

INSPECTION REPORT

Rushall Junior Mixed and Infant School

Rushall, Walsall

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104196

Headteacher: Mr A. Cheminais

Lead inspector: Bernice Magson

Dates of inspection: 12th –15th January 2004

Inspection number: 257374

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	224
School address:	Pelsall Lane Rushall Walsall West Midlands
Postcode:	WS4 1NQ
Telephone number:	01922 682300
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P. Labrum
Date of previous inspection:	6 th July 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This average sized primary school serving the Rushall district of Walsall admits pupils from the surrounding district, aged from 3 to 11 years. Social indicators of the area are average. Attached to the school are two special educational needs units for pupils who have speech and language disorders. Overall there are 224 pupils on roll, including 13 part-time places in the nursery class. Attainment on entry to the nursery class is average and remains average in all areas of learning at the start of the National Curriculum in Year 1. Pupils are mostly of white British origin and a small number of pupils are of Asian, Caribbean and Chinese origin, with none at early stages of language acquisition. The numbers of pupils with special educational needs varies significantly in each school year but is currently at 16 per cent of pupils, similar to the national average. Twelve pupils have formal statements for their speech and language disorders, which is above the national average. The school has received a national achievement award in 2002 in recognition of its improving standards. Very recently the school has been awarded the national status of "Investors in People."

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18143	Bernice Magson	Lead inspector	English, information and communication technology, design and technology, special educational needs
14083	Andy Anderson	Lay inspector	
22671	David White	Team inspector	Science, art and design, history, geography, religious education
2818	Graham Warner	Team inspector	Mathematics, music, physical education, Foundation Stage

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is **an effective school** providing a good quality of education for its pupils. They attain average standards overall by the age of 11. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- By Year 6 pupils attain above average standards in mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, and music
- Standards in writing are below average in Year 6
- Marking and target setting provide pupils with insufficient information about how to improve
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, including those pupils with speech and language disorders in the special needs units
- There is a very good range of learning experiences to enrich the curriculum, including in the Foundation Stage where children achieve well
- Management systems are inconsistent across the school

There has been a good rate of improvement since the last inspection. Standards in Year 6 have improved in mathematics, ICT, art and design, music and design and technology. Assessment systems provide satisfactory information on standards, although pupils have a limited understanding of how to improve, as the quality of marking and target setting is inconsistent. Coordinators now produce good development plans for their subject, based on successful monitoring of pupils' progress, with a good identification of strengths and weaknesses. The role of the senior management team remains underdeveloped, especially that of the deputy headteacher. Partnership links with parents are now good and with the community very good, effectively supporting pupils in their learning.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average points scored in National Curriculum tests.

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

The achievement of pupils is satisfactory overall, but good in the Foundation Stage. By the end of the reception year most children achieve the expected learning goals for their age in all areas of learning, and exceed national expectations in their personal and social development. In Years 1 to 6 standards are average overall. Standards in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics have shown good improvement over time in national tests, with improvement above the national trend. In 2003 standards were above average in reading, and average in writing and mathematics. By Year 6 current standards are above average in mathematics, ICT, art and design and music. Standards are average in other subjects of the National Curriculum, apart from English where standards are below average.

Insufficient evidence was collected to make a judgement on standards in geography and physical education. In the 2003 national tests, standards showed very good improvement in mathematics and science, and satisfactory improvement in English. In mathematics standards are in the top ten per cent of schools, when results are compared with those of similar schools. Girls achieve better than boys, especially in English. Pupils with special educational needs and the small number with English as an additional language achieve well because of good levels of adult support.

The pupils have good attitudes to school. They enjoy school activities and are happy in lessons. Their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory**. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, although the boisterous behaviour of a small minority on the playground at break and lunchtimes intimidates younger children. Attendance is well below the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good**. In all lessons there is good teamwork between teachers, teaching assistants, parents and voluntary helpers providing mutual support for pupils, as necessary. There is good attention to equal opportunities for all pupils. Lessons are well planned, with a good variety of teaching methods to encourage and motivate pupils. Particularly successful is the use of ICT as a teaching tool, and providing pupils with a different method of recording, or for research. Assessment is satisfactory overall, but good in the Foundation Stage and in the special needs' classes. In Years 1 to 6 teachers make insufficient use of marking and target setting to help pupils understand how to improve. Insufficient use is made of assessment information to track pupils' on-going progress in lessons. Parents make a good contribution to children's learning at school and in the home.

The school provides a good curriculum, with many very good first-hand learning experiences. There is a good curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes, with a good balance between direct teaching and investigative learning. For pupils with special educational needs there are good levels of inclusion in all learning activities in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6, but in Years 1 and 2 opportunities for an inclusive education programme are often missed. Throughout school participation in the arts is very good, and there are very good partnerships links with the community. This is helping to raise standards. Participation in sports is satisfactory. There is an insufficient range of extra curricular activities for pupils of all ages. Teachers know their pupils well and provide good levels of care and support of pupils, engendering very good relationships between adults and pupils. Arrangements for the initial induction of children into the nursery and reception classes are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is good. He has a good vision and high aspirations for the development of the school. There is good leadership of the Foundation Stage and very effective management systems. Overall, management is unsatisfactory because there is a lack of cohesion in decision-making. Responsibilities of key staff are insufficient to support the headteacher in his management of the school, or in the analysis of performance data. The governance of the school is satisfactory. The governing body complies with all their statutory responsibilities.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents are pleased with the work of the school, including those parents of pupils in the speech and language units. Pupils have positive views about the school and in the school council are eager to support its development.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing across the school
- Develop consistent and cohesive systems of management
- Improve the quality of marking and target setting

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, and subjects

The achievement of pupils is satisfactory overall. It is good in the nursery, reception year and in Year 6, and satisfactory in Years 1 to 5. Standards are satisfactory throughout the school. Results improved in the 2003 national tests. Girls do consistently better than boys at the age of 11, particularly in English. Over time there are differences in the performance of pupils in national tests as a result of variations in numbers of pupils with special educational needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The trend of improvement for all core subjects is above the national trend for 7 year olds
- In 2003 standards in Year 6 were well above average in mathematics
- Standards are below average in writing in Year 6

Commentary

1. When children start school in the nursery they have attained standards appropriate for their age. They achieve well in all areas of learning. By the start of the National Curriculum in Year 1 they are attaining above average standards in their personal and social development, and attaining all other early learning goals appropriate for their age. All pupils are prepared well for the next stage of learning.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.7 (15.1)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.8 (13.6)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.7 (15.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Standards of the current Year 2 cohort are average overall. In national tests, standards fluctuate in Year 2. Nevertheless, a comparison of the average points scored over a three-year period show that standards are improving significantly in reading, writing and mathematics. It is difficult to make a meaningful comparison of test results annually because of the variable number of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), which depress standards for some year groups. In 2003 few pupils had SEN, whereas in the previous year the inclusion of a quarter of pupils with SEN depressed the test results. In 2003 the test results were above average in reading, and average in writing and mathematics. However, very few pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in writing. All pupils achieved their predicted targets and the small number of pupils with special educational needs achieved well, because of the good levels of adult support.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
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English	26.4 (26.1)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.7 (26.4)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.7 (27.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Standards in the current Year 6 cohort are above average in mathematics, average in science, but below average in English. Over time the rate of improvement in national tests by Year 6 is in line with the national trend. In 2003 there was good improvement on the standards achieved in previous years, with well above average standards attained in mathematics, and above average standards in science. Half of all Year 6 pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in science, and over a third in mathematics. All pupils make rapid progress in Year 6. Comparing their test results in 2003 with prior attainment in Year 2, the value added improvement in performance is well above that of all pupils nationally, and in the top ten per cent of similar schools. However, over a three year period, the performance of Year 6 boys fell below the national average in all core subjects, while girls exceeded national averages for their age group. Currently standards in writing are below average, with most pupils finding it difficult to organise and write convincingly for a range of audiences. Initiatives have been introduced to raise standards in story writing and this has been effective in Year 6, where pupils are attaining average standards in this aspect of writing. Pupils achieve well in science in Years 3 and 4, because there are good links to practical investigations, which makes learning more meaningful. In Year 5 the poor behaviour of some pupils impinges on their rates of progress, particularly of the more able.
4. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language in the mainstream classes achieve well overall. There are good systems for identifying their needs at an early stage and individual education plans are devised successfully to match individual needs. Good support is given in lessons providing sensitive intervention and practical assistance when necessary.
5. Pupils in the speech and language units achieve very well because of the regular and consistent assessment of their progress. Teachers ensure that next steps in development build very successfully on previous learning. In each lesson an inclusive programme of provision with mainstream pupils is considered, and then evaluated at the end of each lesson. It is particularly successful in the Foundation Stage and Year 4, where it helps to raise standards and awareness of the needs of others in all lessons. Regular reviews take place to monitor pupils' progress over time, often involving parents. As a result pupils with speech and language disorders achieve very well towards their individual targets for improvement.
6. Standards are above average by Year 6 in ICT, art and design, and in music throughout the school. Standards are average for all ages in all other subjects, except geography and physical education, where no judgement could be made because of insufficient evidence.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to the school are good; they behave well in lessons. The provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Attendance is unsatisfactory. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Moral and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have positive attitudes to the school.
- The behaviour of the younger children is consistently good.
- Attendance levels are well below the national median.
- Procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

- Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are eager to learn. They participate willingly in lessons and the other activities. Pupils are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. When they are offered opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example representing their classes at the school council, they respond in a mature and responsible manner.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. However, opportunities for promoting spiritual development in assemblies, and in lessons, for example in art and design and music, are often missed. This area is underdeveloped. Collective worship meets statutory requirements and opportunities are planned for pupils to learn about the celebrations and beliefs of other faiths in religious education lessons. Provision for pupils' own cultural and their multicultural development is good.
- The provision for pupils' moral development is good. All pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. Most pupils behave well in lessons, when moving around the school, and in the playground at breaks and lunchtimes. Behaviour management in the classrooms is very good. Where there are instances of challenging behaviour, particularly among the older pupils, they are dealt with well. At lunchtimes, over-boisterous behaviour by the older pupils, for example dominating the playground playing ball games, intimidates some of the younger children. This is not always firmly dealt with. However, the pupils themselves say that they are not bullied or harassed.
- Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are given the same empathetic support as many other pupils in the school. Good personal relationships are developed with all adults. Most pupils respond well to each other. Consequently pupils have good attitudes to their classmates and pay respect to the views of others because their views are respected too.

Attendance

The table below shows the attendance figures for the school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.9	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Pupils being withdrawn from school for annual holidays cause a high percentage of the authorised absence during term time. Taxis bringing pupils to school regularly arriving late adversely affect punctuality, particularly in the special units. The school has insufficient strategies to promote good attendance, for example, by presenting good attendance rewards. There is no centralised, systematic procedure for

monitoring attendance and rigorously following up absence. Currently the monitoring of absences is left to individual class teachers.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	200	0	0
White – Irish	3	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	5	0	0
Chinese	6	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

There have been no exclusions in recent years.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are good overall. There is a good curriculum, enhanced by many very good first-hand learning experiences. The provision for extra-curricular activities is unsatisfactory throughout school. Assessment is satisfactory overall, although insufficient use is made of assessment to measure pupils' progress. Links with parents and other schools are good. Links with the community are very good and enhance the quality of provision, particularly in the junior classes.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school and assessment is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In lessons there is good teamwork and mutual support among teachers, teaching assistants, parents and other voluntary helpers
- ICT is used very effectively by most teachers in demonstrations of new techniques, and by pupils in their recording and research
- Teachers make insufficient use of marking and target setting to help pupils know how to improve, and there is limited use of assessment information to track pupils' progress in lessons
- There is very good inclusion in the reception class and Year 4 of pupils with speech and language disorders

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 50 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0(0%)	13(26%)	28(56%)	7(14%)	2(4%)	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 where 30 or more lessons are seen.

11. During the inspection the vast majority of teaching seen was good or better, with a quarter of teaching very good. In the Foundation Stage the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good or better. In Year 6, and for pupils taught in the speech and language units, teaching is mostly very good. There was one unsatisfactory lesson seen in both the infant and junior classes. Assessment is satisfactory overall, but good in the Foundation Stage. Statutory and optional tests inform teachers about standards achieved at the end of each school year. The coordination of assessment is unsatisfactory and procedures are inconsistent across the school.
12. Teachers in the nursery and reception classes have a very good understanding of how children of this age learn. They provide a warm and friendly classroom environment, and encourage pupils to participate in a variety of directed activities and investigative play. They are skilled at making learning meaningful for all pupils. For example children in the nursery struggled to learn technical vocabulary to describe the weather conditions outdoors, they chose weather symbols to record on a weather chart, and in a weather house enjoyed dressing up to role-play various types of weather outdoors, later chatting happily about wind, rain and snow as they played. Through skilled questioning children are encouraged to consider alternatives and make their own decisions, with adults supporting them effectively as they learn. Assessment of children's progress is good, with assessment systems involving all staff so that activities build very successfully on prior attainment. At the end of each day staff revisit their earlier assessments initially recorded on post-its and in "Day Books," and then adapt their lesson planning as a consequence of children's responses.
13. In Years 1 to 6 the majority of teachers have joined the school in the last three years. They are making a good contribution to raising the quality of teaching and learning by using a good variety of teaching styles, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Currently teaching is mostly good, apart from in English where teaching is satisfactory. In most lessons, in Years 3 to 6, teachers have high expectations of pupils and there is good challenge in the learning. Lessons are well planned with a good variety of teaching styles, appropriately encouraging and motivating pupils of all abilities. Teaching assistants manage their time well and give sensitive and appropriate support where necessary. There is a good range of learning experiences for pupils, which introduce, develop and consolidate new learning. For example, in a science lesson in Year 4, pupils used computers and the interactive whiteboard to complete simulations on electric circuits, prior to undertaking and recording practical experiments. Very good attention was given to providing appropriate teaching aids to support individuals as necessary, and ensuring all pupils, including those with complex special educational needs, could participate effectively with their peer group. Some good links are made across the curriculum often involving the use of literacy and numeracy skills. When working on logo programs, Year 6 pupils completed a storybook in an ICT lesson, producing a three-page animation, paying good attention to the artistic interpretation of each character, and incorporating text with graphics for each story character. At the end of the lesson, after intense concentrated activity, pupils proudly presented some very good work, which incorporated learning in ICT, art and design and literacy. In the small number of unsatisfactory lessons, there was a lack of challenge to learning with insufficient focus on the learning objectives. Additionally, in Year 5, there are insufficient strategies to address the unsatisfactory behaviour and attitudes of a small minority of pupils, which impinges on their learning.
14. There has been satisfactory development in assessment systems over time in Years 1 to 6. Most teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the standards in core subjects of pupils in their class, although there are missed opportunities for coordinators to share relevant and useful information with teachers. An analysis of previous test results has shown some subject strengths and

weaknesses. However, the senior management team and assessment coordinator give insufficient attention to predicting standards and tracking pupils' rates of progress in order to measure strengths and weaknesses in performance. This limits opportunities for teachers to focus on overcoming problem areas of the curriculum. Recently some teachers in Years 3 to 6 have introduced a system of target setting by trialling a mixture of individual and whole class literacy targets. Although this is a good development, currently individual pupils have limited recall of their targets or understanding of their purpose. The impact of this initiative is restricted further by a lack of consistency in approach. For example, there are few references to pupils' targets for improvement in teachers' marking. Assessment of pupils with special educational needs is good, particularly of those in the speech and language units. Teachers in the special needs' unit monitor pupils' daily achievements well, and pupils and their parents have a good understanding of progress that is being made.

The curriculum

The range of broad and balanced curriculum opportunities offered by the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good opportunities for enrichment through links with the community, for example with the Creative Partnership project and the Education Development Centre
- Provision of extra-curricular activities is limited for all pupils
- The programme of work for personal, social and health education is inconsistent across the school

Commentary

15. The school provides a good curriculum, which is broad and balanced and has suitable time allocations for all subjects. All National Curriculum subjects and religious education are covered appropriately, although in personal, social and health education there is not a whole-school programme of work and coverage is inconsistent. The school has identified this weakness and the newly appointed coordinator is introducing a full curricular programme into the school. The policy for health education, which includes sex and drugs education, are all agreed by the governing body and are taught accordingly. Adults are sensitive to pupils' needs and deal with all subjects sympathetically, responding well to the particular worries of pupils. This caring nature is extended to all aspects of school life, including its approach to racial harmony and inclusion. Long, medium and short-term planning of the curriculum is matched to the knowledge and skills appropriate for each ability and age group, effectively addressing one of the key recommendations of the last inspection. Particularly good is the lesson planning for pupils in the speech and language units so that they are provided with a wealth of experiences appropriately adapted for their special educational needs. The curriculum offers many opportunities for these pupils and for those pupils with English as an additional language. In classrooms there is an appropriate level of support, given within the context of support for all pupils. Teachers have a sound awareness of standards through assessments at the end of topics, and in most classrooms any identified needs are met in carefully planned activities. There is, however, a continuing need to ensure that in all teachers' planning there is an appropriate and consistent approach to the curriculum based on the good use of assessment information.

16. The very good links with the community enrich the curriculum. The work of the Creative Partnership project within the school is having a very beneficial effect on creative experiences of all pupils in literacy, music and art and design. The pupils in Year 2 remember with enthusiasm

their visit to the local church and the song they composed with a visiting musician. Pupils in Year 3 sketched charcoal still life pictures of potatoes, in the style of Van Gogh, following their visit to a farm. In Year 6, pupils have worked with the Educational Development Centre to produce imaginative computer-generated portraits in the style of Picasso. The display throughout the school of the work generated by these links is of a high quality.

17. There are very limited opportunities for the pupils to take part in any extra-curricular activities at lunchtimes or after school. Although there are indications that more clubs are to be made available, currently there are just three clubs for the older pupils to attend. Of these, the choir sings at a number of locations within the community.
18. While some teachers have worked well to identify cross-curricular links for literacy, numeracy and ICT, there is not yet a complete and consistent approach to these links in all classes. In Year 6 curricular links are very good and assist pupils in the practice and reinforcement of new skills. Other pupils are less fortunate with insufficient opportunities for the consolidation of their learning. As a result rates of progress are restricted, such as in writing for different purposes.
19. The school's accommodation and resources are good. Large classrooms and additional work spaces enable the teachers and teaching assistants to provide a good range of learning experiences. Appropriate resources for all subjects are readily available for pupils and teachers to use. All teachers are beginning to use their interactive whiteboards with imagination and creativity to enrich the pupils' learning experiences. There are some examples of very good practice.

Care, guidance and support

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good overall. They support pupils' learning well. Health and safety procedures are good. Achievement is monitored well but personal development is monitored inconsistently. The involvement of pupils in the school's work and development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and non-teaching staff provide very good pastoral support for pupils.
- Pupils have very good relationships with the adults in the school.
- The monitoring of pupils' personal development is inconsistent.

Commentary

20. The headteacher and staff are very approachable, caring and committed to the pupils in their charge. This has resulted in every child having a very good and trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school. From the minute that pupils enter school their needs are being considered. There is good on-going assessment of children's progress in the nursery and reception years. The induction programme for children entering the nursery is very good. Child protection procedures are securely in place and are known and understood by all members of staff.
21. Children are well cared for because teachers establish clear routines and expectations, and manage lessons very well. There is a sound range of record keeping that ensures pupils are supported and guided appropriately to their age and abilities. However, pupils' personal development is not consistently monitored throughout the school. The guidance given to pupils is not securely based on a consistently recorded monitoring system.

22. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language have good levels of support given to them by both class teachers and support staff. Support is given sensitively within classes. The high level of care is symptomatic of the general level of care given to all pupils.
23. The school has good procedures for ensuring the children's health and safety. The headteacher and the governing body take their health and safety responsibilities very seriously. All the required checks and inspections are regularly carried out and properly recorded. There is consistent safe practice in lessons. However, lunchtime supervision arrangements need to be reviewed to prevent the younger children being intimidated by the over boisterous play of the older boys. The headteacher and governors have already identified this problem and are preparing an action plan to improve provision at lunchtime, which includes the allocation of funds from the budget.
24. The school has recently initiated a school council. This is still in an early stage of development but is already providing pupils with opportunities to be involved in school life. Already the school council has made suggestions regarding additional playground games at lunchtimes.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents and the community is good overall. The partnership with parents and other schools is good. Links with the community are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very good links with parents of children who have special educational needs.
- The school has very productive links with the community.

Commentary

25. Most parents are pleased with what the school provides and have every confidence in the ability of the school to meet the needs of their children. The school actively encourages parents to be involved in their children's education. Many parents and grandparents help in classrooms and accompany children on out of school trips. Most parents support their children's education at home and in the school. The school hosts courses for parents, either to further their own education or help them with their children's education.

26. Overall the information provided by the school is good. For example, teachers regularly provide parents with curricular and topic information. The governors hold an annual meeting with parents and publish an informative annual report. The school's prospectus is both attractive and informative. The governors' annual report is of a satisfactory quality. The school has an open door policy and there are plenty of opportunities for parents to talk to teachers on an informal basis.

27. The school receives the parents of pupils with special educational needs and English as a second language with the same openness as all parents. At least termly discussions are held and sometimes more often to help them to understand what the school is doing in order to support their children. However, regular newsletters and information about curriculum are only sent in English and the school has not gathered information about the helpfulness of this to parents.

28. The school has very good links with the community which contributes positively on the wider education of both pupils and parents. Examples include the regular visits to the local library by all pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership, and there is satisfactory leadership by key staff. In the Foundation Stage leadership is good and management very good. Overall the management of the school is unsatisfactory. The school provides satisfactory daily management of the special educational needs units.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a good vision and high aspirations for the development of the school
- The management systems of the school are inconsistent
- Coordinators are effective in monitoring and identifying priorities to develop the curriculum and teaching and learning
- The role of the deputy headteacher is under developed

Commentary

29. The headteacher places a strong emphasis on creating a positive ethos in which pupils are happy and can succeed. He is instrumental in developing very good links with the community, which improves the quality of education for all pupils. In each year group there are very good examples of extended learning experiences, which interest pupils and motivate them to learn. Professional expertise is used to good advantage to provide a depth to pupils' learning and improve the expertise of staff. With the help of blacksmiths, artists and designers, Year 6, for example, have created a huge sculptured tiled mural of the district of Rushall, of which they are justifiably very proud. It is not unusual to see a granddad working on woodwork tasks, or a librarian telling stories to a group of children. All classes, including the special needs units, visit the library monthly. The headteacher monitors effectively to ensure that these links remain relevant to the needs of the school.
30. Subject coordinators are effective in developing good action plans based on monitoring of the curriculum, teaching and learning. Their priorities are appropriate, and are effectively incorporated into the annual school improvement plan, which includes priorities for all the key aspects of the development of the school. However although successful outcomes are identified there is a lack of cohesion between coordinator and whole school planning, review and evaluation. Key staff have too limited a role in linking the daily management of the school with its strategic planning. They have insufficient knowledge of the development of key priorities and a limited overview of the whole school, with the result that there is a lack of cohesion in their overall management of developments. For example, the planned developments in marking and target setting are spasmodic and inconsistent in their application, limiting the effectiveness and impact on pupils' learning. Overall longer term strategic planning lacks rigour, and is not based sufficiently on the good monitoring and evaluation of pupil performance by coordinators. Although there is a strong commitment to inclusion in the school, there are varied levels of integration into mainstream classes of pupils from the special educational needs units. Integration is very effective and appropriate in Year 4 and in the reception class but, in Years 1 and 2, inclusion opportunities are insufficient. The daily management of the speech and language units by the school is satisfactory, but specialist teachers and their assistants find that the mechanisms for meaningful decision making for the longer term are still evolving, and currently this limits the coordination of provision. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. This is the responsibility of all staff under the good guidance and leadership of the headteacher.
31. All governors are committed and loyal to the school. They undertake their role conscientiously and fulfill all statutory responsibilities. Governors are linked to classes and pupils know their governors well. The committee structure is well established and enables the governors to make an honest evaluation of key priorities. Governors have a good understanding of the importance of making decisions based on best value judgements. Their recent decision to provide teaching assistants in all classes has already had a positive impact on pupils' learning. The governing body shares the high aspirations of the headteacher and, currently, they are in negotiation with the local education authority to have overall responsibility for the speech and language units. Already, they have been influential in persuading politicians and the directors of learning in Walsall that there are palpable benefits in extending the provision for pupils with speech and language disorders to include junior aged pupils. As a result a second speech and language unit opened at the start of the current school year, offering pupils in Years 3 to 6 the opportunity to complete their primary education at the school. Governors are less successful in longer term strategic planning based on a review of performance and including rigorous financial management, and as a result there are difficulties in structuring the development of their decisions.

32. The school's financial planning is satisfactory. The budget is managed satisfactorily, although with community and educational organisations sharing the building this is not always easy. Careful budgeting for improved ICT equipment has improved the range of teaching styles available to teachers, and offered more opportunities for pupils to use computer generated learning programs. Financial plans for the large budget surplus have included the purchase of interactive whiteboards and the planned development of the playground areas and outdoor learning environment. Daily administration is satisfactory. The office manager knows the families well and parents value her support.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	599,524
Total expenditure	551,057
Expenditure per pupil	2296

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	62,299
Balance carried forward to the next	48,466

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

When the children begin in the school's nursery class, their attainment is broadly average in all areas of learning. The quality of teaching is good with some strong features in both the nursery and reception classes. During the inspection all teaching seen was of a good or very good quality. As a result, children achieve well and most of them will reach the early learning goals in all of the areas of learning. In their personal and social development many children are already exceeding expected levels. A strong feature is the inclusion of all of the children recognised as having special educational needs. They are well supported and involved in all activities. Pupils from the speech and language unit are integrated into the activities very thoughtfully at appropriate times. All children are being well prepared for their future work in the Year 1 class.

The Foundation Stage is effectively led by the deputy headteacher, who works in the Year 2 class. The management of the Foundation Stage provision is very good and is capably provided by the nursery teacher. The nursery teacher is well supported by the reception teacher, support assistants and a group of well-informed voluntary helpers. The nursery teacher ensures that all staff working in the Foundation Stage plan together and this is very successful in ensuring that there is a constant dialogue about the children's progress and achievement. In lessons all staff are involved in the on-going assessments that are a regular, and important feature of checking that pupils are making good progress. The sample of work confirms the on-going nature of the assessments as work is carefully, but rigorously annotated to ensure improvements are being made.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and support staff set out systematic routines that support the children's personal development well
- There is a good balance of teacher directed and independently focused activities

Commentary

33. The children, parents and carers in both the nursery and reception classes are very aware of the staff routines and expectations. Class rules are clearly established which ensure that the children are secure in their understanding. The children happily settle into the classroom routines. In the nursery they self register with confidence. From this they move into sharing books and toys with one another and adults very well. In the reception class the children quietly move on to the carpeted area when they have left their coats in the cloakroom outside the classroom. They respond positively to the teacher's good role model as they answer the register politely and confidently. Once the children move into the wide variety of activities that develop their opportunities across the range of areas of learning, they work and play together well. Every opportunity is taken by staff to support them in reflecting on the effects of their actions on others. The children consequently build upon these opportunities effectively and develop their personal and social skills well. Good relationships are quickly developed and reflect well in the confidence

the children show. They concentrate hard and persevere in working at the well-balanced number of teacher directed and independent activities that serve the children well. These help them to develop as good achievers and to make good progress in their personal, social and emotional skills. Many children are already well on the way to achieving the early learning goals and by the end of the year will have exceeded them.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Basic skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing are being carefully developed
- Teachers and support staff plan, track and assess achievements very thoughtfully
- A good range of activities support children well in developing these skills

Commentary

34. Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop thoroughly children's communication, language and literacy skills. They have clear expectations of the children following their good role modelling. As a consequence the children make good progress and achieve well.
35. The children listen with care to clear instructions before they engage in a good number of directed and independent activities. When the children are working in a one to one situation with the nursery teacher, they are enabled to create imaginative images from block prints because they have listened purposefully. Other children working with a teaching assistant send letters to a puppet about a lost pet because they are able to thoroughly discuss how to compose a letter.
36. There is regular reinforcement of reading skills. Reading skills, for example, are developed well as the children prepare for snack time learning to recognize their own names. The joy of books is promoted with children. They enjoy sitting cosily with their teacher in an attractive book corner and readily they share a book with them.
37. Reading and writing are enhanced in the reception class as the children research information books and copy the outline of a story of a bear hunt. The children are able to do well because they have already listened carefully when involved in an imaginary bear hunt with a teaching assistant. Work on developing understanding of sounds is made more meaningful for the children, when the teacher provides actual resources of things such as raisins and ravioli when the children focus clearly on the "r" sound at the beginning of words

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Practical activities purposefully help children to achieve well
- Good teaching supports children's understanding

Commentary

38. Teachers plan very carefully to make many openings for children to develop understanding of a range of mathematical skills. At registration time in the nursery and reception classes, the teachers encourage children to count actual numbers so that number recognition is clearly understood.
39. In the nursery class the children work singly or in pairs in many of the activities with quiet thoughtfulness. The children are stretched in their learning when they are counting objects from one to five accurately with a teaching assistant. They are able to add them together independently but need systematic prompting from the teaching assistant to subtract them accurately. They achieve this successfully. The nursery teacher assures their accurate understanding of one to one correspondence as the children recognise their name card at snack time. Then they place their name card in a specific spot on the carpet where they sit to eat their fruit. Songs are used successfully to reinforce understanding of numbers. The teacher draws five snowmen on the whiteboard and combines shape recognition with numbers as different shaped hats are drawn after the children have sung “Five jolly snowmen.” The children’s knowledge and understanding are extended as numbers of buttons, eyes and ears are decided upon by them for the teacher to add to the drawing.
40. The use of number rhymes is effectively continued in the reception class. The children listen attentively and join in eagerly as they move along a number line with the kangaroo puppet used by the teacher. This captures and sustains their attention and develops good attitudes to learning about numbers. The practical nature of their learning continues when a good range of resources helps them to understand the differences between long and short distances. Socks, shoes, making paper chains and sand trails are just some of the visually vivid illustrations that are helpful to developing the children’s knowledge and understanding.
41. Staff are continuously questioning perceptively. Through their skilful use of questions they track the children’s growing knowledge and understanding. This monitoring in lessons and assessment of progress ensures the children are achieving successfully.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good first-hand learning opportunities to make learning meaningful
- Children achieve well and are curious about the world around them

Commentary

42. The teachers ensure that the children have good opportunities to achieve well in all the strands of this area of learning. The learning is often usefully integrated with other areas of learning. For example, in the nursery class the children successfully learn to control the computer mouse as they play a number game in pairs. This effectively develops counting understanding at the same time. The children also discover the effect of air on materials as they blow bubbles in the outdoor play area. At the same time directional movement is confidently understood. The discussions led by the teacher and support assistant are well focused as the children become excited by their findings.

Children from the nursery and reception classes make well structured preparations for going on a winter picnic together. They make sensible decisions about what clothes to wear. They prepare sandwiches with the help of teaching assistants so that their awareness of what is needed in order to have a successful time is made clear to them.

43. The children continue to find out about direction as they move in different ways in the reception class bear hunt. They co-operate well and pay good attention to caring for one another as they methodically move in backwards and forwards directions to escape the bear. They make well-planned visits to places such as a local farm. The police visit the school to enhance the children's learning opportunities about their immediate environment.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are a good range of opportunities given to the children to develop their physical skills
- The enthusiasm of the children promotes interest and they achieve well

Commentary

44. In the nursery class, the children have a number of good opportunities to develop a sense of moving safely and adventurously in their outside play area. The outside area is shared with the reception class who also make good use of it. For example, the nursery class explored travelling in different directions following the trail of some floating bubbles. Although excited by this activity the children still respected one another's safety and took care with how they moved around a fairly limited space. Good control of movement is being well developed throughout the Foundation Stage classes.

45. The nursery and reception classes join together for some activities, for example in the school's gymnasium. They explore the use of a large space with confidence and support for one another. The younger children have good role models presented to them by the older ones as well as the teachers and teaching assistants. One assistant carefully records the children's achievement so that effective levels of support can be given when it is needed. However, little support is necessary because of the skilful way that the children control movements on tip-toe, walking, or jogging, judiciously side stepping the stepping stone pads. The children enjoy the lesson together and make positive responses to the varied tasks as they go on to move creatively to music. They use sticks with streamers to point to the way that they intend moving and so achieve good quality in their control and use of space.

46. The children develop smaller physical skills well as they use paintbrushes and pencils with growing precision in their classrooms. They develop good manipulative control by completing jigsaws and using plastic construction kits with care and imagination.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children greatly enjoy this aspect of their learning
- Teachers and support staff plan thoughtfully and give good levels of support

Commentary

47. The teachers provide a wide range of creative experiences, and as a result children achieve well. The experiences arise in imaginative play, story time, art and music. In the nursery class the children are excited by the chance to write to their puppet, who has lost a pet when going on holiday. The teaching assistant working with them carefully structures the imaginative ways in which they describe their knowledge. Other children create imaginative block printing images as they work carefully with the class teacher. They discuss their success in an informed way. They

benefit from the teacher carefully preparing the resources so that they are able to work at the tasks systematically.

48. In the reception class the children make use of an even wider range of materials as they make collages. They cut papers and twist straws with expertise to produce images of how they escaped from the bear on the bear hunt. This links well with their imaginative play.

49. The classes join together for some of their music making. Again the children benefit from role-modelling by the older children's role and adults who work with them. The music teacher leads the lesson expertly with good levels of support from the class teacher. The children enjoy singing together and playing the musical instruments with growing control and skill. Technical language is used as they talk in a well-informed way about their singing as well as about the instruments. Proudly, children give a final performance together to show their good levels of achievement made in the lesson.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Almost half of all pupils have attained above average standards in reading by Year 2
- There is under achievement in writing, particularly by the more able pupils
- Teachers' planning is good, structuring learning very effectively to build on prior attainment

Commentary

50. Standards in English are improving over time and are now closer to national averages in Years 2 and 6. Currently, in Year 2, standards are average in reading and writing, but below average in Year 6. The latest national tests show good improvement on previous results in reading and writing by Year 2, but pupils' performance by Year 6 remains below average. However it is difficult to compare test results each year when there are varied numbers of pupils with special educational needs. In 2003 there were few Year 2 pupils with special educational needs included in the tests, whereas 24 per cent of pupils had special needs in 2002. In Year 6, although test results remained at below average levels, the performance of pupils showed very good improvement on their performance at seven years of age. In 2003 girls performed better in national tests than boys, similar to the national trend, but with a much wider differential by Year 6 than nationally.

51. Pupils have satisfactory skills of communication throughout school. They enjoy debating in the newly formed school council, for example, and share ideas in lessons effectively. By Year 6 pupils are choosing words more precisely to explain their meanings. Pupils enjoy reading and choose books well to satisfy their knowledge for learning or to read for pleasure. The school has a good focus on developing reading skills, which is effective. There is a suitable choice of reading material in all classrooms and every day teaching time is allocated to reading, so that every pupil has the opportunity to read regularly for pleasure. Additionally, each class visits the library each month. The librarian is skilled at encouraging pupils to read for pleasure and through her input pupils' knowledge of children's classics is being augmented. A visit to the theatre encouraged pupils in Years 4 to 6 to read "Tom's Midnight Garden."

52. Standards in writing are below average overall. The development of writing is less well structured than reading. There is no agreed whole school action plan for the development of writing, although all teachers recognise it as a priority. Insufficient attention is given to the teaching of writing skills, followed by a time for pupils to write at length. Pupils are not learning the process of planning, drafting and editing in order to produce a well-presented and well-written piece of work. Although teachers have correctly identified pupils' current writing standards, there is limited monitoring of their performance against agreed targets in order to measure progress. Where targets for improvement are provided, they lack identified small steps to make it meaningful for pupils, and enable success to be more attainable. Some good writing is taking place. In Year 6 for example pupils have their own diary in which they can record personal triumphs, thoughts and feelings. Many pupils particularly enjoy writing poetry, and some write for pleasure at breaktimes or lunchtimes. Poetry submitted by Year 5 pupils was included in a Black Country "Budding Poets" publication. A term's homework project in Year 6 gave them relevant and worthwhile opportunities to write concisely, structuring their writing appropriately. However although older pupils are improving their understanding of writing for different audiences, some have an insufficient breadth of vocabulary from which to choose words. Additionally handwriting styles are inconsistent and pupils as young as Year 1 are already forming their letters inaccurately.
53. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and pupils' achievement in lessons is mostly satisfactory. Lessons are well planned with topics that interest pupils and appropriate resources are provided. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language receive good support in lessons. Teamwork between teachers, teaching assistants, parents and voluntary helpers is very effective in lessons. In one very good lesson, for example, the support assistant in Year 6 recorded each teaching point on the whiteboard, so that constant reminders were available for pupils as the lesson progressed. In less successful and unsatisfactory lessons the challenge of pupils in their writing is insufficient. Spelling is taught inconsistently across the school. Some pupils are expected to learn lists of words, which are too difficult for them to recall or use successfully in their own writing. Spelling lists have too little relationship to pupils' own level of ability.
54. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place and good use of outside agencies has been sought to improve teachers' professional knowledge. However the coordinator is providing insufficient direction to less experienced teachers in writing development. For example, there has been no audit of the use of writing across the curriculum. Currently there is a lack of whole school commitment and vision in this area of the curriculum.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. The school makes satisfactory links to enable pupils to consolidate and use their language and literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum. Particularly good links are made to ICT and pupils word-process their work, search the Internet for information, or practise number and spelling rules. In design and technology, Year 6 pupils have written a good account of their design and make processes, sequencing activities and suitably listing resources. Pupils learn to use bullet points in making notes, or account writing in making a scientific report. However insufficient use is made of the various subjects of the curriculum to develop and extend writing skills. For example, a worksheet in which pupils give one word answers or phrases is not developing pupil's ability to construct sentences. The coordinator has not yet monitored the use of writing across the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by Year 6 and well above average in the latest national tests
- The teaching is good and pupils are keenly interested in their learning
- There is not sharp enough analysis of performance data, or marking, to allow targets to be set more accurately

Commentary

56. The good start that the pupils make in the Foundation Stage is built upon effectively in Years 1 and 2. As they move through the school the pupils continue to achieve well because they are interested in the imaginative way that they are taught mathematics. The end of Year 6 accelerates the pupils' standards as a result of the very good teaching. Consequently the pupils achieve very well and standards are above average. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. The work is matched closely to pupils' needs so that those with special educational needs, including the special units, achieve well.
57. As the pupils move through the school a strong knowledge and understanding of the numbers system is well established. Teachers use accurate mathematical vocabulary so that pupils are immersed in its use and respond in similar language. Most lessons begin with briskly conducted mental mathematical sessions. These develop the pupils' speed and accuracy while confirming a secure understanding of place value. Occasionally the pace is slower as the pupils need to consolidate their knowledge of multiplication tables. The pupils' growing knowledge and understanding are supported by the practical nature of tasks in Years 1 and 2. For example, Year 2 excitedly confirm that digits develop knowledge and understanding of place value as they play a well devised dice game. This method of learning effectively continues in junior classes. For example, in Year 3, the pupils are able to explain accurately the use of bridging techniques as they work out addition and subtraction exercises on the interactive whiteboard. Problem solving exercises help the pupils to develop skills with manipulating numbers accurately in Year 4 and 5 classes. These experiences support the pupils well in achieving well and preparing them confidently for work in Year 6. In Year 6 the pupils' progress in learning is accelerated. They are able to work with very good levels of accuracy and achieve very well as they deal confidently in thousands as they develop knowledge and understanding of place value. Other aspects of mathematics are covered well throughout the school.
58. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school with some very good teaching in Year 6. Teachers generally plan with care. They devise interesting tasks and resource them thoughtfully, for example through the good use of the interactive whiteboards. There is a strong commitment to all pupils achieving well through teachers and support staff working closely together to help the pupils grow in confidence. For example, in Year 6, the class teacher and teaching assistant interact meaningfully, as the assistant deliberately miscalculates as numbers move along a number line in order to allow the pupils to correct accurately. This strength in the school's provision is not always well supported by sharp enough analysis of assessment information. As a result not all teachers consistently set appropriate targets for pupils. There is also some inconsistency in the application of the school's good marking policy, which has been noted through the monitoring carried out by the very good coordinator. This is unhelpful in supporting the pupils understanding of what they need to do in order to improve upon their work.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. The pupils have a number of good opportunities to use and develop their mathematical understanding in other subjects. They put skills that they have learned into practice. For instance, they use measuring ability in design and technology activities. Graphs are used to record data accurately in science lessons.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to science
- There has been good improvement in standards over time, although the achievement of boys is insufficient
- Opportunities for pupils to write scientific reports is limited

Commentary

60. Standards in science are average in Years 2 and 6. There has been good improvement in the standards being achieved in Year 6 when compared with national data and that for similar schools. However, while the girls have improved above the national trend for the past three years, the performance of the boys has been below the national trend. The school has identified this weakness and has begun to employ strategies that enable the boys to make better progress. In Year 6 these strategies are well in evidence and, challenge and high expectation, matched by clear targets for time and effort, are having a positive effect on the boys' learning.

61. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Planning gives a good direction to lessons. In the very best lessons teachers set high expectations and challenge the pupils' learning with purposeful questioning of their knowledge and understanding. Lessons are enriched by the creative use of the interactive whiteboards to assist learning. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and behaviour management reflects this. However, in the one unsatisfactory lesson observed good relationships between pupils were not evident and, as a result, the pupils' learning was adversely affected. Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support pupils' learning. They are knowledgeable and skilled in using good questioning techniques. They establish good relationships with the pupils. This is particularly successful with pupils with special educational needs including those with behavioural difficulties. These pupils are enabled to take a full and active part in the lessons and achieve well.

62. Pupils enjoy the lessons. Pupils in Year 2 enjoyed using their senses to explore ice balloons and, by careful observation, were able to suggest why the balloons had burst after freezing. Skills of observation and deduction while studying micro-organisms, were fully used by the pupils in Year 6 when examining the decomposition of a variety of foods.

63. The subject coordinator has a clear vision of how to improve standards further and works hard to implement her ideas. She monitors the pupils' progress well and works with other teachers to improve the quality of teaching. Currently there is insufficient detailed analysis of performance data to evaluate the school's performance. However, the coordinator has identified the future direction of the subject accurately and has devised a good action plan to address the issues raised.

In particular, opportunities for writing scientific reports are precisely identified and are to be developed. While the worksheets usually provided are appropriate for recording what they have observed, the pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities for writing.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make rapid progress, and by Year 6 they are achieving above average standards
- There is a wide range of learning opportunities, which include the use of ICT skills.
- Insufficient use is made of assessment information to ensure pupils are challenged effectively

Commentary

64. Standards are improving in ICT over time, because pupils are having greater access to machines. Currently pupils achieve satisfactorily by Year 2 and have average standards, but by Year 6 they have made good progress and most pupils attain above average standards. In Years 3 to 6 opportunities for work in ICT are planned into most lessons. Specialist skills are taught regularly to all pupils following a planned programme of work. All pupils are confident in their use of computers, CD players or listening centres. By Year 2 pupils can write a brief description of themselves, using the capital lock for capital letters, adding full stops and mostly using the space bar. This work links well to the development of their writing skills, for example in understanding of punctuation. By Year 6 pupils use machines competently. In some very good work during the inspection pupils worked independently or in pairs to create a storybook and by the end of the lesson many of them had developed a three page storybook using a logo program. In demonstrations at the end of the lessons they showed that they could incorporate both graphics and a spoken text successfully to make an animated script.

65. The quality of teaching is good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Teaching is good for all pupils taught in the speech and language units. In Years 1 and 2 pupils are not excited by ICT, partially because there is limited evidence of ICT on classroom displays or in pupils' books. A scrutiny of their work shows that by Year 2 they have learned about data collection by making a database and graph of their favourite fruits and animals and have learnt to read information from a block graph of their results. They are being encouraged to make their work more interesting to the reader by adding a border or graphics to the Christmas story. For less able Year 2 pupils, limited writing skills are restricting progress in word-processing tasks and some Year 2 pupils have poor mouse control. By Year 6 most pupils have a good understanding of all strands of the ICT programme appropriate for their age. Pupils are allowed to work on computers and laptops out of lessons to develop projects of their own. Links with other education providers has enabled them to be included in joint projects, for example on multi-page work with Logotron, or on a school website with Microsoft. Assessment of coverage of the curriculum is undertaken in all year groups. However it gives insufficient details of pupils' achievements and, as a result, in some classes assessment has limited use in ensuring that all pupils are provided with appropriately challenging work.

66. Pupils in the special needs units work happily and confidently on machines. There is a suitable range of software to extend their numeracy and literacy skills. Pupils in Year 4, and in the

reception class work alongside their peer group for many lessons and ICT supports the development of knowledge and skill in other subjects.

67. Leadership and management of ICT are good. The coordinator has a good expertise and provides innovative leadership of the subject. He leads by example and through his enthusiasm motivates pupils to learn. However, although he has monitored the development of the subject across the school, he has made only satisfactory progress in ensuring that there is appropriate recognition and development of the subject in Years 1 and 2. There has been insufficient guidance to enable less confident teachers to use computers creatively as a learning tool.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

68. There are good links made in the use of ICT across the curriculum, particularly in Years 4 to 6. Additionally the ICT coordinator is encouraging pupils to use ICT very successfully in other settings. For example, pupils in Year 6 regularly send their homework to school by email from public library computers. Within school there are examples of good work linking art to ICT. Some pupils have created very good quality designs in the style of Paul Klee based on their earlier study of his work on an Internet gallery.

HUMANITIES

It was not possible to make an overall judgement on provision or standards in **geography** because of insufficient inspection evidence. A scrutiny of the work in the exercise books indicates that, by the age of 11, pupils are achieving standards that are in line with expectations. The evidence available shows that the overall subject planning throughout the school is good and takes an appropriate account of the national guidance.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good in Years 3 to 6
- The pupils maintain good working attitudes

Commentary

69. Standards in history by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in all year groups. The standards achieved are similar to those achieved at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress through the well-targeted support provided by the teaching assistants. There are good levels of integration and inclusion between pupils in Years 3 to 6.

70. History makes a positive contribution to the pupils' literacy and information and communication technology skills and development. There are opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in history and to use computers to research for information or record their findings.

71. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good. In a very good lesson in Year 6 the teacher's enthusiasm for, and knowledge of, the subject enhanced the pupils' learning. The imaginative use of the interactive whiteboard, role-play and the skills of the teaching assistant all contributed to

the success of the lesson. Whole class and discussions in “talking pairs” were used effectively to build on the pupils’ understanding of the past and develop their interpretation of historical information. Throughout the school the quality of planning is good and lessons are well structured.

72. The leadership of the subject is good. The coordinator monitors teachers’ planning and has opportunities to observe colleagues in class. The analysis of this information is used to formulate the subject Action Plan for future development.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning, which reflects the Walsall Agreed Syllabus, is clear and used effectively by the teachers
- The coordinator has a clear vision for the future direction of the subject
- More opportunities for pupils to express themselves in writing need to be identified

Commentary

73. By the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils reach standards that are in line with those expected for their age as set out in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and their achievement is satisfactory. This is similar to the judgement made at the previous inspection. Pupils enjoy the subject. This was evident when the pupils in Year 6 thoughtfully considered and discussed the similarities and differences of Christianity, Islam and Judaism as well as suggesting reasons. They were able to name key religious artefacts and practices accurately and describe their functions. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

74. The three lessons observed, two in the infants and one in the juniors, were satisfactory. Lesson planning was clear and effectively used by the teachers. Teachers encouraged their pupils to discuss their thoughts and feelings, for example in Year 2 while talking about the Good Samaritan. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to express their ideas in writing.

75. The newly appointed coordinator has a clear vision and action plan for the future development of the subject and the enthusiasm to achieve it.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

As no lessons were seen during the inspection no firm judgements can be made on provision or the quality of teaching in **art and design**. Nevertheless a scrutiny of teachers planning shows that teachers have good knowledge and pupils are taught skills well. The planned curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to develop a wide range of skills. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that by Year 2 standards are in line with those expected nationally and by the end of Year 6 standards are above average. Throughout Years 3 to 6 pupils achieve well through a well-planned programme that builds successfully on their current skills in a range of media. There are many good examples of creative and imaginative work in Year 6 in all aspects of the art curriculum. Particularly commendable are the designs created by Year 6 pupils for use in graphic programs in ICT lessons. Displays around the school show the good rates of progress of many pupils and rewards their achievements, while providing inspiration and encouragement to all pupils. The school's very positive links with the Creative Partnership project make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning. An excellent map of Walsall, made in a ceramic and metal sculpture, is a good illustration of the strength of these links. The pupils in Year 6 are proud of their work which is of a very high standard. Other work includes good quality ink and colour wash sketches and descriptive written observations of spectators at Walsall F.C., resulting in an impressive terra cotta army of supporters. The two coordinators lead the subject well so that they make a positive contribution to the standards the pupils' achieve. The school has improved standards since the previous inspection.

Two lessons were seen in **physical education** and consequently it is not possible to make a secure judgement on provision, standards or the overall quality of the teaching and learning. The evidence from those lessons, together with discussions with the coordinator and a scrutiny of planning shows that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met well. The school has the advantage of a swimming pool on site. Although it was not possible to observe any swimming lessons it is clear that the school achieves the appropriate standards in that aspect of physical education. Additionally, the school has a large, separate gymnasium. This is well used by all classes, including the Foundation Stage. The resources have a direct impact upon the progress that the pupils make as they move through the school. The good links established with the local secondary sports college are generating further developments to effectively raise standards. Exchange of staff and resources are two significant measures that are promoted by the newly appointed coordinator. Her clear action plan is supporting further good practice in the school and is a result of well structured leadership and management arrangements. A particularly good feature is the inclusion of pupils from both speech and language units with classes in their year groups. Special needs pupils are often able to make very good contributions to the achievements being made. They do so by sharing their efforts with other pupils as examples of good work. This gives them great pleasure as well as raising their self-esteem.

Music

The school's provision for music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6
- Teaching and learning are very good and pupils achieve very well
- Singing and instrumental tuition feature strongly to ensure a very good improvement since the last inspection

Commentary

76. The pupils are keenly interested and are very enthusiastic about music lessons. In consequence, they achieve very well throughout the school. Since the last inspection there has been a good development in music with a new coordinator giving impetus to the subject. Standards are now above those expected at the end of Years 2 and 6.
77. The lessons have varied content throughout the school so that all of the requirements of the curriculum are being covered effectively. The pupils perform and appraise their work confidently. They learn to compose from an early age and develop their skills very well in this respect. They sing with growing attention to the complexity of the songs that include partner, echo and part songs. In Year 2, for example, current learning is built upon previous learning systematically. The pupils use a wide variety of instruments very sensibly in co-operative groups as they create dynamics and tempo in sound pictures. The pupils compose the sound pictures as they make their own apt choices of instruments that accompany the story of “The dark, dark wood.” Their performance is well supported by an expressive reading of the story. In Years 4, 5 and 6 learning about music making is enhanced for some pupils as they learn to play violins, trombones and trumpets with peripatetic music teachers. In Year 6 the focus is on performance and appraisal as the pupils echo sing a series of street cries. The musical notation is shared with them on the overhead projector, which develops their knowledge and understanding of how music is successfully composed. The street cries are quickly developed in one lesson in a complex pattern of part singing. Five different part songs are sung successfully when pupils produce high quality singing. Good attention is paid to tempo as well as rhythm and duration. The performance is briefly but carefully appraised to complete the pupils’ learning.
78. The music coordinator teaches all classes. The subject is well resourced. The quality of teaching is very good. All class teachers and support staff are also included in the lessons and provide good role models as they join in the music making in a variety of ways. The music teacher plans work very thoroughly and shares planning with class teachers. Class teachers are then able to follow up the work with good measures of confidence. The subject is led very effectively.
79. Pupils from the speech and language units are fully involved in the music-making in the school. The school choir performs in the local music festivals as well in the local community. This enhances the opportunities that the pupils have to show their skills as performers.

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good cross-curricular links provide relevance to all activities
- Assessment is insufficient to ensure that learning builds successfully on prior attainment

Commentary

80. Pupils have very positive attitudes to design and technology projects. “I cant wait to do woodwork” had written a Year 6 pupil, and standards produced in the lesson showed that the enthusiasm and interest of all pupils is raising standards. Standards by Years 2 and 6 are satisfactory. The limited teaching time allocated to the subject restricts rates of progress overall. Nevertheless in lessons pupils achieve well and are proud of their completed work. Pupils announced “I’m good at it” and another adds “I’m kind of proud and pleased with my pencil case”.

81. Pupils undertake work in design and technology in blocks of activity, completing a programme of work set out in the national guidelines. There is full coverage of all strands of the primary programme and, additionally, work that extends learning in other subjects. In Year 1 pupils have made houses from junk materials as part of a topic on buildings in the local environment. In Year 2 good quality work has produced a shadow puppet play of a visit to a Sikh temple and food technology activities culminated with parents visiting the Year 2 café to taste the final results. There is evidence of sound progress as pupils move through the school. In Year 3 pupils have made simple moving monsters, and by Year 5 have examined more complicated methods of movement in toys prior to making toys of their own. By Year 6 pupils have a sound understanding of the design, make and review process.
82. Teachers plan topics well. Good use is made of outside expertise in strengthening the delivery of each project. A blacksmith demonstrated to pupils how he bends metal, and a joiner taught pupils appropriate technical vocabulary as he helped them make their own wooden pencil cases.
83. There is a new coordinator who is still developing their understanding of current strengths and weaknesses. Already it has been recognised that a uniform method of assessment would improve the continuity in pupils' learning. Leadership and management are currently satisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE) AND CITIZENSHIP

Although the curriculum and teaching of PSHE is satisfactory, there are some inconsistencies of approach across the school. Recently a programme of study has been introduced for each year group, but it is too early to judge its effectiveness. A start has been made in developing the pupils' understanding of the need to become active citizens of their world. Circle times in classes are helping pupils to address pertinent issues competently as well as providing opportunities for developing their speaking and listening skills. In developing this aspect of pupils' learning, the school is preparing them well for future stages of their education.

A recently appointed coordinator for PHSE has drawn up a brief, but suitably direct action plan. This thoughtfully highlights the need to develop citizenship strategies in the school's curriculum. A first step has been taken with the establishment of an effective school council. This involves pupils from classes throughout the school who have elected their own chair person and secretary. The PHSE coordinator attends meetings but, appropriately, does not influence discussions and decisions made by the council. The work of the group is in its infancy but already shows that it is addressing the needs of the pupils effectively. It is currently considering plans to enhance the playground facilities.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

