

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST PATRICK'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Earlswood, near Solihull

LEA area: Solihull

Unique reference number: 104096

Headteacher: Mrs S O'Grady

Lead inspector: Mr T Neat

Dates of inspection: 14-17 June 2004

Inspection number: 257908

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: 3-11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 287

School address: Salter Street  
Earlswood  
Solihull  
West Midlands

Postcode: B94 6DE

Telephone number: 01564 702278

Fax number: 01564 702262

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr James Brown

Date of previous inspection: 29 June 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Patrick's is a voluntary-aided Church of England primary school situated on the edge of a small village on the rural outskirts of Solihull. It is located away from the residential areas from which it draws its pupils. They come from a wide area, attracted by the school's good reputation and its Christian character. The school is consistently over-subscribed and the number on roll has grown considerably in recent years. There are currently 266 pupils attending full-time and a further 21 children attend the Nursery mornings only. The school is larger than average. Very few pupils are eligible for a free school meal, about one per cent. They are drawn from a broad but generally above average range of socio-economic circumstances. Most children joining the school have had some form of pre-school experience. A significant proportion of children in the areas from which pupils are drawn are educated privately. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below the national average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational need. The main problems experienced by these pupils are dyslexia, and social, emotional, behavioural and moderate learning difficulties. Overall, attainment on entry is average. The great majority of pupils, 92 per cent, are from white-British families. The remaining eight per cent are mainly from mixed ethnic and Asian families. A small number have English as an additional language, but none are at an early stage of acquiring English skills. The proportion of pupils who stay at the school for the whole of their primary education is higher than found nationally. The school was given an Achievement Award in 2003 for the good results it gained in the national tests. It has also gained the Investors in People Award and the Active Mark for promoting pupils' participation in sport. St Patrick's is one of 12 schools visited in February last year by HMI looking at boys' writing. The school was chosen because, in contrast to the national picture, boys' achievement in writing is almost as good as girls.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20007	Mr T Neat	Lead inspector	English Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs
14066	Ms G Hoggard	Lay inspector	
17208	Mrs G Briggs	Team inspector	Science Art and design Music The Foundation Stage
19897	Mr A Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History

The inspection contractor was:

PBM Brookbridge and Bedford Ltd  
PO Box 524  
Cheadle  
Staffs  
ST10 4RN

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

St Patrick's CE Primary is a **very effective** school. It is led and managed extremely well by the headteacher. Teaching and learning are very good and pupils attain very high standards. The school gives **very good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve very well in English, mathematics and science.
- The headteacher's leadership and management are excellent and key staff work very effectively.
- Very good teaching and learning are supported by excellent assessment.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and behave very well.
- All pupils are cared for very well and the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- A very good curriculum is enriched very well, especially through the very close links with the community.

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. The key weaknesses found at that time have been addressed successfully and overall provision has improved significantly.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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	A*	A	A*	A*

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

Children enter the Nursery with broadly typical attainment. They achieve well overall as they progress through the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup>. By the time they leave the Reception class, most children exceed the national goals for their personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. Achievement is very good in mathematical development and most children easily exceed the national goals. In physical development and creative development achievement is satisfactory and children reach the goals set. Pupils achieve very well in Years 1 to 6 and attain high standards. In the 2003 national tests, the results in Year 2 were well above average in reading, writing and science, and in the top five per cent in the country for mathematics. The results in Year 6 in 2003 were in the top five per cent for all the tested subjects and this is excellent. Inspection evidence confirms the high standards and levels of achievement. It shows that pupils currently in Year 2 are likely to attain results in reading, writing, mathematics and science that are in the top five per cent in the country. Pupils in Year 6 are on course to attain results in the top five per cent in the country in English, mathematics and science. Standards in design and technology are well above average in Years 2 and 6. In information and communication technology, geography and history, pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain

<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage is the period of education for children aged three to the end of the Reception year.

standards above the expected level. Standards in art and design are in line with the expected levels at the end of Years 2 and 6. In music and physical education, although the school makes proper provision to teach these subjects, it was not possible to see enough lessons to make valid judgements. The standards attained in religious education are evaluated in the Section 23 inspection.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are very good. Excellent lessons were seen in a range of subjects. Teachers are highly committed to doing their best. Pupils respond very well to the demands made on them. Teachers work hard to meet the needs of all pupils. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good, overall, with some excellent teaching in the Reception class. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is very good. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good, with a high proportion of excellent lessons seen. Assessment is excellent; marking is a main strength. The curriculum is very good. It is enriched very well by a wide variety of clubs, school visits and visitors. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The care, support and guidance pupils receive are very good. A very caring, supportive environment is created. Pupils are offered many opportunities to express their views and help develop the school. The school's links with parents and the community are very good. The strong support of parents is a considerable aid to pupils' progress. Links with other schools are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher is highly respected by everyone associated with the school and he enjoys an excellent reputation. There is a constant focus on raising standards and improving provision. Key members of staff lead very effectively. Subject coordinators have a very clear understanding of their role in checking the quality of work in their subjects. The work of some is outstanding. The use of assessment information to make the best possible provision for those in danger of underachieving is a great strength of the headteacher's management. Very good use is made of local education authority staff to train subject coordinators in the skills of observing lessons. The contribution of the governing body is good. Governors are very supportive, committed and hardworking. The governing body meets all its statutory duties, with the exception of providing information for parents about plans to improve access for the disabled. Resources are used and administered very well.

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

Parents hold very positive opinions about the school and fully recognise its many good features. In particular, they value the strong leadership of the headteacher, the good teaching, settling in arrangements and the progress their children make. Pupils' opinions about the school are extremely positive. They are very enthusiastic about their school. They love the many different activities offered. They feel they have to work hard, but that their teachers are helpful and supportive. When asked what they would like to change, a very large number of pupils said, 'Nothing.' Several added, 'It's brilliant as it is!'

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The quality of leadership, management and provision is such that there are no major areas for improvement. The school should press ahead with its plans to improve the overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage. To meet statutory requirements, the governing body should ensure that information about its plans to improve access for the disabled are included in the information it provides for parents.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Achievement is very good overall; it is good in the Foundation Stage and very good in Years 1 to 6. The achievement of boys and girls is broadly similar. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Overall, standards in the core subjects are very high.

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

- The school has maintained very good levels of achievement for several years.
- Standards in writing are exceptionally high by the time pupils leave.
- Standards in the non-core subjects<sup>2</sup> are generally good.
- The progress of pupils between Years 2 and 6 is very good or better.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children enter the Nursery with attainment broadly in line with typical levels. They achieve well during their time in the Nursery and Reception years because of the good provision in the Nursery and sometimes excellent provision in the Reception class. Achievement is better now than at the time of the last inspection because the quality of teaching has improved. By the time children leave the Reception class, most of them exceed the national goals for early learning in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. Achievement is very good in mathematical development and most children easily exceed the goals set. In physical development and creative development achievement is satisfactory and children reach the goals set.
2. Pupils attain high standards and achieve very well in Years 1 to 6. This is due in large part to the excellent leadership and management of the headteacher and the very good teaching. Everyone associated with the school wants the best for the pupils, including the fulfillment of every child's potential. This has resulted in pupils attaining standards over the last four years that are never less than above average and usually well above average, frequently in the top five per cent in the country. In 2003, the most recent year for which validated data are available, pupils in Year 2 attained results in the national tests that were well above average in reading, writing and science, and in the top five per cent in the country for mathematics. The results of pupils in Year 6 last year were in the top five per cent for all the tested subjects: English, mathematics and science. Standards and achievement are higher than at the time of the last inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.8 (29.2)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	30.9 (29.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	32.3 (30.8)	28.6 (28.3)

<sup>2</sup> The non-core subjects are art and design; design and technology; geography; history; information and communication technology; music; physical education.



3. Inspection evidence confirms the high standards and levels of achievement. It shows that pupils currently in Year 2 are likely to achieve reading, writing, mathematics and science results in the top five per cent in the country. Pupils in Year 6 are on course to attain results in the top five per cent in the country in English, mathematics and science. Standards in writing are particularly high because of the very clear minded way in which the provision for this aspect has been developed. There has been a strong focus on improving the teaching methods and teacher expertise as well as identifying regular, relevant opportunities for writing so that it is given consistently high priority throughout the school. Standards in design and technology are well above average in Years 2 and 6. In information and communication technology, geography, and history, pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain standards that are above average. Standards in art and design are average in Years 2 and 6. In music and physical education, although the school makes proper provision to teach these subjects, it was not possible to see enough lessons to make valid judgements. The standards attained in religious education are evaluated separately in a Section 23 inspection.
4. The standards achieved by pupils in Years 2 and 6 in the national tests are rising at a higher rate than the national trend of improvement. For the last four years the extent to which pupils made progress between Years 2 and 6, compared with schools with similar performance, has been either well above average or in the top five per cent in the country.
5. Boys and girls attain equally well, including in the development of writing skills. This is in contrast to the national picture where boys lag behind girls. The good performance of boys is due to the excellent provision the school makes for English. Very good progress is made by pupils with special educational needs and many make excellent gains in relation to their prior attainment. This is due to the very good provision made by the school. The few bilingual pupils and those from mixed ethnic and minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as the other pupils. Gifted and talented pupils achieve as well as their peers, thanks to the stimulating ethos of the school and the good provision made for them.

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

Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. Their behaviour is very good. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. Attendance is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are extremely keen to learn.
- Pupils conduct themselves very sensibly in and around the school.
- Personal development is very strong, although the provision for cultural development can be improved.
- Pupils have very positive views about their school.
- Attendance is above average.

### **Commentary**

6. The very good personal development of pupils has a considerable impact on the standards they achieve. Attitudes to learning are better than at the time of the last inspection and are now excellent. This is evident from the results of the pre-inspection survey of pupils' opinions and

from the way in which they conduct themselves in lessons. The enthusiasm of the teachers rubs off on pupils and generates high levels of interest. In a literacy lesson for Year 1, the teacher told her class, "I want you to dazzle me with your writing!" The pupils settled immediately to their work and applied themselves very well.

7. Pupils' opinions about the school are extremely positive. They are very enthusiastic about their school. They love the many different activities offered. They feel they have to work hard, but that their teachers are helpful and supportive. When asked what they would like to change, a very large number of pupils said, 'Nothing.' Several added, 'It's brilliant as it is!'
8. Behaviour is very good in and around the school, as it was when the school was last inspected. Often, behaviour in lessons is excellent. In the playground, in church, in assembly and at lunchtime pupils behave very sensibly and with great courtesy towards visitors. Pupils relate very well to others. Year 4 pupils in an art lesson looking at colour mixing worked very well together, helping each other and making suggestions to get the exact shade which would match the Indian textiles on display. The school, although quite large, maintains the ethos of a smaller village school, which is greatly appreciated by parents. It functions as a warm, caring community where each child is known and welcomed. In response, pupils cooperate well with others both at work and at play. No pupils were excluded during the reporting period. The school has good arrangements to deal with any bullying that might occur.
9. The provision to promote the personal development of pupils is a great strength of the school, resulting in confident, mature and articulate children with high self-esteem. The provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. Spiritual development is very good. Thoughtful, reflective assemblies contribute strongly as does the careful planning of suitable topics within lessons. For example, in a personal and social education lesson, Year 5 pupils considered their aspirations for the future and wrote small cards outlining what they wished for and how they would achieve it. Suitable music played quietly in the background, generating moments of stillness and insight. Moral development is also very strong and consequently pupils are caring, polite and very thoughtful. The school has clear expectations about behaviour shared by all, resulting in consistent codes of conduct across the school. Pupils do a lot of work for charity, fundraising energetically and generating their own ideas. Cultural development, although good, is not quite as strong as the other areas. Pupils learn much about their own heritage but the extent to which they are prepared for life in our multi-ethnic society can be improved. Opportunities are missed, for example, to take advantage of the great cultural diversity of nearby Birmingham.
10. Attendance is above the national average and punctuality is good. This reflects parents' support and the pupils' own enthusiasm to get to school.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.4	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**

The quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are very good. Assessment is excellent. The curriculum is very good. The care, support and guidance pupils receive are very good. The school's links with parents and the community are very good. The links with other schools are good.

## Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The assessment of pupils' work is excellent.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent lessons were seen in a range of subjects.
- Teachers are highly committed to doing their best.
- Pupils respond very well to the demands made on them.
- Teachers work hard to meet the needs of all pupils.
- The assessment of pupils' work is very effective in helping pupils to improve.

### Commentary

11. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and this is a key factor in the high standards the pupils achieve. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good, overall, with some excellent teaching in the Reception class. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is very good. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good, with a high proportion of excellent lessons seen. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. The proportion of very good and excellent teaching has increased significantly and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. Nearly one in ten lessons was unsatisfactory at that time.

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10 (22%)	19 (42%)	9 (20%)	7 (16%)	0 (0%)	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.*

12. Teaching in English, mathematics and science is very good. All the lessons observed were good or better. Excellent practice was observed in all three of these subjects. The non-core subjects are also taught very well, with a high proportion of excellent lessons seen. This outstanding teaching was in art and design, geography and personal, social and health education.
13. The fundamental strength of the teaching is the very strong commitment of staff to do their best for the pupils and the school, and to achieve the highest quality professional performance themselves. Teachers spare no effort to bring this about. Lessons are planned and prepared thoroughly and learning resources used very effectively. For example, a Year 5 classroom was transformed into South American jungle for an art lesson, with appropriate music playing, constantly changing images of exotic flowers displayed on the interactive whiteboard<sup>3</sup> and a profusion of plants at the centre of the room. The inspector noted, "The lesson was so carefully prepared that [on entering] the pupils were engrossed immediately." Inspirational teaching, informed by expert subject knowledge led to pupils in that lesson attaining standards well above the expected level. Other characteristics of the excellent teaching observed are lively, enthusiastic presentation, very good pace, very effective questioning which causes pupils to think hard and the very good demands made on them. In a science lesson for Year 4 pupils, the teacher's expectations were very high. At one point she asked the nine year olds about to draw

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<sup>3</sup> Interactive whiteboards are blackboard sized screens onto which images are projected. The devices are linked to a computer and can be used for a variety of purposes. Both teachers and children can control what the whiteboard displays by touching the screen.

a line graph, “Do we put the variable on the ‘x’ or ‘y’ axis?” which was a very challenging question for the age group.

14. The very good teaching results in pupils learning very effectively. The teachers’ insistence on very high standards of behaviour leads pupils to listen very attentively and concentrate very well. Pupils respond very well to the high demands made on them by thinking hard and trying to do their best work. The scrutiny of pupils’ work shows that many achieve very good standards in the presentation of their work. Some of their handwriting is of a very high standard. Most are active in their learning, asking questions and taking part in class discussions. They work very well in collaboration with others. Many examples were seen of pupils cooperating very productively, including a Year 5 English lesson in which groups had to create performance poems.
15. Teachers plan very carefully to meet the needs of all the pupils in their care. Different tasks are chosen to try to bring about the optimum learning for pupils of different abilities. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. A key strength is the extremely good liaison between the special educational needs coordinator and class teachers about the day to day gains made by individuals. This very effective communication allows the special educational needs coordinator to advise teachers and also to fine tune her teaching of groups and individuals. Her teaching of groups withdrawn from their class is highly effective, since often it concentrates on preparing these pupils so that they can carry out the same tasks as the rest of the class. This increases their confidence considerably and ensures that they have equal opportunities to succeed.
16. The teachers’ assessment of pupils’ learning is excellent. Their questioning of pupils in lessons to judge their progress is very effective indeed and the quality of their marking of written work is often outstanding. This is particularly true in English, where teachers spend a great deal of time ensuring that pupils know what next to do to improve. Teaching assistants work very closely and effectively with teachers and contribute strongly to the progress made by pupils, especially those with special educational needs.
17. Homework is used extensively and effectively to raise standards. A few parents are concerned that too much is set, especially for younger pupils. However, 262 pupils completed the pre-inspection children’s questionnaire and all of them had the opportunity to write comments on the form. Most pupils did so, but only ten said they would like less homework.

## **The curriculum**

The school offers a rich, innovative curriculum, providing a broad range of very good learning opportunities. It provides a very good preparation for secondary education. Overall, the accommodation and learning resources are good.

## **Strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is enriched very well by a wide variety of clubs, school visits and visitors.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is very good.
- The school ensures that all groups of pupils have equal access to the full curriculum.
- Storage space is very limited.

## **Commentary**

18. The school offers a broad, rich curriculum, which prepares the pupils very well for secondary education. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection, when it was good. Although there is a strong emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy, a good balance ensures that other subjects are not neglected. A successful creative arts week was held last year. A good number of pupils currently take advantage of opportunities for instrumental music tuition. Secondary school members of staff provide the resources for taster sessions in French for pupils in Year 6. Debating skills are encouraged. The school recently won the West Midlands Region Children's Parliament debating competition. The total weekly teaching time is well above the recommended minimum for pupils of this age.
19. Curriculum planning is very good. The teachers plan very thoroughly for the work which the pupils will do each term and each week, taking account of their varying needs. There are good opportunities for the pupils to use their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in other subjects. The school meets its obligations to provide a daily act of collective worship. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
20. The school always looks for ways of developing the curriculum further. Two years ago, the school gained the Active Mark for the quality of its physical education provision. The school has been involved in a local education authority Creative Arts Project over the past year as a way of raising standards in art, music and drama. The pupils are currently participating in a project on the theme of 'The Forest Child', which has clear potential for developing skills in drama and for promoting personal development. New art topics have been introduced to broaden learning experiences. The school is considering ways of developing its citizenship programme in the most effective way. Next term, a 'Thinking Skills' project is to be trialled in Years 1 and 3.
21. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The knowledgeable coordinator, teachers and their assistants works very effectively to tailor the curriculum offered to groups and individuals.
22. A very wide range of clubs provides opportunities for all pupils to pursue their interests outside lessons and parents appreciate this. These include sports, art, chess, computers, needlework, gardening, recorders, choir and guitar. There are private clubs for Spanish, gymnastics and dance and commercially-run before and after-school clubs. Sports teams play competitive matches against local schools, often with considerable success. The teachers enrich learning further by organising a wide range of visits to places such as Shugborough Hall and Umberslade Children's Farm. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 benefit from residential visits. The school regularly makes very effective use of the knowledge and expertise of visitors, including the emergency and the Natural History Service. The quality of this provision has a significantly positive effect on pupils' interest in learning and the standards they attain.
23. There are sufficient members of staff to allow the curriculum to be taught effectively. The accommodation is good. Strengths include the information and communication technology suite, a large hall with an audio sound system and an easily accessible library. Although ramps provide good access for pupils and adults with severe mobility problems, parts of the building would be difficult to negotiate. Storage space is very limited, particularly in the hall. There is a wide range of resources to support teaching and learning in all subjects. The library contains a good range of fiction and non-fiction books. There has been particularly good improvement in the resources for information and communication technology.

24. Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is very good and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. There are regular timetabled opportunities for pupils to discuss issues of concern, such as keeping safe, responsibilities and making decisions. There are good opportunities for the pupils to develop social skills in clubs, on school visits, in class assemblies and in school productions. Health education has improved since the previous inspection. The pupils learn about the need for good hygiene and a balanced diet as part of a healthy lifestyle. The Healthy Roadshow recently visited the school and a healthy snack week was held earlier this term. Formal sex education for the oldest pupils is handled sensitively by the teachers and the school nurse. In science, the pupils learn about the dangers of drugs and alcohol abuse.

## **Care, guidance and support**

Pupils are cared for very well. The provision for their welfare, health and safety is very good. The support, advice and guidance they are given is very good. Pupils are involved very well in the work and development of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A very caring, supportive environment is created.
- Pupils are offered many opportunities to express their views and help develop the school.

### **Commentary**

25. This is a very caring and very supportive school where every pupil is encouraged to do their best. Each is valued, respected and their views are listened to. Procedures to ensure pupils' safety and well-being are very good. Those for child protection meet requirements fully. Teachers and other staff pay very good attention to health and safety. Regular risk assessments are carried out and appropriate action taken. Pupils feel safe in school because they know that there will always be an adult to turn to if they need help or advice. The provision for supporting, guiding and caring for pupils is better now than when the school was last inspected.
26. The school strikes exactly the right balance between offering a caring and nurturing environment, and urging each pupil to do their best. Each pupil is well-known to the staff and so are their abilities; lesson plans show clear evidence of fine-tuning to meet the needs of individuals. Many opportunities are offered for pupils to evaluate their own learning. Children with special educational needs are particularly well-supported and as a result make very good progress. Pupils indicate they are well aware of the National Curriculum levels they are working at and say teachers make it clear how they can improve, through helpful comments, marking of homework and advice in class.
27. The school acts very effectively to involve pupils through seeking their views and acting upon them. The school council meets weekly and functions as a lively democratic forum. Changes it has instigated include better signage for the toilets, splitting the playground into zones for different activities and encouraging the whole school to have only healthy snacks. Even children in the Foundation Stage are able to explain the benefits of the school council and why they enjoy being members of it. Teachers are very willing to listen to pupils' views in lessons. This helps to build pupils' self-confidence.

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

The school's links with parents are very good. Its links with the community are very good. The links made with other schools are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents' views are very positive and they support the school well.
- Very good links with the community help pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding.
- Good links with other schools contribute to raising standards and help pupils to transfer to secondary school more easily.



## Commentary

28. Parents hold very positive opinions about the school and fully recognise its many good features. In particular, they value the strong leadership of the headteacher, the good teaching, settling in arrangements and the progress their children make. The school consulted them on their views using a detailed questionnaire - most responses were very positive, though some said they would like some feedback on the exercise. The information provided for parents is good. The annual reports about each pupil's progress are of good quality, although they lack information about National Curriculum levels. The combined prospectus and governors' annual report is detailed and informative, especially about what pupils are actually learning.
29. Parents are very supportive of the school. They participate in good numbers at events such as the weekly achievement assembly, sports and performances. Parents also help regularly in school and the parent-teacher association is very active in fund-raising. Parents support their children's education considerably, by, for example, ensuring that homework tasks are completed. Links with parents have improved since the last inspection.
30. There are very good links with the community, although by virtue of its location the school has no obvious local settlement. Nonetheless it has worked hard to build and maintain a wide variety of links. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection. The school has very close association with the church, which encompasses regular worship and activities such as the Harvest Festival. Other links include participation in the Solihull choirs' competition and curricular projects involving a local supermarket. Through its annual charity week, pupils raise money to support local organisations, such as a nearby hospice. Pupils also gain a wider understanding of environmental issues through their work at the local Earlswood Lakes leisure area and of compassion for animals through their work for the animal sanctuary. Pupils are encouraged to be mature and outward-looking and have considerable depth in their understanding of others.
31. Links with other schools and colleges are good. St Patrick's is part of a local cluster group and works productively with local secondary schools specialising in art and sports to raise standards in dance and promote opportunities for competition. Local colleges run courses to assist parents in helping their children with reading and maths. The transition to secondary school is handled well. Teachers make good use of a programme of work provided by the local education authority to ensure pupils experience minimum disruption to their studies. Teachers from the various secondary schools to which pupils transfer visit the school in the summer term and as a result, pupils in Year 6 are confident about their impending move.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The quality of leadership by the headteacher is excellent. The quality of governance is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's excellent leadership and management create a strong focus on achieving high standards and improving provision.
- Governors are very supportive, committed and hardworking.
- Very effective administration and financial control help in the achievement of educational objectives.

## Commentary

32. The headteacher exercises excellent leadership, the key ingredient of which is a relentless focus on raising standards and improving provision. In the ten years of the headteacher's tenure the number of pupils has increased from about 90 to its present 287. The most important outcome of the headteacher's leadership has been the creation of a culture of high expectations of all pupils no matter what their ability, no matter what the task or endeavour. This has been possible because the headteacher has created and sustained of a high performing team of teachers and teaching assistants, imbued with the headteacher's and their own high degree of ambition for the pupils and the school.
33. The leadership of other key staff is very good overall. The headteacher is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher. The subject coordinators vary in their experience, and some are relatively new to their posts, but overall are very effective. They have a very clear understanding of their role in checking the quality of work in their subjects. The work of some is outstanding.
34. The management of the headteacher is excellent. The analysis of the standards pupils attain is of a high order. The headteacher has a very detailed knowledge of the progress made by every pupil in the school. The use of assessment information to make the best possible provision for those in danger of underachieving is a great strength of her management. The headteacher's work to improve the quality of teaching and learning is also of great importance. Very good use is made of local education authority staff to train subject coordinators in the skills of observing lessons. This has a very good impact on their ability to support colleagues in raising standards.
35. The very good leadership and management of the provision for special educational needs and the very effective work of the coordinator and the teaching assistants who work with the pupils concerned contribute strongly to the very good results the school achieves.
36. The overall contribution of the governing body is good. They are very supportive of the headteacher and school staff, and are very strongly committed to moving the school forward. Governors have made great efforts to support the school in its expansion, and in the provision of new buildings and the refurbishment of existing ones. The Chairman has set up a very valuable link with a school in Malawi which serves very well to promote pupils' cultural understanding. The governors' involvement in the life of the school is good, for example, there is a link governor for child protection. Governors meet all their statutory duties, with the exception of providing information for parents about plans to improve access for the disabled. There is a good race equality policy and suitable arrangements for monitoring its implementation.
37. The governors are involved well in drawing up the budget and monitoring expenditure. The resources available to the school are used very well in pursuit of its educational priorities. The principles of best value are applied well to all its work, including the consultation of parents and pupils. Financial control is very good; the recommendations of the last auditors' report have been implemented successfully. Day to day administration is very effective. The school secretary's contribution to this and very many other aspects of school life is considerable.

### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	743,736	Balance from previous year	58,237

Total expenditure	717,528
Expenditure per pupil	2,407

Balance carried forward to the next	26,208
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## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

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

38. The provision in the Nursery is satisfactory and in the Reception class it is very good; provision is good overall. As a result, children achieve well overall. The children enter the Nursery with broadly typical attainment. All members of staff work effectively at settling the children in and providing a relaxed, supportive and welcoming environment. In the Reception class, the members of staff work very hard and successfully at developing skills and knowledge. The very good practice in the Reception class does not sufficiently influence the work in the Nursery at the moment. Monitoring of teaching by the coordinator has not as yet been extensive enough to spread the very good practice from the Reception into the Nursery, reflecting the relative newness of the coordinator. The school is aware of this situation and has plans to address it.
39. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. All the weaknesses identified at that time have now been remedied. Provision is no longer unsatisfactory and both settings are now very appropriate learning environments. Teachers' planning is detailed and fully takes into account the Foundation Stage guidance. Information provided for parents is very welcoming and informative. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good but the coordinator is relatively new to the post and has not yet provided enough guidance for the work of the Nursery. Consequently, the two settings do not totally complement each other.

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

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is good.

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

- The children settle very well into both settings.
- All adults play an effective and vital role in supporting all children in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Children make very good progress in the Reception class in the development of their independent skills and the way they persevere with tasks.

#### **Commentary**

40. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the Nursery and very good in the Reception. All the adults ensure that the environment provided, together with the ethos of the settings, helps the children to learn quickly what is expected of them. They settle readily into the routines and are encouraged to be responsible. In the Nursery, children are confident when working with others and share resources freely. They enter the room happily and eagerly, trusting the adults and relating well to them. They achieve satisfactorily and are prepared well to join the Reception class in September. In this class children achieve very well, so that by the time they leave the Reception class, most exceed the goals set for this area of learning.
41. In the Reception class, children concentrate on the task set, doing so quite unaided at times. They are sensible and can undertake many activities independently. They persevere with tasks impressively. Children work very well together, supporting each other confidently. They care for their environment and show a joy and enthusiasm for everything within it.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children make very good progress in the Reception class and achieve well.
- Good opportunities for role-play help to develop speaking and listening skills.
- An emphasis on the development of reading and writing skills in Reception helps children attain above the national goals for early learning by the end of the Foundation Stage.

### **Commentary**

42. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the Nursery and very good in the Reception class. In the Nursery, all the children are supported well and encouraged to talk and extend their vocabulary through role-play and topic work. The work on people who help us is made real when the teacher asks the children to act out the role of a fireman rescuing the animals and teddies from a fire. Children use appropriate language and chant rhymes accurately. Children are helped to enjoy books and can identify their names for the register. In the Reception class, the teacher's very good understanding of how children learn leads to well targeted work. Lessons are exciting and interactive. Children are encouraged to read accurately with the help of Boris the puppet. Very good assessment strategies ensure that individual needs are identified and addressed immediately. The skills and knowledge needed to read and write are taught very effectively. This leads to a significant proportion of children reading books above the expected level with interest, enjoyment and understanding. Reading is supported well by the parents, and many children visit libraries outside school. Many children can write in complete sentences, with accurate spelling and punctuation. Overall, children achieve well and most are on course to exceed the national goals for early learning by the end of the Reception year.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Some excellent teaching was seen in the Reception class.
- Children leave the Reception class having made very good progress throughout the year.
- Children leave the Reception class exceeding expected levels of attainment.
- Very good improvements have made in this area of learning since the last inspection.

### **Commentary**

43. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the Nursery. In the Reception class they are very good and at times excellent. The teaching assistant in the Reception class plays a vital role in supporting the teaching and contributes very well to the standards that children achieve. In the Nursery children are beginning to use number names to ten accurately and understand that numbers are used to identify sizes of groups. They can, for example, count the five teddies who need rescuing from 'the fire', pointing to them as they count. Once children transfer to the Reception class they make rapid progress. By the time they leave, two thirds of the group are attaining above the national goals, with many children able to count to 100 and knowing, for example, that 2 less than 30 is 28. Most count in 10's, 5's and 2's to 100. They use the

computer effectively to practise the skills they have learnt. They are developing appropriate mathematical vocabulary, for example, using the word 'symmetrical' when creating butterflies with paint.

44. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Children achieve well. No child is leaving the Reception class attaining below the expected level and most are on course to exceed the national goals for early learning by the end of the Reception year. There is now an appropriate emphasis on practical activities being used to enhance learning, and no longer a dependence on worksheets.

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

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children learn effectively about the world in which they live through a very good range of first-hand experiences.
- Children achieve well and leave the Foundation Stage with a broad knowledge on which to build.
- Children exceed the expected outcomes by the end of the Reception class.

### **Commentary**

45. There is a broad range of first-hand experiences planned throughout the Foundation Stage, which motivates the children well. In the Nursery, they meet a range of people who help us, such as those working in the police and fire services and learn about their work. They respond well to these experiences effectively by representing them in paintings and drawing on them in their role-play. This practice is continued in the Reception class as children learn about mini-beasts and plant life. They were seen watching with great excitement and anticipation as a butterfly emerged from its pupa. They use accurate vocabulary when talking about the life-cycle of a caterpillar and when planting seeds. Information and communication technology is used well. Children program the Roamer accurately to move across the floor. Computers are used effectively in both settings to support learning. Teaching and learning are good and most children are on course to exceed the national goals for early learning by the end of the Reception year.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good use made of an enthusiastic, part-time teacher to teach games to Reception children.
- Despite the temporary accommodation, the members of the Nursery staff work hard to ensure that pupils' physical development is supported effectively through outside play.

### **Commentary**

46. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some good teaching of games skills in the Reception class. The part-time teacher has great enthusiasm for this area of learning, which is

imparted to the Reception class children. In an outdoor lesson, children were observed throwing, catching and balancing well. They moved confidently and organised themselves effectively into groups. The children enjoyed the lesson. In the Nursery all children are given opportunities to develop their manipulative skills by handling dough, scissors, pencils and paint brushes. Their hand-eye coordination is appropriately developed and they balance well on gymnastics equipment. The temporary outside area is being used well as an additional space for learning. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection when outside, adventurous play was limited. Children demonstrate an awareness of space and avoid colliding with others when riding their bikes. In the Reception class, children cut out accurately, manipulate small pieces of equipment and enjoy constructing jigsaws and play world environments. They use a range of tools with confidence and precision. Children achieve satisfactorily and on course to attain the national goals by the end of the Reception year.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for pupils' creative development is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good improvement has been made in provision since the time of the last inspection.
- Opportunities for children to make choices could be further extended.

### **Commentary**

47. Teachers provide a broad range of experiences to help develop children's creativity. These include opportunities through role-play to stimulate imaginations, such as the area set up in the Nursery for the emergency services and using the outside area as an imaginary road crossing. Children undertake an appropriate range of activities involving paint, collage work, pastels and crayons. In one activity, they enjoyed making a large fire engine with reflective and coloured papers. In the Reception class, children understanding about paint mixing and how to create different colours, shades and tones. They learn a range of songs and clapped the rhythm accurately when singing, 'If I were a butterfly'.
48. There has been good improvement in provision since the last inspection. Opportunities for imaginative play are more extensive and built clearly into teachers' planning. There are more opportunities for children to make choices for themselves. Children's achievement is satisfactory and most of them are on course to attain the national goals for early learning by the end of the Reception year.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is excellent.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is consistently high.
- Pupils' writing is of impressive quality.
- Very good teaching results in pupils learning very effectively.
- Leadership and management are excellent.

## Commentary

49. Pupils have achieved consistently impressive results over recent years. Those currently in Year 6 are on course to attain very high and sustain the trend of the previous three years. The early indications of the 2004 results in Year 2 show that reading and writing standards are very high and likely to be in the top five per cent in the country. Standards have risen since the last inspection.
50. Across the school, pupils attain above the expected level in all aspects of English. In Year 2 in speaking and listening, pupils talk and listen with growing confidence in a variety of settings. Observation of an art lesson for that age group showed that they take account of what others say and begin to add detail to their answers. One pupil agreed with another, saying, "I think he is right" and then gave extended reasons for their opinion. Year 6 pupils express themselves clearly using complex sentences, which show good attention to the needs of the listener. The very good emphasis placed on developing speaking and listening skills by teachers promotes high standards. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, the prompting by the teacher to get pupils to explain a bit more illustrates this point.
51. Pupils' enthusiasm for reading and the good support from home, help in the achievement of high standards. Year 2 pupils read with growing confidence and readily express preferences for different genres and authors. By Year 6 most pupils read accurately, fluently and expressively at a level well above that expected for their age. They make notes from a range of reference books to assist their work on a given topic. The language rich environment and the ready access to good quality literature not only enhances pupils' reading standards, but allows them to absorb a range of models for their own writing.
52. Inspection evidence is consistent with the findings of Her Majesty's Inspectors who visited the school last year looking at boys' writing across the country. Unlike the national picture, boys' achievement in writing is almost as good as girls'. This is due in part to the language rich environment, writing topics chosen to appeal to boys and the frequent use of computers. The writing of pupils in Year 2 is structured and clear and the features of different writing forms are used appropriately. Interesting words are chosen and used with precision by pupils in Year 6 to produce engaging images in their stories. Poetry is also of very high quality.
53. The main reasons for these very high writing standards are:
- the very good teaching and learning;
  - the very good personal development of pupils;
  - the school's culture of striving for excellence;
  - the highly structured approach to teaching writing skills;
  - the teachers' clear understanding of the characteristics of high quality writing;
  - the skilful choice of writing topics that appeal to boys as much as girls;
  - the quality of marking, which is sometimes outstanding;
  - the excellent work of the subject coordinator.
54. The quality of teaching is very good and several excellent lessons were observed. This results in very effective learning in which pupils are absorbed in their tasks, working earnestly and carefully. Meticulous, detailed lesson planning, highly effective demonstration of skills by the teachers and the systematic use of writing frames and other devices have a strong, positive impact on achieving high standards. Pupils' attitudes reflect the enthusiasm of most of the



teachers. In a Year 5 literacy lesson cheers went up when the words, “We are going to write our own poems today”, were heard.

55. The leadership and management of the coordinator are of the highest quality. The coordinator acts as a very effective role model for teaching and shows immense commitment to the pupils in the outstanding quality of the marking of their work. Monitoring of all aspects of English work enables the coordinator to fine tune the provision for the subject and to plan assiduously to maintain the very high standards. The very detailed feedback of the outcomes of monitoring to each teacher ensures that everyone knows how they can contribute to this.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

56. Although opportunities to develop literacy skills are not systematically planned for all subjects, teachers provide very well for this in practice. Very good encouragement to Year 4 pupils to write as though they were a Tudor child, enhances both history and literacy skills. Pupils make effective use of their writing skills to describe a meeting with Henry VIII and to write vivid newspaper accounts of the execution of Anne Boleyn. The use of printed worksheets in subjects such as science reduces opportunities in Years 1 and 2.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved significantly since the previous inspection and are now high.
- Teaching is very good and this enables all groups of pupils to achieve very well.
- There are plenty of opportunities for the pupils to apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum.

### Commentary

57. In Years 2 and 6, all groups of pupils achieve very well. Overall standards in basic numeracy and in other areas of mathematics are well above average, which is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. In both Year 2 and Year 6, almost all the pupils attain the nationally expected levels, with many exceeding them. Boys and girls attain equally well.
58. In Year 2, the pupils' skills in basic numeracy are very good. They make quick mental recall of number facts. They have a very good understanding of place value in three digit numbers. They order numbers to 100 and higher attaining pupils do this confidently to 1000. They investigate number patterns, including odd and even numbers. The pupils have a very good understanding of simple fractions. They recognise and name two and three-dimensional shapes confidently. They measure length accurately, although lower attaining pupils find it harder to make reasonable estimates beforehand. The pupils are developing their ability to use their knowledge to solve simple word problems.
59. In Year 6, the pupils use their knowledge of all four operations to solve mental calculations quickly and to apply their skills in solving real life problems, including holiday costs, ratio and proportion. They use written methods of short and long multiplication very effectively and they have a very good understanding of equivalent fractions and decimals. They measure and draw angles accurately. The pupils investigate probability and the effects of reflection, rotation and translation on a shape's position. They plot coordinates accurately in all four quadrants. They calculate the area and perimeter of irregular shapes with confidence and represent data by means of accurate tables and graphs.
60. Teaching and learning are very good. Some excellent teaching was observed in Years 3 to 6. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection and is an important factor in pupils' achievement. The teachers plan their lessons in great detail and they ensure that all pupils are fully involved in learning. This ensures that all groups of pupils, including high attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, make very good progress. There is a very strong focus on developing mental calculations and problem solving skills. The teachers encourage the pupils to explain their strategies and this enhances understanding and helps them to see that there is often more than one way of solving a calculation or a problem. In a Year 4 lesson, this helped the pupils to solve problems by multiplying by 10 and then adjusting by addition or subtraction.
61. The teachers make very good use of learning resources in order to enhance learning, especially the interactive whiteboards linked to a computer. This helped pupils in a Year 2 lesson to find multiples of 10 up to 100. In a Year 6 lesson, it helped the pupils in a subtraction investigation and in their ability to solve a real-life problem involving the area of nets. The teachers use

questioning very well, in order to make the pupils think carefully. In the same Year 6 lesson, the teacher asked “Why would this information be helpful to the manufacturer?” This helped the pupils to understand the link between finding the net and the need for the most economical use of packaging. The teachers mark pupils work positively, offering excellent guidance as to how improvements might be made. They set regular homework tasks to consolidate and extend learning.

62. The new coordinator has made a good start in leading and managing the subject. Other teachers are offered help and advice. Sampling of pupils’ work provides an overview of standards and the coordinator’s monitoring of planning ensures consistency throughout the school. There are very good procedures for assessing and tracking the pupils’ progress and very good use is made of this information to highlight areas of relative weakness, plan the next steps in learning and to set pupil targets for improvement. The coordinator has developed a clear action plan to maintain current high standards.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

63. There are good opportunities for the pupils to develop and make use of their mathematical skills in other subjects. In science, for example, pupils in Year 6 draw accurate bar line graphs of the time taken for sugar cubes to dissolve in different water temperatures. Pupils in Year 5 draw graphs depicting the length of days throughout the year.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is excellent.

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

- Pupils’ achievement in undertaking scientific investigations is excellent.
- Achievement at the end of Year 6 is high for all ability groups.
- Pupils show commitment, motivation and enjoyment in science lessons.
- The leadership and management of the subject are excellent.
- The very good provision noted at the time of the last inspection has improved and is now excellent.

#### **Commentary**

64. Pupils enter Year 1 with knowledge and skills at the appropriate level for their age. By Year 2, standards have risen and pupils are attaining above national expectations. By Year 6, many pupils are attaining far above the nationally expected levels and standards overall are very high. This demonstrates very good achievement, with some outstanding results in the development of pupils’ investigative skills.
65. In recent years, attainment in the national tests in science has been very high in Year 6, with all pupils attaining the nationally expected level and a very high proportion exceeding this. Teacher assessments in Year 2 have shown pupils’ attainment to be consistently above the expected level, particularly the proportion of pupils exceeding expectations. Over the past three years the achievement of pupils in Year 6 has been very high when looking at their progress from Year 2.
66. Pupils achieve very well because of a very strong emphasis on developing skills in scientific investigations. Pupils are guided very clearly when undertaking practical activities. There is a

clear focus on the use of correct scientific vocabulary, reasoned predictions, how to set up a fair test and how to form accurate conclusions. The emphasis on practical, first-hand experiences to enhance knowledge and skills was evident in every lesson, whether looking at the reproductive systems of a flower, the affect of light on green plants or the water flow through different types of soil. Equipment and resources are always of a high standard to support this.

67. Teaching and learning throughout the school are very good and at times excellent, particularly with the older year groups. All teachers have very good subject knowledge. They plan challenging activities. Expectations are high and this leads to very good behaviour and attitudes to learning. There is a very good pace to lessons and an impressive emphasis on pupils retaining knowledge and taking responsibility for their own learning. For example, in a Year 5 lesson on the reproductive system of a flower, pupils set themselves targets of how many facts they would remember by the end of the lesson. These were often exceeded through a variety of assessment strategies provided by the teacher, often including use of the interactive whiteboard.
68. The excellent teaching observed in another lesson involved very skilful questioning techniques with extensive demands made of pupils' learning. Here pupils were skilfully led yet given responsibility for thinking things out and making decisions for themselves. Pupils worked with a high level of enthusiasm, commitment and concentration. They were engrossed in their work and were determined to achieve success. Assessment at a whole school level and of individuals is very good. Pupils clearly understand what they need to do in order to make progress in their learning.
69. Very good use is made of writing skills and, more impressively, mathematical skills. In work seen, results were gathered accurately, analysed effectively and data presented in a range of appropriate ways using graphs, charts and tables. Information and communication technology is incorporated into many lessons through the use of the interactive whiteboard. The coordinator continues to provide excellent leadership, as was seen at the time of the last inspection. The high standards have been maintained and overall provision for the subject has improved even further.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision for information and communication technology is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have improved since the previous inspection and are now above average.
- Teaching is good and is a significant factor in the pupils' achievement.
- Particularly good use is made of the interactive whiteboards to enhance teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- Subject leadership is very good and is a significantly positive factor in provision for information and communication technology.

### **Commentary**

70. In Years 2 and 6, all groups of pupils achieve well. Standards are above average, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Boys and girls attain equally well. Pupils in Year 2 show good keyboard skills and mouse control. Their word processing skills are good. They use different sizes, styles and colours of font to meet the requirements of the reader. Pupils highlight text and make text bold. They combine text and art effectively. They delete mistakes

and they know how to save their work into relevant files. In art, the pupils generate effective symmetrical patterns using computer programs. In work linked to geography, the pupils use relevant programs to create maps of an imaginary town and they select an appropriate route for a screen turtle to take. In mathematics and science, the pupils represent data by means of accurate pictograms generated by computers.

71. By Year 6, the pupils can access the Internet confidently to research information in a variety of subjects and they create good multi-media presentations on different topics. They make effective use of spreadsheets to enter, analyse and retrieve data. The pupils have a good understanding of how input devices can control output devices and that all devices can be stopped using one command. The pupils show good word processing skills in describing aspects of life in Tudor and Victorian times in history lessons. In work on persuasive writing in literacy, they make effective use of different fonts to create eye-catching advertisements and posters promoting the forthcoming school fete. The pupils represent data, such as their favourite activities at Boreatton Park, by means of accurate graphs.
72. Teaching is good and is a significant factor in rising standards. There are examples of very good teaching. In a Year 6 literacy topic, the use of information and communication technology enhanced learning about Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'. The pupils added speech and thought bubbles to freeze-frame photographs taken during role-play. Using a digital camera, the pupils added imaginative effects to photographs to give their interpretations of some of the play's famous lines. The teachers manage classes in the information and communication technology suite well, ensuring that all pupils are fully involved in learning. There is a good balance between direct teaching of skills and independent use of the computers.
73. The new coordinator has made a very good start in leading and managing the subject and this is a significant factor in raising standards. There is a clear action plan to raise standards further. Planning is soundly based on national guidelines and there are good systems for assessing the pupils' progress and for using this information to plan the next steps in learning. The curriculum is enriched by a weekly computer club.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

74. Provision here is very good. The teachers are confident in using information and communication technology, particularly the interactive whiteboards to enhance teaching and learning in a variety of subjects. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, this helped the pupils to select appropriate coins to buy items in a toy shop. Computers were used well in a science lesson for Year 3 to help the pupils to understand the use of databases in learning about mini-beasts. In a Year 5 art lesson, the teacher used a graphics package very effectively to enhance the pupils' ability to create pictures in the style of Mondrian.

### **HUMANITIES**

75. Subjects in this curriculum area were sampled. The standards and provision in religious education are reported in the Section 23 inspection report.
76. In Year 2 and Year 6, all groups of pupils achieve well in **geography**. Standards are above average, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Boys and girls attain equally well. Year 2 pupils make good progress in developing early mapping skills. They can locate features accurately on a local map and on a local aerial photograph and name and locate the constituent countries of the United Kingdom, all of which is consistent with the national

expectations for their age. The pupils have a good understanding of the importance of water throughout the world and of its many uses and know much about the physical and human features of the coast, again consistent with national expectations. By Year 6, the pupils can access the Internet to locate world events currently in the news. They have a good understanding of environmental pollution, have the knowledge and awareness necessary to consider the negative influence of mass tourism on the Greek island of Kefalonia, and can recognise the changing nature of a river and its valley from source to mouth. The breadth and depth of their knowledge is better than typically found. The subject is used well to develop literacy skills, particularly writing.

77. Teaching and learning in **geography** are very good and contribute directly to pupils' achievement. There is a strong focus on developing mapping and research skills and on using geography as a vehicle for developing literacy skills through extended writing. There is much emphasis too, on making the pupils aware of environmental issues. This was very much the case in a Year 2 lesson, where the teacher made very effective use of a television report, which helped the pupils understand the need to care for the environment. The teachers encourage the use of correct geographical vocabulary and this has a good impact on learning. Some excellent teaching was observed in Year 5 where the teachers made extremely effective use of models to illustrate the effects of flooding by the Mississippi River. The teachers also used role-play very effectively to develop a sense of empathy with people whose lives were devastated by the floods. Local fieldwork and visits to places further afield, such as Stratford upon Avon, enrich learning.
78. No **history** lessons were observed during the inspection so it is not possible to make a judgement on provision or on the quality of teaching. However, an analysis of pupils' work indicates that all groups of pupils achieve well. In Year 2 and Year 6, standards are above average. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection for Year 6 and is an improvement for Year 2. Planning indicates good curriculum coverage. Learning is enriched by visits to places such as Shugborough and Avoncroft Museum and by visiting theatre. groups.

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

79. Subjects in this curriculum area were not a focus of the inspection and were sampled. Only one lesson was observed in **art and design**. The evidence gained from looking at pupils' work in their sketchbooks and on display, and discussion with the recently-appointed coordinator, shows that standards are broadly average in Year 2 and 6 and that the pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils undertake a satisfactory range of activities which often begin by looking at a specific artist's work. They use their sketchbooks effectively to trial ideas and develop their own skills and knowledge. Those pupils who are identified as having a talent in the subject are supported effectively through the newly formed art club. Some very good, and at times, excellent pieces of work are produced, notably Year 3 and Year 5. A creative arts project has focused on Year 3, and the collage work on display demonstrates a high standard of skill development. The lesson observed in Year 5 produced very high results from the pupils with work in sketchbooks exceeding the expected standards. The use of music and images set the focus and created an appropriate atmosphere. The teacher made available a very wide range of resources for them to use, which stimulated ideas and gave opportunities to experiment with different colours and textures. Pupils were given time to create tropical images which they evaluated and modified in an informed way. The teacher's own high level of skill and expertise had a huge impact on raising the standard of work produced. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The creative arts project is beginning to raise effectively the profile of

art within the whole school community. The recently appointed coordinator has excellent subject knowledge and a clear action plan for future developments within the subject.

80. Only one **design and technology** lesson was observed. No judgement is made of the quality of teaching and learning. Evidence from discussion with pupils, the scrutiny of their work and teachers' planning suggests that standards are well above the expected levels at the end of Years 2 and 6. The high expectations of teachers, based on very good subject knowledge, result in pupils achieving very well. Pupils in Year 2 have the ability carry out simple research into winding mechanisms, before designing and making their own products based on this idea. They create good quality annotated design drawings in preparation for making their own wind up toys. The sophistication of their work is also shown by their use of mock ups to test ideas. For example, they make a paper version of a panda puppet, before the final artifact. They record the process they employ and evaluate their products, in order to improve their skills. The work of Year 6 pupils shows the rigorous approach adopted by their teacher to the design process. Very helpful guidance to pupils, based on that provided by the local education authority ensures that pupils consider matters such as the fitness of design proposals to the function of the product. Pupils are required to identify the potential customer. Research is conducted, including on Internet, and pupils disassemble commercially made products to help their studies. Surveys of preferences are carried out. Pupils produce a step by step breakdown of how the making will proceed and 'mock up' versions are produced. The finished products are of high quality.
81. Only one **music** lesson was observed and so no judgement is made of overall provision, standards or the quality of teaching and learning. Evidence was gathered from listening to pupils sing and discussion with the member of staff teaching music. The school is well-resourced, with a good range of tuned and untuned instruments, and this led to very good achievement for pupils of all abilities in the lesson seen. In this very good lesson, Year 4 pupils worked diligently at identifying the pitch of a range of notes using glockenspiels. The very good subject knowledge of the teacher, together with an expert understanding of how pupils learn in this subject, meant that all pupils persevered and achieved successful results by the end of the lesson. All pupils sing well and attain good standards. This was particularly evident when the whole school came together for assembly and a church service. At these times, pupils sing enthusiastically, tunefully and with good intonation and phrasing. Singing remains a considerable strength of the school, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, as pupils are now given appropriate access to instruments during lessons. Extra curricular clubs and activities continue to enhance provision very effectively. The use of one person to do most of the music teaching is helpful in ensuring that learning takes place progressively.
82. No lessons were observed in **physical education**. A discussion was held with the subject coordinator. In 2002 the school was awarded the Active Mark in recognition of its success in involving a high proportion of pupils in physical activities. All teachers lead extra-curricular clubs, many of which provide sports opportunities. All pupils receive swimming instruction. Standards are high, with all pupils in most cohorts able to swim 25 metres unaided by the time they leave the school. Many achieve much higher levels of performance and gain life-saving and personal survival awards. Despite working only part-time, the subject coordinator leads well and has helped to raise standards by providing training for teachers in the teaching of dance and working with local education authority staff to devise a programme of work. This makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development through the inclusion of dances from different cultures, such as Greek and African forms.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- High quality teaching enables pupils to reflect on issues important to them.
- There is strong commitment to improving provision.

### **Commentary**

83. The lessons that were seen were of high quality; one was excellent. The teachers provide very valuable opportunities for pupils to reflect on issues important to them. In the excellent Year 6 lesson about responsibility and risk, the teacher maintained a very good pace and used role-play very effectively to help pupils understand that some judgements are based on rules and others on personal opinion.
84. The school takes this aspect of its work very seriously. It is working towards achieving the Healthy Schools award. It makes good use of the national planning guidance for teaching citizenship. The subject is lead and managed very well. The conscientious coordinator keeps up to date with the latest developments through regular training, which are disseminated to other teachers.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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