

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. JOSEPH'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY

Sutton Coldfield

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103473

Headteacher: Mr. P. Daly

Lead inspector: Mrs. V. Davies

Dates of inspection: 28th June -1st July 2004

Inspection number: 257758

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Boys and girls
Number on roll:	287
School address:	Little Sutton Lane Sutton Coldfield West Midlands
Postcode:	B75 6PB
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. J. Diamond
Date of previous inspection:	8 th June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a bigger than average Roman Catholic primary school for children between the ages of four and eleven. The pupils transfer to local secondary schools at the end of Year 6. Nearly all pupils are Catholics and live in the local area and are almost all of white British heritage. Pupils come from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds and free school meals eligibility is low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average. Attainment on entry to the reception class is broadly average. The school received an achievement award in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20350	Vivien Davies	Lead inspector	Mathematics, art and design, design and technology
9510	Christine Murray-Watson	Lay inspector	
19387	Mari Powell	Team inspector	English, information and communication technology and music
29989	Pauline Goodsell	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, science, history, geography and physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective** school that through good teaching consistently attains high standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve very well. The headteacher, working closely with key staff, offers good leadership and works well with the governing body to manage and improve the school. It has a very strong religious ethos and is well supported by parents and the community. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school in every subject and promotes very good progress
- Pupils have a very positive attitude to school and work hard. They are well mannered, play very well together and enjoy very good relationships with their teachers and fellow pupils
- The school is well managed and its performance data is used very effectively to promote high academic standards
- The results for able pupils well exceed those of similar schools
- Classroom support assistants provide very good support, particularly to pupils with special educational needs
- Children in the reception class make a good start to their school life
- The school ethos is very strong and the leadership is very committed to supporting pupils' spiritual development within the framework of a Catholic set of values
- The predominant teaching style is instructional which tends to restrict the opportunities that pupils have to reason, debate and think for themselves
- Although parental involvement with the school is a strong feature of school life, the school does not provide sufficient opportunity for dialogue with parents. This mirrors the lack of formal consultation with pupils.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Academic standards have been raised. In response to the key issues of the last report, outdoor learning opportunities for the reception class have improved. Assessment is currently well established and is very good. The governing body now monitors standards and pupils' progress carefully, though they no longer make arrangements to visit classrooms.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils are achieving very well and standards are well above average. In the reception class, the children are on track to reach the goals set in national guidance and many will exceed them.

In Year 2 pupils are attaining, year after year, high, and sometimes very high, standards in reading and mathematics. Pupils, including the most able, also achieve very good results compared to similar schools. They achieve high standards also in writing. They have very good phonic knowledge and

read regularly in school and at home. Many of the pupils relish books and can recall stories and poems which they have enjoyed with excitement and pleasure. They are very good at mental arithmetic and show good understanding of basic mathematical routines. They use writing purposefully in many other subjects. Those with special educational needs are given very good support to help them achieve well.

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

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.

A - among the top 5% of schools in the country*

In Year 6 in English, mathematics and science pupils achieve very well and consistently reach high standards compared to national results. Pupils, including the more able, perform very well compared to those in similar schools. In particular, pupils are very literate, have well developed tastes and have a very good knowledge of books and authors. Their writing is powerful and a joy to read. In mathematics pupils reach similarly high standards. Standards achieved in the other subjects of the curriculum are above average except in music and art and design in which they are well above average and in physical education in which they are average.

Nearly all pupils enjoy school and there are very good levels of attendance and punctuality. Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils work very hard and value the way the school celebrates their successes, knowing that merit certificates and other rewards are not awarded lightly, but represent honest achievement and commitment to learning. **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural achievement is very good** and enhanced by the school's commitment to aesthetic and creative subjects and its strong Catholic connections.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching is good overall; in all classes thorough, knowledgeable teaching supports pupils' learning. Classroom assistants offer very good support, particularly to pupils with special educational needs. However, even though teaching is successful, not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to think for themselves in lessons. The curriculum provides all pupils with good opportunities for learning. A good range of cultural, artistic and musical opportunities enriches it outside the normal lessons. However, after school sporting opportunities are limited at present. The care, guidance and support of pupils are good, but there are no opportunities for pupils to formally contribute to the school's development, for example through a school council. Children in the reception class are well cared for. Parents support their children well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school is good overall. The headteacher has a clear vision linked firmly to the school's Catholic ethos. He leads the team well. The Foundation Stage is effectively led by the deputy headteacher. Co-ordinators work very well together as a team to plan, monitor and improve the curriculum. Governors know the school well and play an important role in monitoring results but do not

make arrangements to visit classrooms. Administration of the school, including its financial management, is very good.

PARENTS AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The great majority of parents think well of the school and recognise the good quality of opportunities it offers. Many are concerned about the impact of long term staff absence on their children but most recognise that the school has managed the practical aspects of the situation as well as it can. They value their good relationships with teachers but some would like a greater dialogue with the school. Pupils enjoy school, their friendships and the activities. They value their teachers and feel very cared for.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- Improve the level and quality of consultation with parents and pupils
- Broaden the range of teaching approaches to promote a more enquiring approach to learning

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall pupils achieve well and reach high standards. The school is doing well to maintain its standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In 2003 results in Year 2 and 6 in English, mathematics and science were well ahead of the national average
- In Year 2 the reading and mathematics results were in the top five per cent of national results
- Able pupils and those with special educational needs also achieve very well
- Children in the Foundation Stage make a good start
- In Year 6 standards in the foundation subjects are above average in most subjects and in music and art and design they are well above average

Commentary

1. When the children enter the school assessments show that overall they are of broadly average attainment. The good provision in the Foundation Stage enables the children to make a good start to school and they achieve well. The majority of the children reach the early learning goals in all six areas of learning by the end of reception and many exceed them.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.8 (17.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.1 (14.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.9 (16.5)	16.3 (16.5)

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

2. In Year 2 tests pupils are attaining, year after year, very high standards in reading and mathematics. Pupils, including the most able, also achieve very good results compared to similar schools. They have very good phonic knowledge and read regularly in school and at home. Many of the pupils relish books and can recall stories and poems which they have enjoyed with excitement and pleasure. They are very good at mental arithmetic and show good understanding of basic mathematical routines. They achieve high standards also in writing. They use writing purposefully in many other subjects. Speaking and listening skills are very good. Science results are similarly high. Those with special educational needs are given very good support to help them achieve very well. All pupils are doing very well and inspection evidence confirms the high standard of work and pupils' very good achievement.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.6 (31.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.6 (30.8)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.4 (30.4)	28.6 (28.3)

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

- Progress accelerates in the oldest classes and inspectors confirm that pupils do very well and reach high standards compared to national expectations. In English, pupils achieve very well and consistently reach high standards. Their writing is powerful and a joy to read. They are very literate, have well developed tastes and have a very good knowledge of books and authors. In mathematics, pupils reach similarly high standards. In both subjects their results are very good when compared to their results at seven. Results for more able pupils in English and mathematics also well exceed those achieved in similar schools. In science pupils achieve above average results. More able pupils results compare very well with similar schools. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and do very well.
- In most other subjects of the curriculum pupils achieve well and reach above average standards. In music and art very thorough teaching enables pupils to achieve well above average standards by the end of Year 6. In physical education pupils reach standards that are in line with those achieved nationally.
- Standards have improved since the last inspection in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design and technology. In the other subjects standards have been maintained.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils behave very well, both in lessons and around the school. They work very hard and take full advantage of the learning opportunities offered to them. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Levels of attendance are very good.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very committed to learning and work very hard
- The rewards system and adult example work well to promote hard work, care for others and high standards of behaviour

Commentary

- The pupils respond very well to the good teaching they receive. They work very hard during their lessons and even at a young age they are able to display good powers of concentration throughout each lesson. This has a positive impact on the amount of progress that can be made and the standards being achieved. They appreciate the way the school celebrates their successes, knowing that merit certificates and other rewards are not awarded lightly, but represent honest achievement and commitment to learning.

7. Behaviour is of a consistently good standard and relationships between the pupils and with adults in the school are friendly and polite. The pupils respond well to the good role models provided by their class teachers, treating each other with considerable courtesy and mutual respect. Instances were seen of older pupils taking care of younger ones, in an environment where the great majority of the pupils feel secure and confident that they will be treated in a fair way. There were five fixed term exclusions last academic year.

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	287	5	

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

8. Provision for the pupils’ personal development is of a high order. They are encouraged to find a strong sense of identity within the spiritual, moral and social context of the Roman Catholic Church. Links with Catholic charities play a major part in helping the pupils to develop a sense of social responsibility and the significant part played in the life of the school by collective acts of worship, regularly attended by other family members, supports spiritual development within a wider context than just school life. The emphasis given to the creative and expressive arts within the curriculum, as well as opportunities to study the different cultures represented within British society, mean that cultural development is of a similarly high order.
9. It is evident that both the pupils and their families value their time in school and that regular and punctual attendance is the accepted norm. The pupils line up promptly to come into school at the start of the day, and after lunch, and there is no delay to the start of lessons.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.9	School data	0.0
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall the quality of education is good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good overall and pupils enjoy their learning. Their very good achievements in English underpin their success in other subjects. Assessment is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school and in every subject teaching is consistently good and promotes very good progress. In particular, teachers are very thorough, systematic and persistent so that pupils' learning is very secure
- Assessment systems are well established and regular. Outcomes are monitored and strengths and weaknesses acted upon
- Well qualified classroom assistants give pupils very good support so pupils with special educational needs do well
- At present the range of everyday teaching styles does not sufficiently encourage speculation, reflection and discussion.

Commentary

10. Teaching is a strong feature of this school and the quality has been maintained since the last inspection. Subject knowledge is strong because subject co-ordinators provide very clear guidance and give good support so teachers are well prepared. In consequence teachers can explain clearly because they understand the subject matter. Teachers include very many opportunities for pupils to use and see the basic subject vocabulary. Links between subjects are well made. In particular there are many opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills for independent recording. Teachers understand the importance of thorough teaching of the basic skills, so in Year 4 the teacher devoted some part of her lesson to very good oral work on the number facts which could be deduced from a multiplication sum. She continually assessed her pupils as she taught to make sure that their learning was secure and made use of a simple visual aid to provide a good visual reference as an aid to memory and understanding

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	8 (18%)	29 (66%)	6 (14%)	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. Teachers' expectations are high. They insist on pupils' full attention as they teach. They expect high standards of presentation and hard work from their pupils. In consequence, pupils behave well and concentrate on their work. As pupils work on their tasks, teachers are therefore free to concentrate on offering very good support to pupils who have queries or difficulties. Many lessons are conducted at a rapid pace and time is very well used. This approach is particularly effective with able pupils who grasp the point quickly. In many English and mathematics lessons very good classroom assistants provide very good additional support for pupils who find learning difficult.
12. Teachers focus well on clear instructional teaching. Pupils are expected to achieve high standards and work hard. However, although this style of teaching is very successful in maintaining high standards in

tests it does limit pupils' opportunities to think independently. In some lessons very good opportunities are provided for pupils to pursue their own ideas. Sometimes, when teaching is satisfactory, teachers do not involve pupils as fully as they might in making decisions about their learning or in considering how they might solve problems. In a science lesson, for example, the design of the experiment to test forces was provided by the teacher though pupils were able to organise their own approach to recording. At times teachers miss opportunities to offer tasks that allow pupils to take an individual approach, and this is reflected in the similar work that pupils of the same age sometimes produce.

13. In the reception class teaching is good so the children make a good start to school, enjoy their learning and achieve well. The teaching of basic skills is well planned and organised and results in the good achievement in learning to read, write and in number work. The classroom assistant very effectively supports individual and group activities and makes a significant contribution to helping the children to behave well and concentrate on the carefully planned and challenging learning tasks. The adults help the children to feel secure, gain confidence and communicate well with others.
14. Accurate assessment systems are well established in the school in most subjects and teachers use the information well to monitor progress and to identify areas in which pupils need extra help. Marking is carried out regularly. Teachers often write encouraging remarks. However, they do not often make written comment on the small adjustments that pupils can make to improve future work. There is regular homework and awards for learning tables.

The curriculum

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that ensures that the pupils acquire the skills and knowledge appropriate for the primary stage of education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for developing literacy skills is well planned and broad so that the pupils confidently apply these skills in many areas of their work
- Arrangements for the transition from the Foundation Stage to Year 1 of the National Curriculum and from Year 6 to the secondary phase, are well thought out so that the pupils are confident when they begin each new stage of their learning
- The range of enrichment experiences is broad in many areas, but could be broadened further in sport
- Resources of staff and materials are good
- The accommodation is well organised, attractive and generally used well

Commentary

15. Since the last inspection, the curriculum has maintained its good features and improved provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and for the physical area of learning in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum is well managed to ensure that new learning builds upon earlier stages. The staff team works very closely together to ensure that the challenges and demands of the curriculum match the stage of learning of each pupil. Thus, the pupils with special educational needs are well catered for because their needs are accurately

identified through rigorous assessment procedures led by the very experienced SENCO. Appropriate support is then provided and communication between members of staff, parents, and, where appropriate, specialists, is well done and informative.

16. The school has devised its own strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. These are closely based on the model suggested in the national guidance for these areas of learning. However, in the case of literacy, for example, particular emphasis is given to the teaching of a wide range of writing skills. The school has improved the range of opportunities for the pupils to acquire and apply skills in ICT but there is still room for these to be applied with greater imagination, for example, in science. However, the library provision and the Internet are well used to support investigative work, for example, as a background for the art curriculum and history. Many of the older pupils are now ready to undertake a greater proportion of their learning through using their independent enquiry and problem-solving skills more regularly.
17. The good provision for the children in the Foundation Stage means that they get a start of high quality to their education. The children have access to a range of well-planned and interesting learning activities. The classroom is well organised and provides a motivating environment that encourages the children to become involved in the learning opportunities provided. The key issue from the last inspection to improve the outdoor learning experiences has been satisfactorily addressed. The children have good access to the playground to use wheeled toys and the fenced outside area is well used to give children access to a range of interesting and enjoyable learning activities.
18. Visits and visitors make a strong contribution to many areas of learning. The aesthetic curriculum is well developed. Artists visit school and are a source of occasional inspiration for pupils. Many pupils have opportunities to learn a range of instruments and participate in musical performances in and outside school, for example, at Symphony Hall in Birmingham. Opportunities for taking part in music and drama productions are entered into with zest. This was the case during a school assembly led by children in the Foundation Stage. During the inspection, the pupils in Year 5 undertook an interesting geographical survey during a well organised visit. Older pupils benefit both socially and educationally from a residential trip. The school has recently started a good citizenship programme for older pupils.
19. The accommodation provides for classrooms of adequate size but also additional areas remain from the time the school was a combined middle and lower school. The ICT suite is a valuable resource but it is very cramped and class demonstrations are difficult to manage. The youngest children have an indoor role play area but are also able to extend some of their indoor activities outside to a designated safe area contiguous to their classroom.
20. Resources are generally good. The ICT suite is about to be re-equipped and all classrooms will then have the surplus computers. The library has a good range of stock and further provision is planned for. The resources for art and music make a good contribution to the quality of work in these subjects. The teachers and teaching assistants themselves are a driving force in raising standards and represent a very valuable resource.

Care, guidance and support

Good procedures ensure that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment. There is proper provision for child protection and the staff work hard to ensure that individual care and welfare are well supported. Very good levels of academic monitoring help to support the high standards being achieved. While the pupils' views are valued, the culture of the school does not yet give them a formal voice in its development.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Induction at Foundation Stage is very good
- The staff's efforts to ensure continuity of provision during the period of staff absence was very good
- The quality of relationships with pupils is very good and embraces their families, who are also part of the faith community
- There are no formal arrangements for seeking pupils' views

Commentary

21. The school has very good arrangements for children when they start school. Informal visits, including a "Teddy Bears' Picnic" contribute to this, as well a good level of information for the parents. These include liaison with the nurseries and other settings, children and parents visiting the classes and meetings for parents. The teacher has daily opportunities for the exchange of information between parents, carers and herself. There are good arrangements for the children to leave school safely in the care of a known adult. Adults who work in the school know the children well and establish good relationships with them. This encourages the children to try hard and to behave very well and promotes the good achievement seen.
22. In the last year, staff absences for a variety of reasons have meant that a significant number of pupils have had more than one class teacher and some pupils have had several changes in a relatively short space of time. The determination of the headteacher and his staff to minimise the impact of this on the care and progress of the pupils has meant that standards have not suffered. As far as possible, individual care of the pupils has been maintained along with close monitoring of their progress. The deputy headteacher has played a key role in maintaining pastoral care.
23. Within the context of the Roman Catholic faith, there is a strong sense of shared vision across the school. This has a positive impact on the relationships that have developed between the staff, the pupils and their families. As a result, there is a sense of common purpose that is both supportive and challenging. Every pupil is encouraged to aspire to the highest possible standards, both of personal development and academic achievement. This is similar to the last inspection.
24. While pupils have easy access to staff members, including the headteacher, and their views are canvassed on a range of topics, the school does not give them any formal voice in its development. The opportunity to make a case for introducing changes that they see as potentially beneficial goes no further than informal discussion. As a result, there is some frustration amongst some of the older pupils and opportunities to develop an awareness of how democracy can work are lost.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has maintained good links with the parents and its two local Roman Catholic parishes since the last inspection. The links that have been established with local nurseries and the main receiving secondary school are similarly good.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Parental involvement in the school is a strong feature of school life
 - Relationships with the two Roman catholic parishes are very strong
 - Some parents are dissatisfied with the quality of their dialogue with the school
25. Because of the status of St Joseph's as a Roman Catholic "Aided" school, there is a strong sense of ownership by the parents and a willingness to be involved in the life of the school. Many parents, often with younger siblings, attend the acts of collective worship held in the school and many families will meet at their parish churches. Parents and grandparents come in to school to hear readers and to contribute craft skills and generally support the class teachers. School trips also attract valuable parental support. There is a Parents and Friends Association which raises considerable funds. For example, having helped to pay for a new playground, they are now actively raising money to equip it with large play equipment and benches. Good relationships are maintained since the previous inspection.
26. Most parents have high aspirations for their children and offer good support for their learning, whether through support of homework or through ensuring regular and prompt attendance. At an act of worship led by young pupils during the inspection week, for example, nearly every child had at least one family member present. This very positive encouragement to do well and to work hard underpins the high standards being achieved at all levels.
27. Despite this very positive picture, there is a significant minority of parents who feel strongly that the school could do more to address their concerns and that their children have not been able to achieve to the best of their ability. Some of this dissatisfaction stems from a difficult period in the school's recent history when it has had to cope with considerable staff absence and the necessary changes of class teachers as a result. Amongst this minority, there is also a feeling that they do not know enough about the taught curriculum, and that what is being taught limits opportunities for less formal activities for the children.
28. Evidence indicates that these perceptions are largely unfounded. Parents are regularly sent good quality information about what is to be taught each term, and this includes information about creative activities, such as music and art, as well. Class teachers readily make themselves available for informal contacts at the start and end of the school day, in addition to a programme of regular meetings with parents to discuss their child's progress. What appears to be lacking, however, is a sense of real dialogue between these parents and the school management. As with the lack of formal structures within which the pupils can express their views, parents too can feel limited, and sometimes frustrated, about the way their views are considered. This can be exacerbated by a lack of feedback, for example, following the school's recent questionnaire.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance are good overall.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Management in the school is very successfully devolved so subject co-ordinators play an important role in monitoring their subjects
- The headteacher-deputy head partnership is very strong; both are committed to the achievement of high standards

- The governing body knows the school well and monitors standards and pupil progress carefully; however, they do not make formal arrangements to visit classrooms
- Communication during the period of staff absence did not satisfy some parents who felt that their concerns were not properly heard.

Commentary

29. The leadership of the school has a very clear commitment to helping pupils achieve high academic standards. The headteacher and the deputy form a strong team. They are also committed to developing the school's Catholic ethos, supporting pupils in their spiritual journey and maintaining the school's strong links with the two parishes and role as a centre of worship. The deputy headteacher offers strong pastoral support and daily informal link for parents as she is always available on the playground before and after school. The school is very rigorous in its evaluation of its academic performance and this is reflected in the school development plan which is largely curriculum based. However, the same rigour is not always applied to other aspects that contribute to the quality of educational provision.
30. Subject leaders work closely together to develop a strong, effective curriculum. Monitoring arrangements have worked well and co-ordinators make good use of sampling pupils' work and analysing assessment information to improve standards in their subjects. Recent training opportunities have increased teachers' subject expertise in design and technology and other co-ordinators, notably the mathematics co-ordinator, are keen to arrange training to increase their colleagues' teaching repertoire and subject confidence. Special educational needs provision is well managed and there is very good governor involvement. Governors monitor the assessment of the curriculum very well and have very effective links with co-ordinators.
31. The governors ensure the school meets all requirements well. They are fully involved in monitoring the school's results and comparing the school's performance with national results. The governors have addressed most of the monitoring issues from the last inspection. However, there are some aspects that require tightening. In particular, the governors have not established a formal monitoring routine. Governors listen to parents and are aware of problems. Although they visit the school frequently, they do not make formal, regular arrangements to visit classrooms and see pupils learning in the classroom.
32. The management of the school is good. In particular, the school monitors all aspects of the curriculum and particularly English and mathematics thoroughly. Outcomes are evaluated and extra help allocated where needed. The performance of those classes affected by absence has been particularly carefully scrutinised. New staff and supply staff are well supported; subject co-ordinators play a key role. The subject co-ordinator for design and technology did some specialist teaching in Year 5 to ensure that the planned programme was followed during staff absence. Recent long-term teacher absence in three classes in the junior department, resulting in temporary teaching arrangements, caused considerable anxiety to parents. In the main parents were kept informed but there was some uncertainty about one class. Communication was not as sensitive to the need to listen as it should be.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	667 350
Total expenditure	675 483
Expenditure per pupil	2 492

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	30 990
Balance carried forward to the next	22 857

33. Prudent financial planning and secure management and monitoring of budgets help the school to meet its targets for development and educational priorities. A budget surplus is kept at an appropriate level. Decisions on spending and allocation of resources are made with a good appreciation for the principles of best value. The school has obtained additional funding to help with the cost of a new playground which supplemented money raised by parents. The school secretary provides very good support, particularly as the headteacher had extra teaching commitment this year to help cover for staff absence. The school uses time efficiently so each class has three substantial lessons during the morning.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

34. The quality of provision for each of the areas of learning is good and has improved since the last inspection. Baseline assessments show that, when the children enter the school, attainment is broadly average overall. The majority of children achieve the early learning goals in all six areas of learning by the end of reception and most exceed them.
35. The teaching of the reception children is consistently good and many strong features were evident in the lessons that were observed. As a result, the children make a good start to school and achieve well. The teacher and her assistant plan the learning activities carefully to ensure that there are opportunities for the children to have access to all six areas of learning, and especially literacy and mathematics. The teaching of basic skills is well planned and this results in the good progress seen in learning to read, write and in number work. The classroom assistant very effectively supports individual and groups activities and makes a significant contribution to helping the children behave well and concentrate on the carefully planned learning tasks. The adults help the children to feel secure, gain confidence and communicate well with others. Good arrangements check what the children know, understand and can do and the information is well used to plan the next steps children need to take in their learning. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed by the deputy headteacher who works very well with her colleague to promote the provision and development of the curriculum for the children. She has a clear vision of how the planning for the whole Foundation Stage can be further improved to promote the progress of the children. For example, there are plans to further extend and improve the outdoor play area.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children develop a good understanding of how to behave and look after themselves in school
- There are high expectations that the children will concentrate, persevere and try hard to complete tasks

Commentary

36. The children settle quickly and happily when they come into school because the adults make sure that the children have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. The children develop positive attitudes to taking care of themselves and to learning. They know the routines well on entering the classroom, for example putting away their belongings and organising their dinner boxes. The teacher and her assistant have high expectations that the children will behave well and be thoughtful towards each other. The children speak confidently to adults and each other. Their personal and social skills are developed well because they are provided with good

opportunities to work and play together and to reflect on the effect of their actions on others. Good relationships develop between the adults in the reception class and the children.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in learning the basic skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing
- Some reading material is out of date

Commentary

37. The children are given good opportunities to respond to events in stories such as the Three Little Pigs, and their vocabulary is extended well through question and answer sessions. There is a range of role-play opportunities for the children to use; this further increases proficiency in speaking and listening. The children's early reading skills are developed well because they are given good opportunities to respond to events in stories, share books and receive clear teaching of the sounds that letters make. By the end of the reception year a good number of children read simple books fluently and are able to retell stories they have read. The home-school reading partnership is strong, and this has a positive effect on the good achievement of the children in learning to read. However, some of the reading material for the children is outdated and does not promote an early joy in reading. Writing skills are taught systematically and carefully so that the children learn to form letters correctly as well as learning to write and spell a basic vocabulary of key words. In the early stages of learning to write there have been, this year, occasional missed opportunities for children to use the good knowledge and understanding they have of letters and letter sounds to try to write without help.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in learning the basic skills of counting, recognising and ordering numbers
- Learning in this area is made challenging through the use of a good range of interesting activities

Commentary

38. The children achieve well in acquiring basic mathematical skills because the teacher uses the children's natural enthusiasm for counting and using numbers. The majority of the children can count and recognise numbers up to twenty and many know numbers beyond. They can add and subtract numbers up to ten and the more able children can work with larger numbers. The

children learn to compare longer and shorter items through practical experiences. A good emphasis on the correct use of language enables children to acquire new words to use in number activities and helps to ensure that they make good progress in gaining mathematical understanding. By the end of the reception year children have a good vocabulary to describe mathematical features of patterns and the properties of a range of two and three-dimensional shapes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

- The children achieve well because the teacher plans interesting learning activities
- They are making good progress in learning to use computers

Commentary

39. The teacher's planning ensures that there are good opportunities for the children to experience each of the strands within this area of learning. The children use the computers confidently to support their learning and know how alter colours and shapes in paint programs. During the inspection they made good progress in learning to change the size and colour of a font and add text to their lively pictures of the wolf or pigs. As part of their attendance at a Catholic school they learn and participate in the faith and customs of Christianity. They have a good sense of their own identity as part of a family, a class and a school and have opportunities to reflect, for example, about what makes them happy or unhappy. They plant seeds and observe how they grow and learn about which baby animal matches which parent.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

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

Commentary

40. The children develop good fine motor skills when using pencils, scissors and paint brushes. They use them with care and precision and have opportunities to develop fine manipulative control by completing jigsaws and using construction kits. The main school playground provides them with facilities for using wheeled toys and they steer and pedal enthusiastically showing a good sense of space and control. Overall, the children achieve well because the teacher plans the learning activities well; however, the small size of the fenced area limits the opportunities for the children to explore independently. The children dress and undress for their

physical education sessions in the school hall and outside on the playground. The indoor lessons give them opportunities to climb, balance and jump using the apparatus; however, at present there are limited opportunities outdoors for them to develop these skills. They enjoy these lessons and show a good awareness of space. They can follow and interpret instructions, and respond well when asked to move in a variety of ways.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources are well prepared and provide a good range of activities
- Occasionally, creative opportunities are limited because of the restricted outdoor play area

Commentary

41. The children have opportunities to use a wide range of media, and sand and water are available on a regular basis. The children enjoy making thumb pots and carefully create patterns to decorate them. They join in singing and musical activities with enjoyment, knowing a good range of songs. Use is made of the home corner (at present a café and shop) to develop children's language and social skills through role-play. The teacher provides a good range of interesting activities in the outdoor area but opportunities for the children to explore creatively and imaginatively outdoors are limited.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

The provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils achieve very well and standards are well above average at the end of Year 6.
- Reading and writing are important elements of many curriculum areas and are well taught.
- The pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because they are very well supported.

Commentary

42. Reading and writing standards are high throughout the school but are very high among the older pupils. They are able to write for many different purposes and apply their reading skills with discrimination to develop a rich vocabulary to enliven their writing. In all the classes, good quality discussion provides a very sound basis for the development of other literacy skills. Standards in English have improved across the school since the last inspection.

43. Speaking skills are very systematically developed, for example, as the younger pupils are asked to express their opinions about stories they read or draw inferences as they listen to a story read by an adult. Older pupils have opportunities to talk about their responses to poetry or matters that arise in history or geography lessons. At times, they are invited to talk in pairs. However, in general there are too few opportunities for discussion among pupils. As their command of language is very well advanced and their social skills sufficiently well developed they are capable of holding independent group discussions, pooling their ideas on different topics. The good relationships in classes ensure that discussion opportunities managed by the pupils would provide further positive experiences.
44. The pupils achieve very well in reading because the range of reading material is mostly of good quality and opportunities for reading are frequent and well managed. The regular use of literacy texts to support writing ensures that the pupils encounter a wide range of reading in books, newspaper articles, advertisements and Internet material. Adults themselves provide good role models for expressive reading. A class in Year 1 were fired by the way their teacher read "Emma's Problem". As a result they rapidly drew inferences from the text and answered questions in a very lively way. The phonic work undertaken with the younger children provides a very secure basis when they need to be able to read words unfamiliar to them. Additional support for reading ensures that diffident readers are able to reach the average expected standards and, therefore, achieve well. Older readers have distinct preferences for certain authors. They spoke confidently and often amusingly about their current reading choice. Reading standards are well above average by the end of Year 6. A particular strength of the reading at this level was the way direct speech was read so expressively, no doubt a legacy from the drama and role play activities that are a feature of English lessons.
45. The teaching of writing is always at least good and is a strength of the school. In an excellent lesson in Year 6 based on the author Gillian Cross, pupils worked with their teacher to explore figurative language. By the end of Year 6, many pupils attain well above average standards. All the pupils achieve well over time, including those with special educational needs. Classroom and corridor walls are peppered with a wide range of the pupils' writing ranging from factual accounts of work carried out in design and technology to evaluations of poems by selected authors together with other examples of narrative, descriptive, persuasive and journalistic writing. Pupils in one year group, for example, had written lively responses to a recent article in a national daily arguing that sport at school keeps pupils thin. The younger pupils are systematically taught to punctuate their work appropriately. They are encouraged to form their letters clearly and uniformly prior to developing their own confident, joined style of writing.
46. The writing experiences of older pupils are clearly influenced by reading and discussing a variety of texts. This has resulted in pupils developing a very good level of awareness of how to write effective openings to their own writing and how to maximise the impact of their descriptive writing. One pupil, describing a character in a story wrote "...a laced up expression on her face to match" as part of a description of a rather mean minded person. Their awareness of the different styles used by authors such as C S Lewis, Jacqueline Wilson and others is very well developed by the time they leave Year 6.

47. The good teaching of literacy represents a good balance of systematic teaching of sentence structures, punctuation and grammar combined with a lively approach to exposing the pupils to a very good range of texts. The teachers and their assistants adopt a coherent and consistent approach that helps pupils achieve very well over time. The subject co-ordinator was absent for much of the year but other staff covered well.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. Writing opportunities are endemic right across the curriculum. The pupils record their planning for projects in design and technology, discoveries in science lessons, imaginary interviews with figures from the past in history and a wide range of other experiences across the curriculum. This extends to writing beautifully phrased prayers that reflect the school's fostering of the pupils' spiritual development.

MATHEMATICS

Overall provision is **good**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection and are consistently high compared to national standards
- Teaching is very thorough, so pupils' grasp of key skills and knowledge is very secure and they achieve very well. This includes pupils with special educational needs
- Assessment is very well used to check pupils' progress and to identify areas of strength and weakness
- The predominant teaching style is instructional, which tends to restrict the opportunities that pupils have to reason, debate and think for themselves

Commentary

49. Year 2 results in 2003 were very high, in the top five per cent nationally. Results for able pupils compared to similar schools are also very high. Teacher assessment indicates that pupils are not so secure with the use and application of mathematics and inspection evidence confirms this. The present Year 2 is reaching above average standards and pupils of all abilities are achieving very well. Many pupils say that mathematics is a favourite subject; they work very hard and present their work neatly. Pupils cover numeracy well and there is very good attention to other aspects of mathematics, including data handling. Pupils are able to construct accurate and well presented graphs displaying information about Smarties. They can construct a tally chart and are able apply these skills to a new situation the next day.
50. Year 6 mathematics results for 2003 were well above average. Compared to their previous performance in Year 2 results are well above expected levels. Results for more able pupils are well above similar schools. The present Year 6 are reaching above average standards and achieving very well. Their mental skills are very good and they can explain their thinking. They are confident about measure and can convert from one unit to another. Pupils enjoy investigational work and, using the teacher's

approach, compare areas and perimeters. In another class, which had a series of supply staff, the teacher worked hard to help pupils recall previous learning on area.

51. Teaching is dependable and good. Teachers prepare their lessons well. Staff and pupils alike work very hard to maintain the consistently high standards. Pupils who have difficulty are given very good support by well trained classroom assistants who are well briefed by teachers. There is regular homework and awards for learning tables. Simple resources are well used to illustrate mathematical ideas and teachers deal with very effectively with misunderstandings. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and teachers focus well on clear instructional teaching. However, although this style of teaching is very successful in maintaining high standards in tests, it does limit pupils' opportunities to think mathematically in response to teachers' challenges.
52. The subject is well led by a very capable, new mathematics co-ordinator. She monitors all aspect of the subject, including the half-termly assessment of each class, very well and has produced a realistic subject report for the governing body. She is awaiting a place on a mathematics course. She is aware that other staff have not received recent training and plans to remedy this. During this year she has provided considerable additional support to supply teachers filling in to cover for extended staff absence.

Mathematics across the curriculum

53. Mathematics is well used in other areas of the curriculum. In science, pupils make very good use of mathematics to measure forces. In geography, they rely on accurate calculation to measure the velocity of the stream while on a field trip. Information and communication technology is utilized to record data and for simple programming. Pupils also enjoy practice programs. In design and technology work pupils use graphs to help them make good decisions about the use of appropriate materials in their products.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in science because teaching is good
- Teachers use assessment very well to promote the good progress of pupils
- Pupils have very good attitudes and take a great pride in their work
- In some classes pupils do not have enough opportunity to use their own ideas and initiative
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to use ICT skills to support scientific learning.

Commentary

54. Standards seen during the inspection were above average in Year 2 and well above in Year 6. This broadly confirms the above average results in the 2003 tests. The pupils enter the school with a broad range of attainment and achieve very well. The leadership of the subject is good; the co-ordinator supports colleagues well and monitors standards to ensure that they remain

high. She also has a good impact on what the school provides for its pupils to enhance their learning. This represents a good improvement in standards since the last inspection.

55. The pupils are doing very well because there is consistently good, thorough teaching. Teachers place a strong emphasis on pupils in all year groups acquiring good amounts of correct scientific vocabulary and knowledge, which is reflected in the quantity and quality of pupils' recorded work in all year groups. The teaching ensures that pupils work hard - there is an efficient use of time in lessons, which are conducted at a good pace. There are positive relationships within the classrooms and teachers have high expectations that the pupils will behave well; this workmanlike atmosphere ensures that topics are thoroughly covered. When teaching assistants are present in the lessons they give very good support, especially to pupils with special educational needs enabling them to achieve very well against their prior attainment. The efficient assessment system focuses on specific areas in each topic and this helps the teachers to accurately gauge the understanding and progress of the pupils in order to plan further work.
56. In some lessons very good opportunities are provided for pupils to pursue their own ideas and develop their own investigations, as for example when the Year 2 pupils disassemble and re-assemble torches and find out how to incorporate a buzzer into a circuit. Sometimes, however, teachers do not involve pupils as well as they might in making decisions in their learning or in considering how they might solve problems. Pupils are expected to work hard and to record their work at length and in detail, but at times teachers miss opportunities to sufficiently differentiate between the abilities of different pupils, and this is reflected in the similar work that pupils of the same age sometimes produce.
57. The teachers seek to enrich pupils' learning in interesting ways. Each year a Theatre Science Workshop group visits the school and visits are made to places such as Snibston Discovery Park and the Botanical Gardens to support learning in science. Good use is made of the school grounds for investigating habitats. All of these opportunities enable pupils to make good links in their learning. However, limited use is made of the pupils' ICT skills to support scientific learning; the school recognises that this is an area for development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved since the last inspection and is now **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are above average
- The curriculum is well planned
- Resources have improved.

Commentary

58. Standards are generally above average by the time the pupils leave Year 6. The thoughtful planning of the curriculum across different stages ensures that lessons build well on the pupils' previous experiences. At seven most pupils are able to create a piece of writing or a picture on the screen, modify it, save it and retrieve it. They can record data in the form of simple graphs. A few pupils are now confident in the use of a programmable robot and can create a series of instructions, for example, to plan a simple route.
59. The oldest pupils take a keen interest in the lively teaching they receive. They behave well in the lessons and are very supportive of each other. They relish opportunities to experiment with graphics, colour and font as they use desktop publishing programs. The pupils in Year 6 displayed an above average degree of skill to create a programme to give to family members at their leavers' celebration. This activity provided a useful opportunity for discussion and experimentation. In Year 4, the pupils have used Internet information and compiled an attractive, informative file of work on acid rain. The oldest pupils have begun to be familiar with *Powerpoint* presentations and explored the use of the *Excel* program to record data.
60. The teaching is of good quality and there are well focused opportunities to develop a range of key skills. The ICT suite is well organised but somewhat cramped for older pupils. The co-ordinator is very good and has been rigorous in her choice of materials for the pupils to use but, at times, there is a degree of frustration when two or three of the machines fail. Pupils' progress in ICT is carefully tracked and records scrutinised to ascertain where additional help is needed in order to ensure inclusion for pupils of all abilities. When the planned updating of hardware occurs in the autumn, the machines presently in the ICT suite will be placed in classrooms, providing a much needed resource for use as a regular part of lessons.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

61. Opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning in other subjects are at variable stages of development. In mathematics, data handling capabilities are well developed. Word processing skills are well used and most pupils are confident when using the computer for graphics work. Pupils are just beginning to use the research capability of the Internet to further their knowledge when studying subjects like geography and history. However, limited use is made of the pupils' ICT skills to support scientific learning; the school recognises that this is an area for development.

HUMANITIES

62. No lessons were seen in **history**. However, from the teachers' planning, work and displays seen and from talking to pupils it is evident that history has a secure place in the curriculum and that pupils achieve good standards. It contributes very well to pupils' social and cultural education. The co-ordinator of history leads the subject effectively and enthusiastically. The pupils show a

keen interest in and enjoy the topics they cover, and an understanding of chronology is developed well throughout the school. A strong feature of the history curriculum is the very good use made of literacy skills. Pupils write their own accounts of events using a range of genres and forms. These demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the issues being studied and display lively and imaginative use of language. Often features of historical enquiry are explored throughout the topics being studied and pupils have a good understanding of different sources of evidence and information. These include texts, photographs, artefacts and 'living memory'. Some information is gained using the Internet, but overall the use of ICT skills is too limited in history. Art and design and design and technology are very well used through a variety of drawing and illustrative ways to extend learning in history. A good range of visits and workshops also enhances the pupils' learning opportunities. For example, the pupils are able to experience a Victorian washday when they visit Shugborough Hall, and the Year 3 are awaiting with anticipation the imminent visit of the 'Vikings'.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in geography and the standards reached are above those expected nationally
- The curriculum opportunities are good and they make a good contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development
- Good use is made of literacy and mathematical skills but opportunities to use ICT skills are too limited

Commentary

63. Pupils' attainment is above that expected in Years 2 and 6. This is a similar situation to that found at the time of the last inspection. The pupils enjoy their geography lessons and contribute well in question and answer sessions. In those lessons where teaching assistants are present they very effectively support pupils with special educational needs or lower ability and enable them to take a full and positive part in the learning. The subject is well led and managed and makes a very positive contribution to the social and cultural education and personal development of the pupils. Visits to places of interest enhance and broaden the good learning opportunities already provided by the teachers in school. A good example of this was seen in the visit of the Year 2 pupils to the Botanical Gardens as part of their topic on rainforests.
64. The overall quality of the teaching of geography is good. The lessons are well planned and carried out and, as a result, the pupils achieve well in gaining geographical knowledge and understanding. When it is possible good cross-curricular links between subjects are made. There are good opportunities to use English through written accounts and mathematics in measuring, mapping and data handling in geography. The teachers mark the pupils' work regularly and add constructive and helpful comments. Occasional use is being made by pupils of

ICT skills, for example by researching topics on the Internet and using word-processing and data handling programs.

65. The Year 1 and 2 pupils describe and map their journeys to school. The youngest pupils think about and plan a village. In Year 3 the pupils learn about Brazil as a contrasting locality and this work is continued in Year 4 as pupils consider St Lucia as a holiday destination. Good use is made of art techniques and ICT skills as they produce good quality posters to attract tourists. The Year 5 pupils learn about rivers and take part in an interesting and worthwhile fieldtrip starting from school and following and investigating the course of the stream. Very good lessons were seen in Year 6 as pupils study life in an Indian village. The teachers begin the work by asking pupils to express their ideas about features such as amenities, food and transport. The pupils then study photographs and discuss their findings, which in some cases challenge their pre-conceptions and help them to discover that life in Chembakolli has both similarities and differences to their own.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

66. It was not possible to make judgements on overall provision in art and design and design and technology because of insufficient inspection evidence.
67. One lesson was seen in **art and design**. A very good body of work was examined, indicating a full curriculum with an emphasis on developing skills. All pupils, except the youngest had sketchbooks and there was a very good collection of photographs and lots of work on display. In addition, discussions were held with the co-ordinator and with pupils. Work in other subjects, including history and geography, provided many examples of very well drawn and colourful images. Pupils are helped to acquire a very broad range of techniques and work with a very good choice of good quality materials. They achieve well and by Year 6 standards are well above average. The work of visitors, fellow pupils and famous artists are very well used to extend pupils' imaginations. All pupils spoken to enjoyed the subject. Many felt they were good at art. Some older pupils said they would welcome more opportunity to use their skills on projects of their own choice. Inspection evidence would confirm that, although pupils achieve well and reach high standards, they work on very tightly defined tasks and sometimes have limited individual choice. The subject has improved since the last inspection.
68. The high quality of displays and artefacts chosen to enhance teaching in other subjects, including collective worship, contributes strongly to building aesthetic values. The subject plays an important role in developing pupils' spirituality throughout the school. The subject has improved since the last inspection. It is well lead by a very well qualified co-ordinator who offers good leadership and monitors the subject effectively. The very well established scheme of work is based on a local authority approach, which is well linked to the National Curriculum. There is an annual programme which includes opportunities for pupils to learn skills and acquire knowledge about printing, drawing and painting, textiles and three dimensional work including ceramics. There is a regular programme of termly assessments. The governing body receives regular feedback from the co-ordinators annual report.

69. In **design and technology** there were no lessons seen in the infant classes. In the junior classes the teaching seen was focussed and pupils were interested. In addition, pupils' notebooks were examined alongside work on display and plentiful photographs. Discussions were held with younger pupils and also with the co-ordinator. The standard achieved is good and has improved since the previous inspection. The teachers focus successfully on building the pupils' skills, developing techniques and on accurate and appropriate recording. Pupils are taught from an early age to plan and evaluate well. Pupils in Year 3 understand about healthy eating and plan menus and recipes for sandwiches accordingly. They know about health and safety and hygiene. They apply these rules to a practical sandwich making session in which they bring their planned ingredients and tools from home and with minimal support from some parent volunteers produce and display an attractive sandwich. Older pupils in Year 6 discussed shelters, their purpose and design, and are looking forward to an opportunity to build their own. Some pupils have already had experience of building full sized shelters during their residential trip to Dorset.
70. Subject leadership is good. There has been recent training for all staff in the subject. Pupils' work is assessed termly and outcomes are passed to the co-ordinator. There is regular monitoring by the subject leader and good support provided for new staff and particularly for supply teachers. The school has good resources. The staff plan well to include aspects of design and technology in some other subjects and this is particularly effective in helping the pupils to grasp historical ideas and to improve their understanding of some scientific principles.

Music

Overall provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good specialist teaching is provided for most classes
- There is a good balance of activities in the subject, including composing and performing

Commentary

71. Attainment in music is well above average by the time pupils leave the school. The pupils make good progress in singing melodiously by the end of Year 2 to singing a good range of songs from many cultures and times by the end of Year 6.
72. Music is given considerable prominence as the school has a strong commitment to the pupils' aesthetic and creative development as part of the broad curriculum it offers. The curriculum is rich in offering the pupils the opportunity to listen and to perform a good range of music from many cultures. During the inspection, classes in Year 5 were singing and accompanying a Syrian folk song, clearly appreciating and recreating the mood of the music to reflect the heavy, slow plodding of camels trudging across the desert.
73. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 sing tunefully, one group having been invited to occupy a key position on the podium at the Birmingham Symphony Hall. They listen well and are especially pleased when they use a range of untuned percussion instruments to recreate rhythms and

accompany their singing. Older pupils recognise different types of music such as string groups, military and brass bands, swing, blues and other classical forms. They know that music from different countries may have a particular character. This was the case as the class listened to music from “Rawhide” and appreciated the structure of the melody. A number of pupils play instruments such as oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and a range of strings. Good opportunities are found to include these instruments in the normal performance work in classrooms.

74. The curriculum is very thoroughly planned to ensure a good balance of listening, composing and performing. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The deployment of a teacher with very good specialist knowledge ensures a very high level of teaching for the pupils from Year 2 upwards. The pupils respond very well because they are interested, and the teaching takes very good account of their own interests and experiences. They have recently enjoyed opportunities to use computer programs for their composition work. Music also features prominently in the religious life of the school.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are in line with those expected nationally by the end of Year 6
- Pupils achieve well in playing games and in swimming
- Extra-curricular opportunities and sporting links with other schools are limited

Commentary

75. Standards throughout the school are similar to those found at the last inspection. The children enter the school with a broadly average range of attainment in their physical development. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 the pupils show average standards overall. The school has recognised that this is an area for development and two teachers with expertise in physical education have been appointed for next year.
76. Overall teaching is satisfactory, although during the inspection several good lessons were seen. The teachers’ enthusiasm and good subject knowledge encourages pupils and helps them to improve their work. From the teachers' planning, photographic evidence and talking with pupils it is clear that all aspects of the physical education curriculum are covered. In the summer term lessons mainly concentrate on games and swimming for the Year 6 pupils. The teachers plan structured lessons that meet the needs of the pupils, challenge them and provide opportunities for them to learn new skills and improve their performance. The teachers engage the pupils well in the activities and consequently the pupils gain confidence to try hard and to fully participate in the lessons. The teachers use a good range of methods such as small group games, demonstrations, evaluation of the pupils' work and how it can be improved.
77. Pupils enjoy participating in sport and are proud of their successes against other schools in swimming. Almost invariably, all the pupils reach the expected standard of swimming 25

metres and many exceed it. Those with physical disabilities and other special educational needs are supported very well and are able to take a full part in the school's programme. Older pupils have the opportunity to take part in more adventurous activities such as climbing and trampolining during the residential visit planned for them. There is a limited range of after-school sports clubs for pupils. The girls speak enthusiastically of the netball club and there is a good take up of the opportunity to play rounders. However, the development of after-school football and other sports is too restricted and there is some disappointment amongst the boys that more opportunities are not provided for them to play against other schools.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

78. No lessons were seen. However, the school is committed to the personal development of its pupils and achievements are very good. Teachers' attention to their pupils' personal development was a striking part of many lessons. Pupils' involvement in the religious life of the school facilitates a growing understanding of the benefits and responsibilities of belonging to a community.

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	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3

Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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