion than seen nationally achieves the higher level 3 in National Curriculum tests. The school is aware of this and is working to target advancement, but more remains to be done, particularly in extending the opportunities to promote writing skills in other subjects, for example the humanities. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well in all aspects of English

and especially reading because of the good focus that is placed on setting small individual targets they can work towards that are reviewed and revised at regular intervals.

45. The school has rightly placed a strong focus on developing pupils' literacy skills. Strategies to develop speaking and listening skills underpin everything the school does, as this is an area of significant weakness when the pupils first start school in the nursery. Teachers are adept at extending pupils' vocabulary, sentence structure and their understanding of spoken language, and this is one of the main reasons why pupils progress as well as they do. In one example, in Year 1, pupils were developing simple rhythms in a music lesson. The rhythms they created were based on animal movement and jungle sounds, successfully enabling the pupils to put forward their own ideas and descriptions about the sounds they were creating.
46. Pupils take much pleasure in reading, both at school and at home. Pupils' love of reading is the result of good teaching that enables the majority of pupils to build the skills they need to read a text accurately and fluently. Most pupils are confident to talk about the characters in their books, for example the *Very Hungry Caterpillar*, explaining why they behave in a particular manner. In a Year 1 lesson, drama was used very successfully by the highest attainers to re-enact the story and in so doing show how well they understood the story and its sequence. Lower attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a narrow vocabulary on which to draw and their limited speaking skills hold them back in describing storyline and plots for example. This group of pupils also have limited strategies to identify unknown words and the school is tackling this effectively in Year 2 through tailor-made work programmes undertaken in small group withdrawal work. More could be done in Year 1 to provide slow readers with a range of decoding skills that would help both reading and spelling. Parents are fully involved in supporting reading activities at home, and they regularly complete their child's reading diary. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning across the board.
47. Writing is the main thrust in the school's development plan. This extra focus is paying dividends and standards are improving, especially in Year 1. Standards are pushing up in Year 2, but many pupils are still getting to grips with using a wider vocabulary, as well as including full stops and capital letters in their longer pieces of written work. Work from average attaining pupils often, but not always, lacks structure and coherence, but the higher attainers have mastered this. Their work is an average standard, but some pupils in the group are capable of reaching higher standards than this. Achievement is not good enough for the higher attainers. Achievement is broadly satisfactory for the average and lower attaining groups. There are differences in the standard of presentation between classes and pupils' spelling skills fall short of what is expected for their age. The school is not making as much use of extending pupils' creative writing opportunities in the different subjects they study, as seen in many other schools, and this is a missed opportunity.
48. Teachers work together as an effective team. They are well led by the subject leader and the quality of teaching is good. Pupils do well because of this. Lessons are well planned and pitched at the right levels. This is because teachers have effective systems for checking how well pupils are achieving and they provide extra support to make sure that learning does not slip. Much has been achieved so far but there are three main issues for the teachers to tackle next:-
  - The higher attaining pupils do not have enough variety and challenge in the range of writing activities provided.
  - Teachers' marking does not have a firm focus on improvement.
  - Pupils' targets are in place but not all pupils know how well they are doing or involved in reviewing their progress.
49. The subject leader has worked hard, with the support of other senior staff, to improve standards and achievement in English and there is good promise for sustaining improvements in the future as she has more time for monitoring and evaluation work.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. Pupils use their literacy skills successfully to support their learning across the other subjects of the curriculum. They speak clearly to each other in small and large groups, and they use their reading skills to access the other curriculum subjects effectively. Their writing skills are weaker, but pupils always try hard to complete their tasks as well as they can. Some work is not as well presented as it could be however, and higher expectations are required about how work should be set out, dated and self-corrected. There are missed opportunities for promoting creative writing in some subjects and in the use of ICT to support the development of stories. The school is aware of all of these shortcomings through its own monitoring and evaluation activities and is working towards improvement.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average in Years 1 and 2 and achievement is good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The subject is well led and managed and has been improved well since the previous inspection.
- Some aspects of assessment, such as marking and pupils' self-evaluation of their work, are not fully effective.

### Commentary

51. Achievement in mathematics is good from the below average level of skills and knowledge that pupils have when they join Year 1. At that time, pupils have limited speaking skills, which affects their success in talking and thinking about mathematics and in solving problems. However, the structure of the mathematics curriculum is good and the quality of education through the school leads to the effective building of knowledge and skills by boys and girls of different capabilities and from different backgrounds. Last year, mathematics results in the Year 2 National Curriculum tests were average and above those in the other two core subjects. This year, standards in mathematics have been sustained at an average level in Year 2 as these pupils near the end of their time in school.
52. The focus of much of the work in mathematics is on numeracy. The school's numeracy strategy is of good quality and helps pupils in Year 1 move from reciting numbers from 1 to 10 with little recognition of how the words relate to quantities, to a situation in Year 2 where the average and higher attaining pupils are exploring the basics of place value and building their arithmetic skills to include multiplication and division. The challenge provided for the higher attainers is good, as it is for the pupils with learning difficulties in mathematics. The group of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, is well supported by the skilful team of teaching assistants and makes good gains in building mathematical skills.
53. The general quality of teaching and learning is good. Indeed, there is evidence of some very good teaching in mathematics, as observed in a Year 2 lesson where the pupils were working to find the difference between quantities through counting along a number line. In this lesson, the higher attainers were challenged with problems such as  $500 - ? = 451$ . They tackled this work with enthusiasm and enjoyment and were perfecting efficient methods to arrive at the result. Key strengths of teaching include very positive insistence on good standards of behaviour, effective teaching methods and good pace to the work. Marking could be used more to show pupils how to improve their work and there could be more opportunities for pupils to self-assess their work in lessons. However, pupils work well and show good levels of productivity.

54. Provision in mathematics has been improved well since the previous inspection and standards are rising. This is due to the effectiveness of leadership and management. The subject leader has good opportunities to find out about the quality of work in all classes and she has very firm and appropriate priorities for improvement. She gives a strong steer to the subject. There is ample evidence to suggest that mathematics will continue to improve well in the future.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

55. There are some good opportunities for pupils to build their skills and knowledge in mathematics in other subjects. ICT is one subject which is linked carefully and effectively to the development of basic mathematics and in most lessons a group of pupils is given opportunities to hone their skills by working with a good range of quality software. Pupils record their work in science in chart and graph format, though opportunities for such recording in geography, history and religious education could be extended.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching is driving good learning throughout the school.
- Good guidance has been provided for planning the practical aspects of the subject and this is having a positive effect in supporting more effective teaching.
- Leadership and management in science are good.
- The subject leader is aware of the need to monitor the quality of teaching and standards throughout the school in a regular, systematic manner to identify good practice.
- The use of ICT to underpin ongoing skills in science requires a more consistent approach.
- Regular well-planned opportunities are needed for higher attaining pupils to undertake their own investigations.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently show pupils clearly how to improve their work and the school has yet to make fully effective use of targets to support their progress and involve them in regular self-review.

### **Commentary**

56. The provision in science is good, clearly meeting the needs of most boys and girls including those for whom English is an additional language. Standards for some years have been above average but those achieved by current pupils at the end of Year 2 are broadly average, reflecting a similar picture to the previous inspection. There is clear evidence from the subject's high profile throughout the school that standards are set to continue to rise. Factors that contribute to the rising standards include good teaching throughout the school, good implementation of all aspects of the curriculum, a clear thrust to focus rigorously on scientific enquiry and very good relationships both between pupils and teachers and amongst pupils.
57. Teaching and learning are good in all classes. Good teaching motivates pupils well and it was clearly evident during a Year 2 lesson observed that pupils found practical 'hands on' work both interesting and enjoyable. Throughout the school pupils show good attitudes to their work. They work well in groups and pairs, sharing and cooperating well for example during the use of a microscope linked via the computer to study root systems. This kind of well-organised group work makes a good contribution to pupils' social development, while discussion and questioning helps them develop basic literacy skills. These good aspects of teaching and learning, including the effective use of the additional skilful support staff, all contribute to the positive enhancement of the subject's profile throughout the school. Clearly



visible in all classrooms are comprehensive science displays reflecting a good breadth of curriculum experience. Good attention is paid to promoting scientific vocabulary and this helps pupils to understand concepts more easily. However, the scrutiny of work in pupils' books clearly reflects the need to raise pupils' secretarial skills by ensuring that correct spellings are used and that presentation remains at a consistently high level. There are missed opportunities for higher attaining pupils to undertake and record their own investigations due to over reliance on worksheets. There is also a need to place greater emphasis on the written content contained in the final conclusions of experiments. These sometimes fail to reflect a deeper scientific understanding of why a certain event happened, for example 'after exercise the heart beats faster' – with no reason given why such events occur.

58. Leadership of science is effective and the subject leader works hard to support learning across the school. A good start has been made in analysing teacher assessments, taking stock of strengths and areas for future targeted learning. Systematic monitoring of teaching and learning is also an area for continued development. The marking of pupils' work by teachers celebrates success. However, it rarely states how improvements can be made. Pupils' own knowledge of their own learning is, at best, satisfactory. They are unclear about what they need to do to reach higher standards. The regular use of well planned homework tasks to support ongoing topics in science creates a positive link between home and school, encouraging parents to be partners in their child's new learning. Science has a bright prospect for the future and there is a good shared determination to strive for improvement since the previous inspection in terms of curriculum and quality of teaching.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory** and is improving steadily.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are significantly improved levels of resources and staff expertise since the previous inspection.
- ICT is led and managed well by the hard-working and successful subject leader.
- Whilst a system of assessment is in use, it requires further development.
- Links with other schools are very effective in enhancing pupils' experiences in ICT.

### **Commentary**

59. Provision in ICT has been improved well since the previous inspection when it was a key issue because of low standards. In the two years that the subject leader has been in school, a complete audit of the subject has been implemented and the hardware overhauled and updated and the software stock built into a good quality resource. Staff confidence and expertise has also been improved through a well-conceived programme of training. Now, all classes have adequate resources that are used regularly to help pupils develop the necessary skills and understanding.
60. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory through the school and, as the programme of staff development and resource enhancement continues, has enough strengths, and no unsatisfactory features, to form the platform for good teaching and learning in the future. Pupils enjoy their work in ICT and they develop skills, knowledge and understanding at a steady rate because they work productively. Work on display and in books shows the range of ICT experiences and includes, in Year 2, paintings in the style of Van Gogh and writing about Florence Nightingale's work; data presentation on pictograms about the favourite weather of pupils in Year 1.

61. The curriculum for ICT is planned thoroughly and includes appropriate work in the different strands of the subject. Unlike at the time of the previous inspection, all the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. The subject leader has been responsible for creating very strong links with other schools in order to consolidate and extend the quality of the curriculum. The local consortium of schools, *LNCTT*<sup>2</sup>, is an important forum for the development and improvement of ICT locally and the school taps into, and contributes strongly to, the curriculum and resource development work it undertakes.
62. Assessment is being developed well, though continued work is needed to shape it into a system that charts the growth of expertise, identifies strengths and any shortcomings in achievement, and flags clearly the next steps that have to be taken.
63. The advance of ICT is due to the subject leader's hard work, interest and painstaking attention to detail. He leads the subject well and has very well informed understanding of subject performance. There are good prospects for the maintained improvement of provision in ICT.

### **ICT across the curriculum**

64. Led by the subject leader, there has been a steady move away from separate teaching of ICT skills to a cross-curricular approach where pupils build knowledge, skills and understanding of ICT through their work in other subjects. This transition is not yet complete, but it is evident that there are some good links between ICT and English, mathematics and science with bar charts and venn diagrams presented using various software. The links are not as strong in other subjects, though there is evidence of some sound ICT work in art and design and geography amongst the non-core subjects. Overall, ICT is linked satisfactorily to work in other subjects.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Religious education is well led and there is good potential for improvement.
- Not enough work is recorded in the subject and this needs review.
- The subject leader has not had enough opportunities to monitor and evaluate religious education across the school.

### **Commentary**

65. The place of religious education within the overall curriculum is satisfactory. There is an appropriate curriculum for the subject that focuses on both *learning about* and *learning from* religion. Most of the work is centred on the study of Christianity, but other religions, chiefly Hinduism, are included suitably in the work. Pupils achieve soundly as they build skills, knowledge and understanding and standards are average overall. Year 2 pupils can retell the main stories from Christianity, such as those about Easter and Christmas and are aware of some of the similarities and differences between Christianity and Hinduism and Sikhism. The involvement of local clergy in assembly adds well to pupils' moral and spiritual development and the awareness of how people should treat and care for others.
66. Religious education is taught soundly and this ensures pupils learn satisfactorily. In a good lesson observed in Year 1, pupils' speaking and listening skills were well promoted as they

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<sup>2</sup> *Longbridge and Northfield Consortium for IT*

learnt about taking care of others by discussing the needs of a guinea pig brought into school. The pupils recorded what they had found out on a poster telling others how to be a good pet owner. The lesson was well planned to fit into a personal and social education lesson planned for later in the week when the pupils were to consider being a responsible member of the class. However, the limited evidence in pupils' books reflects that typically more time is spent talking about the topics than writing about what has been learnt. This is a missed opportunity to develop pupils' writing skills alongside the increase in understanding of religious education. Work sheets are often the basis for recorded work and this limits creative writing skills. The subject leader is well aware of the need to seek more balance between oral and recorded work, not least to aid her monitoring of the standards being achieved in the subject.

67. The leader of religious education gives a clear steer to the subject but has only limited opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. Assessment is an aspect of provision that she has worked hard to develop. Teachers have used the new system for one term only and it is still bedding in. There is potential for the system to become a useful tool for gauging the progress pupils make over their time in school and for this information to inform the records of achievement shared with parents.

### **Geography and History**

68. As there was a relatively small amount of work available, geography and history were not inspected in detail. However, it is evident that pupils learn soundly from an interesting curriculum. Work in books reflects what has been planned and through topics such as "My favourite toy old and new" enables the pupils to develop a sense of chronology and deepen their knowledge and understanding of history. In geography, mapping skills are soundly developed, for example in Year 1 through the use of coordinates to plot features in the school hall and in Year 2 through the drawing of aerial views of Mr Bean's house from the story of *Fantastic Mr Fox* by Roald Dahl. In the geography lesson observed in Year 2, the pupils built mapping skills successfully as they learnt how to use a key and identify the symbols to aid quick reference of the main features of a locality.
69. Overall standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2.
70. Both subjects are soundly led, although monitoring and evaluation are incomplete procedures, as the subject leaders do not have opportunities to observe work in classrooms across the school. Thus, the relative over-use of worksheets and lack of opportunity for pupils to hone their writing skills in geography and history have not been identified quickly enough. Assessment is in need of a boost, as, at present, it insufficiently identifies how successfully pupils are building skills and knowledge. Additionally, there is limited use of assessment to inform lesson planning geared towards accelerating learning.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

### **ART AND DESIGN / DESIGN TECHNOLOGY**

71. Due to timetable constraints only one art and design lesson could be observed. Consequently, no overall judgements on the quality of provision, especially teaching and learning, can be made in these subjects. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and teachers' planning and talked to pupils about these subjects. Indications are that standards are average in art and design and design technology at the end of Year 2. Over the course of the year pupils are taught all the elements of the subjects.
72. In the art and design lesson seen, teaching and learning were good. Pupils in a Year 2 class were given good opportunities to select from a well-prepared range of activities. Pupils confidently used paint to illustrate different types of lines as related to the environment, either vertical or horizontal. Pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment enabled most to sustain good levels of interest. The majority used pens and pencils adeptly, handling scissors with precision and

accuracy and carefully observing what they were drawing. Good planning enabled pupils' creativity skills to be successfully developed and extended. A good range of pupils' work on display in classrooms clearly illustrates that their efforts are valued. Most pupils show good levels of pride in their work. The average standards reported in the last inspection report have been maintained in two-dimensional and three-dimensional work and achievement is good. A positive feature of the art work in school is the good attention paid to basic drawing skills, especially in portraits and still life as observed in science lessons where pupils were engaged in sketching leaf forms and plant root systems. Pupils use a wide range of resources well in paintings, collage, montage and drawings in the style of painters whose works have been recently studied, for example Van Gogh and Monet. The recent involvement of an artist in residence successfully introduced pupils to wood-carving, the products of which now enhance the outside play area. This well planned activity successfully linked a range of curriculum areas, raising pupils' awareness of the local environment, the importance of woodland areas and the role played by the Lickey Ranger. Recent studies of artwork from non-European cultures are contributing well to pupils' cultural development and awareness.

73. On the basis of evidence available in design technology on display, pupils' skills in making products are average, reflecting similar standards achieved at the time of the previous inspection. In Year 1 pupils have undertaken a range of activities related to tie and dye as they created a range of designs on T-shirts. The manufacture of mittens successfully linked science with design technology, with the choice of materials to keep hands warm. Once the mitten template had been cut out pupils sewed the upper and lower parts with good levels of accuracy. In Year 2 well-constructed vehicles made from card moved robustly on effectively manufactured axles and wheels. Initial designs were clearly labelled before manufacture, indicating parts and materials needed.
74. The subject leaders for art and design and design technology have written detailed action plans which clearly identify the priorities for improvement. However there has been very limited time for the subject leader to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning to check what has been agreed is taking place in all lessons. There are no assessment procedures and this requires review, as does the need to ensure that teachers make consistent use of assessment data to inform lesson planning geared towards accelerating learning.

## **Music**

75. As there was a relatively small amount of work available, music was not inspected in detail and it is not possible to make a firm judgement about the overall provision.
76. In the one lesson observed, pupils were enabled to make steady gains in developing their singing skills. The pupils sang with pleasure and enthusiasm and kept the beat successfully as they sang about mini-beasts. Good cross-curricular links with science work gave added-value to the lesson. Pupils enjoy singing and making music in assembly for example, and boys and girls participate fully in all musical activities. All classes have their full entitlement to the subject and staff are well briefed in how to teach the subject effectively.

## **Physical education**

77. As there was a relatively small amount of work available, physical education was not inspected in detail and it is not possible to make a firm judgement about the overall provision.
78. Two lessons in physical education were observed during the inspection. In both of these, the skills and knowledge shown were average and achievement satisfactory. In the Year 2 games lesson observed there were some very good opportunities for the pupils to evaluate their own work, and that of other pupils, and suggest ways to improve their performance. Planning for physical education shows that the pupils study from an appropriately balanced curriculum, including swimming. At present, the provision for swimming has been discontinued because of refurbishment to the pool. However, it is anticipated that swimming tuition will be resumed

once this work is complete. Assessment procedures and the role of the subject leader in monitoring and evaluating standards and achievement require improvement.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

The provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is a happy, well-ordered community in which all pupils are valued, encouraged to feel special, and helped to become sociable young people who care about one another, and the less fortunate.
- A very successful approach in the foundation stage helps the youngest children in school to make very good progress in their personal development.
- Pupils and their families are well known to teachers and support staff, and the needs of each child are well catered for.
- The behaviour code is very successful in promoting and rewarding positive attitudes and effort.
- A good, broad curriculum provides well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

### **Commentary**

79. The personal development of pupils is promoted well through a cross-curricular, multi-faceted approach which is based on consistent messages and very good role models. Classroom chats or more formal lessons in personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) are supplemented by a programme of visits and visitors, for example fire officers. Daily assemblies focus on the more thought-provoking, intangible elements of human nature and are used well, particularly for understanding about the expression of feelings, and about cultural diversity. For example, during the inspection pupils were encouraged to identify and reflect on a range of feelings, and to realise how transient these might be. For their citizenship education an assembly about the very different experiences of school children in Uganda promoted a searching consideration of cultural diversity.
80. Very good, trusting relationships between pupils and all the adults who work in the school underpin the caring support and advice which promotes their personal and social development.
81. The behaviour code is designed to promote and reward positive attitudes and effort and is very successful. It is based on good manners and consideration for others. Staff are very consistent in their approaches and this is a very positive feature. The next step is to ensure that the consistency of promoting behaviour in school is applied with equally good effectiveness at play and lunchtimes. The introduction of the mediator scheme that involves pupils in managing appropriate aspects of behaviour at these times is a useful start. The school is seeking to raise the profile of PSHCE on the timetable.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7). When judging standards- 1 is very high, 2 - well above average; 3 – above average; 4 – average; 5 – below average; 6 – well below average; 7-very low*