

INSPECTION REPORT

STECHFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103262

Headteacher: Mrs M A Bufton

Lead inspector: Mr F Carruthers

Dates of inspection: 3 – 6 November 2003

Inspection number: 258025

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school: | Primary |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 3 – 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll; | 222 |
| School address: | Albert Road Stechford Birmingham |
| Postcode: | B33 8SJ |
| Telephone number: | 0121 464 3245 |
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| Appropriate authority: | Governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr N Ambler |
| Date of previous inspection: | 29 October 2001 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This inner-city school has 222 boys and girls on roll aged three to 11, which makes its size about the average of most primary schools nationally. Most pupils live within the immediate area, which comprises mainly local authority housing and some privately owned housing. Levels of social deprivation in the area are well above the average found nationally. There are 36 children in the nursery, most of whom attend part-time. About half of the pupils are from ethnic minority groups such as Pakistani, Indian or Black Caribbean. The most frequent minority language spoken is Urdu. Thirty-three pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Forty-five pupils have special educational needs, of whom five have statements of special educational need. Their needs are mainly moderate learning difficulties and some have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupil mobility¹ is twice the average found in most schools and is very high in some year groups. The attainment of the children on entry to the nursery is generally well below average. Since the time of the last inspection, there has been a new headteacher appointed. The school receives funding from the *Excellence in Cities* initiative.

¹ Pupil mobility signifies the number of pupils who start or leave the school at times other than the start of the reception year or the end of Year 6.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--|
| 21285 | Mr F Carruthers | Lead inspector | English Geography History Religious education English as an additional language |
| 19320 | Mrs B Attaway | Lay inspector | |
| 11419 | Mrs J Underwood | Team inspector | Mathematics Art and design Music The Foundation Stage Special educational needs |
| 19897 | Mr A Evans | Team inspector | Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a good education for pupils, who make good progress overall and achieve well. Standards have risen since the time of the last inspection and are now average overall by the end of Year 6. The quality of teaching is good, and the leadership and management of the school are very good. Although the cost of educating a pupil at the school is above average, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards that pupils achieve in National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 have risen significantly in the last two years. Pupils achieve well over time but there are few pupils attaining above the nationally expected level, for example in science.
- Pupils' attitudes, values, behaviour and personal development are very good.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress over time.
- Children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes.
- Very high levels of pupil mobility, especially in the Foundation Stage² and Years 1 and 2, have a very significant, adverse impact on standards at the end of Year 2.
- The quality of teaching is good with strengths in all aspects.
- The care that pupils receive is very good and monitoring of the provision of support, advice and guidance is excellent.
- Links with parents are very good.
- The headteacher has been the dynamic and inspirational force that has resulted in very good improvement in provision and standards since the last inspection. Governors are well informed, know the school's strengths and weaknesses and take a key role in shaping how the school is to develop.
- The school's budget is in deficit but the school has agreed procedures with the local education authority to bring it into balance.

There has been very good improvement since the time of the last inspection, when the school was judged to have serious weaknesses. All key issues have been resolved well and standards that pupils achieve have risen significantly. There has been very good improvement in provision for information and communication technology (ICT). Good improvements have also been made to the accommodation for the children in the Foundation Stage and partnerships with parents.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | all schools | | | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 |
| English | E* | E | C | A |
| mathematics | E | E | C | A |
| science | E* | E | E | 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.

By the end of Year 6, all pupils achieve well and attain standards that are close to the national average in English, mathematics and science. The reason why the results for science in the 2003 tests were well below the national average is because few pupils achieved above the expected Level 4. As indicated in the table above, pupils achieved very well in English and mathematics compared

² The Foundation Stage in this school consists of the nursery and reception classes.

with pupils in similar schools, and their achievement in science was average. Attainment in ICT is average. Children in the nursery and in the reception class make good progress towards the goals that children are expected to achieve by the end of the reception year but most have not achieved them all by then. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall in the infant-aged classes but standards at the end of Year 2 are below and often well below average. This is because they are adversely affected by the high levels of pupil mobility in the younger age groups, which the school has little control over. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress because of good provision.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Their attitudes and behaviour are very good. Levels of attendance are well below the national average and are adversely affected by holidays in term time, with some extended holidays of up to eight weeks.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching is good. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are very good. Teachers throughout the school have very good knowledge of subjects they teach and they manage the pupils very well. A good curriculum is enriched by a very good range of visits, visitors to school and curricular projects. All aspects of care for pupils, their health and safety are very good. Links with parents are having an excellent impact on how well parents can contribute to their children's learning. Links with the wider community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. There have been major improvements in how well the school is led and how governors are at the centre of strategic planning. These have resulted in a whole-school commitment to the raising of standards and developing the quality of provision. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. Teamwork among governors, teaching and support staff is very good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the school and appreciate the many different ways that they are involved in the life of the school. They strongly support the achievement of the headteacher in promoting a school that listens to the views of parents and pupils. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and are confident they will be helped and supported if they have concerns.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Pursue the drive to raise standards, especially those achieved by higher attaining pupils.

A minor issue is:

- Improve the designing and evaluating elements of the curriculum for design and technology.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is **good** overall. From entry into school to the end of Year 6, pupils make good progress and standards are **average** overall in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards that pupils achieve in National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 have risen significantly in the last two years. This is the result of improvements in teaching and learning. Pupils achieve well over time but there are few pupils attaining above the nationally expected level, for example in science.
- Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 in information and communication technology (ICT) has improved significantly from well below average at the last inspection to average. This is the result of concerted action taken to improve provision in the subject.
- Children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes.
- Very high levels of pupil mobility³ are a noticeable feature of the school, especially in the Foundation Stage⁴ and Years 1 and 2. This has a very significant impact on standards at the end of Year 2, which are consistently well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress over time.

Commentary

1. Since 1999, standards at the end of Year 6 have risen broadly in line with the upward trend nationally and the rise has been most significant in the last two years. This is the result of successful action taken after the last inspection to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to set challenging targets for improvement. By the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils achieving the nationally expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science is at least in line with the average for schools nationally. In science, it was well above average in the 2003 National Curriculum results. However, the proportion achieving above average levels is below the national average and to improve this is the next challenge for the school.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 26.6 (24.0) | 27.0 (27.1) |
| Mathematics | 26.6 (24.9) | 27.0 (27.0) |
| Science | 27.4 (26.6) | 28.8 (28.7) |

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

2. Most pupils in Year 6 read fluently and present their written work with care. They can write reports, stories, poems and pieces of persuasive writing well. Standards of spelling are generally good. Pupils have good skills of numeracy and a good all round knowledge of shape

³ Pupil mobility signifies the number of pupils who start or leave the school at times other than the start of the reception year or the end of Year 6.

⁴ The Foundation Stage in this school consists of the nursery and reception classes.

and measures. However, their skills in solving mathematical problems are less secure, though nevertheless satisfactory overall. In science, pupils can predict outcomes of practical investigations satisfactorily and they understand the need to make testing fair. They are not as confident planning their own investigations.

3. Pupils' skills in ICT have improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 6 have a good range of skills, including competency to make a multi-media presentation using sound, text and pictures. Overall, standards are average with strengths in the pupils' ability to research using the Internet, to use a digital camera and clip art with text.
4. Progress for pupils with special educational needs is good, exemplified in the way the pupils move from one category of the Code of Practice to another and off the school's list of pupils with special educational needs. The pupils are developing the relevant skills in literacy and numeracy. Some are on course to achieve the nationally expected levels in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 because of the additional support they receive, so for these pupils, achievement is very good. Pupils learning English as an additional language are joining the school at all times of the school year. For instance, two pupils recently arrived into Year 3 and at the time of the inspection were gaining confidence both in the classroom and when withdrawn for help with a specialist teacher. All pupils with English as an additional language make good progress over time. By the time they are in older junior classes, many are among the highest attainers and are included in the provision for the gifted and talented, which includes extra classes in mathematics and English out of school hours.
5. Many children start in the nursery with low levels of skill in most areas of learning. Because of the very good quality of the provision, the children make good progress in both the nursery and reception classes. Most, however, are still working towards the nationally agreed early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development by the end of the reception year. The school's situation is unusual in that between the end of the nursery year and the start in reception class, there is a high turnover of children. Some move into different primary schools in the locality, while others join the reception class without the benefit of good quality nursery experiences. This is outside the control of the school and adds to the overall below average standards by the end of the reception year.
6. There is a very high level of pupil mobility in Years 1 and 2 as well and this has a significant, adverse impact on the standards that the school achieves at the end of Year 2. Only four of the pupils in last year's Year 2 class had been in school since the reception class and of those who joined during Years 1 and 2, many had special educational needs and did not reach the expected standard. Some arrived in school with little English. Nevertheless, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall in the infant-aged classes.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| Reading | 11.8 (13.6) | 15.9 (16.0) |
| Writing | 12.3 (13.1) | 14.8 (14.5) |
| Mathematics | 12.3 (13.5) | 16.4 (16.7) |

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Overall pupils' attitudes, values, behaviour and personal development are **very good**, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Attendance is **well below average**. Most pupils arrive on time. Provision for pupils' personal development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in all year groups have a very good attitude to school.
- Behaviour is very good and much improved.
- Relationships are good.
- Responsibilities raise pupils' self-esteem.
- Assemblies make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual experience.
- Levels of attendance are well below the national average and are adversely affected by holidays taken in term time.

Commentary

7. Pupils have a very good attitude to school and parents agree. They want to learn and are keen to offer answers. Frequent praise from staff helps to build self-esteem. Extra-curricular activities are enjoyed and available to pupils from Year 1 upwards. Pupils in Year 6 spoke excitedly about their recent camping trip.
8. Behaviour in the classrooms and in the playground is very good. The introduction of assertive behaviour management has raised standards of behaviour since the last inspection. A whole-school, consistent approach has improved the level of respect that pupils have for all adults in school. Bullying is infrequent and pupils are taught how to deal with any instances. For example, pupils in Year 6 said they would do so confidently. The improvement in behaviour has reduced the number of exclusions from seven to three last year, and this trend is set to continue. Pupils are proud of the reward systems and strive to achieve them. By ensuring that each pupil receives at least one award annually, the school is building the pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British | 72 | 2 | 0 |
| White – Irish | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black African | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Asian | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – any other mixed background | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Pakistani | 112 | 1 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – African | 1 | 0 | 0 |

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

9. There are good relationships throughout the school and staff provide very good role models for pupils. Pupils work and play together well in mixed gender and ethnic groups and this reinforces their understanding of values and beliefs which may differ from their own.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data: | 7.1 | School data : | 0.3 |
| National data: | 5.4 | National data: | 0.5 |

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

- Attendance is well below the national average and adversely affected by holidays in term time, with some extended holidays of up to eight weeks. Holiday forms state that pupils taking holidays of more than four weeks will be removed from the register and the school is rigorous applying this requirement. Pupils who take extended holidays are given a diary notebook and disposable camera to record their holiday. On their return other pupils broaden their knowledge of other countries by the sharing of these records. However, there is no focused monitoring of pupils who take holidays of more than two weeks in term time, which would identify the impact on the achievement of these pupils, particularly in tests and assessments.
- The daily monitoring of registers by the learning mentor makes a significant contribution to the low level of unauthorised absence; absence patterns are identified early and action taken. The non-arrival of pupils at school for no known reason is checked promptly and this is good practice. There are very good links with the education social worker.
- Provision for personal development is good and by Year 6, pupils are taking responsibilities well, for instance helping younger ones in the computer suite at lunchtime. Peer mediation is helping older pupils to improve their social skills. The *Together We Learn* project is developing pupils' thinking and learning through science. For example, pupils in a Year 5 design and technology lesson selected a spokesperson for their group and delegated various aspects of their task of planning the design of a musical instrument. Pupils enjoy fund raising and have supported charities such as the *Blue Peter Appeal*.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and much improved. It makes an important contribution to the school's family ethos. There are very good opportunities for external visits, for example pupils in Year 5 expressed real enjoyment of their visit to *Millennium Point*. The school's participation in *Operation Christmas Child* raises pupils' awareness of the needs of others throughout the world. Time for personal reflection in assembly enabled them to think about the children who would receive the gifts. The use of post boxes for the Muslim festival of Eid parallels the importance of this occasion with Christian festivals such as Christmas. The drawing of Menhdi patterns at Eid provides good cross-curricular links. The basics of right and wrong are discussed in lower years, so that by Year 6, pupils are discussing ethical issues such as the environment with interest and a good degree of maturity. Through links with the Malachi Trust pupils have been able to experience the thrill of taking part in a specially written musical at the Old Rep Theatre, about aspects of their everyday life in a multi-cultural society.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good** with strengths in all aspects. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The assessment of pupils' work is good. This, too, is an improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very good.
- Insistence on good behaviour is very good.
- There is a strong focus on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and of those learning English as an additional language is good but the challenge for higher attaining pupils is not always sufficient.
- The headteacher's *special weekly homework* motivates pupils greatly.
- Procedures to assess pupils' progress are good but there is some inconsistency in the quality of marking.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 0 (0%) | 8 (20%) | 28 (68%) | 5 (12%) | 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.

14. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good overall, which is an improvement since the last inspection, when teaching in the reception class was judged to be satisfactory. At present, teachers in both the nursery and reception classes plan individually but liaise closely to ensure progression and continuity in learning. However, as the new reception class is now sited adjacent to the nursery, teachers are aiming to plan together. Planning is closely linked to the *stepping stones*, the steps of development leading to the early learning goals, which are the expected levels by the end of the reception year. The activities are changed regularly and provide children with experiences in all areas of learning. All adults supporting the learning in both classes know exactly what to do because they work closely with the teachers. Every opportunity is used to develop language and role-play skills. This particularly benefits children for whom English is an additional language as their vocabulary and understanding are increased. Teachers' knowledge and enthusiasm motivate the children to succeed and ensure tasks build on previous knowledge and skills. Relationships are very good between the staff and children, giving them confidence to respond to questions and to have a go. The use of day-to-day assessment is very good and ensures all children are appropriately challenged, be they higher or lower attainers.
15. During the inspection, pupils in Year 1 were having a special week focused on ICT, in which they benefited greatly from the expertise of a visiting teacher as part of the *Laptops in Primary Classrooms* project. The quality of this teaching was very good.
16. Teaching and learning in Years 2 to 6 are good overall. Improved teaching since the last inspection is the result of effective in-service training and rigorous monitoring, which have led to a greater proportion of pupils in Year 6 reaching the nationally expected levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science. The teachers plan their lessons carefully and share learning intentions with the pupils. Lessons are well organised, with a good balance between teacher introductions and explanations and individual or group work. Useful sessions at the end of lessons consolidate learning and enable the teachers to assess how much learning has taken place.
17. Teachers' subject knowledge is very secure, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT. Teaching in these subjects is, therefore, consistently good and is leading to rising standards. The teachers provide plenty of opportunities for the pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects. There is a strong focus on

developing the pupils' speaking and listening skills, through initiatives such as *Operation Conversation*, in which parents are encouraged to talk with their children at home.

18. The teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and this leads to a purposeful, working environment in lessons. Relationships are very good and the teachers succeed in encouraging and engaging all pupils in learning. The pupils respond very well to this. They listen attentively and they settle down to work quickly. They are able to work independently. When necessary, for example during practical science work or in the computer room, they work well collaboratively.
19. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good. Pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans that are well written and provide small achievable targets. The teachers are aware of the pupils' needs and prepare appropriate work carefully matched to their needs, or, ensure that the learning support assistants know what the pupils must do. Teachers and assistants meet daily to discuss tasks and later consider how well the pupils understood them. There are very good relationships between pupils and their support staff and this gives them confidence to succeed. The specialist teacher of pupils learning English as an additional language supports individual pupils well, both in lessons and in small-group sessions in a separate classroom. Her specialist expertise helps the pupils to gain confidence quickly and begin to contribute orally in class lessons. During whole-class sessions most teachers target those with special educational needs so they too have an opportunity to respond or share their work with their peers. However, there is sometimes a lack of challenge for higher attainers. As a result, few pupils are achieving the higher National Curriculum levels of attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6, especially in science.
20. Homework is used consistently to consolidate learning in English and mathematics and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher's *special weekly homework* motivates the pupils to extend their learning beyond the classroom.
21. Good assessment procedures in English and mathematics enable the pupils' progress to be carefully tracked. The pupils are familiar with the levels of attainment that they are expected to reach. The teachers make good use of information from assessments and from an analysis of National Curriculum test results to highlight areas of weakness in learning and to set the pupils targets for improvement. Assessment in science and ICT is satisfactory, but is less well developed than in English and mathematics at present. Marking of pupils' work is generally good and is often helpful in guiding the pupils as to how they might improve. The quality of marking is not entirely consistent, however. There are some examples of marking which is brief and unhelpful. During lessons, the teachers check pupils' progress closely, offering help and advice as necessary. Support staff make a valuable contribution in this respect, particularly with pupils who have special educational needs.

The curriculum

The curriculum provided by the school is **good** and affords a good preparation for secondary school. The curriculum has improved significantly since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good.
- The curriculum is enriched significantly through visits, visitors and curricular projects.
- The school is successful in helping all pupils to take a full part in the very good opportunities it provides.
- There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum and plenty of resources to support learning for all pupils in all subjects.
- The elements of designing and evaluating in the curriculum for design and technology are weaker than the making of products

Commentary

22. The school now meets statutory requirements for all subjects of the National Curriculum. Religious education meets the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus. Curricular planning has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is of good quality. Overall, there are good opportunities for the pupils to use their skills of literacy and numeracy in other subjects. The curriculum ensures that all pupils are fully included in learning. However, there is insufficient emphasis given to designing products and evaluating them in the curriculum for design and technology
23. There is very good provision for personal, social and health education and each class has a weekly session on citizenship on its timetable. All pupils are encouraged to become good citizens by participating in a Citizenship Week. There are clear policies for sex and drugs education. Questions about human growth are dealt with honestly and openly, with due regard to the pupils' age, and there is formal sex education for pupils in Year 6. The pupils are taught well about the need for a balanced diet and exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle. They participate in a whole-school Health Week and in the National Fruit Scheme.
24. The school constantly looks at ways of enriching the curriculum. *Weekly Additional Curriculum Enhancement (ACE)* sessions give the pupils the opportunity to develop skills in a wide variety of areas. Pupils in Year 2 participated in a poetry project and there is also a *Thinking skills* group for higher attainers in Year 2, which is part of the school's provision for gifted and talented pupils. Pupils in Year 6 participate in an ICT project with the local girls' high school. There is a course on *Emotional literacy through art* for some less motivated boys in Year 6 and *Listen up!* sessions for newly arrived pupils, for whom English is an additional language. *Operation Conversation* seeks to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills through different areas of the curriculum. Each term, the school devotes one week to a particular theme, such as healthy lifestyles. A wide range of extra-curricular activities provides good opportunities for the pupils to pursue their interests outside lessons. These include netball, gymnastics, art and craft, citizenship and choir. A football club is about to start. Worthwhile visits are made to many places such as Millennium Point, the Black Country Museum and Sarehole Mill. Pupils in Year 6 develop social and physical skills during a residential weekend. The school makes effective use of the knowledge and expertise of visitors whenever possible.
25. All pupils with special educational needs or learning English as an additional language are well catered for within the school's provision for personal development. Teachers take every opportunity to boost their self-esteem and to praise them for their efforts. This has a positive effect on how they regard themselves and gives them confidence to succeed. They participate fully in the life of the school and it is difficult to identify these pupils from the rest, they are so well included. Access to the library is difficult for disabled pupils. The school has, however, toilet facilities for the disabled.
26. There is a good match of teaching and non-teaching staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. Visiting specialist teachers enrich learning in subjects such as ICT and dance. Administrative staff members make a positive contribution to school life. The very well maintained building allows the curriculum to be taught satisfactorily, though some classrooms lack sinks for work involving water. There is a good sized hall for physical education, assemblies and dining and an easily accessible ICT suite. The playgrounds are well marked out for creative games. There are plenty of resources to support learning in all subjects and a satisfactory range of fiction and non-fiction books in the library.

Care, guidance and support

Overall provision is **very good** with many strengths. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The improved quality of monitoring and the continuing high level of care for pupils have made a significant contribution to this improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The care that pupils receive is very good and monitoring of the provision of support, advice and guidance is excellent.
- Arrangements for the health and safety of pupils are very good, for example, there are many trained first aiders.
- The caretaker and his staff maintain the school to a very high standard.
- The quality of displays in school is monitored termly and stimulates the pupils' enthusiasm for learning.
- Members of staff listen well to pupils' ideas.

Commentary

27. The level of support, care and guidance pupils receive is very good, often being extended to families, for example in time of bereavement. In addition to teachers and support staff, some of whom are of minority ethnic backgrounds, the learning mentor provides a point of contact for any pupil or parent with a personal problem. Parents know they will be listened to and that help, internally or externally, will be offered. Monitoring is undertaken weekly and is excellent. Most pupils join the school in the younger years and the induction for these pupils is very good and is much appreciated by the parents. New pupils receive welcome certificates in assembly and this supports their integration well. Parents of pupils transferring to secondary school receive guidance twelve months in advance and this is good practice.
28. There is an opportunity for staff to talk about child protection issues at every staff meeting and training is up to date. All health and safety requirements are met by the critical incident policy and risk assessments fully in place. The pupils' surroundings are maintained to a very high standard by the school caretaker and his staff, which encourages pupils to have pride in their school. The headteacher monitors the quality of displays, which are changed regularly and provide a stimulating environment for learning. A video recording from the local education authority has given staff a better insight into dealing with aggressive incidents and the school has adopted locally agreed policies in this aspect. Some 14 members of staff have received basic first aid and some epilepsy training. One member of staff has advanced first aid training. Two vegetarian options are provided each day and help to meet the needs of some minority ethnic groups. The training of dinner supervisors is encouraging the development of creative play and children are beginning to form their own ideas.
29. Pupils' ideas are listened to. For instance, they contributed to the discussion on the introduction of a school uniform and suggested the post box to help pupils to celebrate Eid. The Good Citizens club has been set up as a forum for pupils to organise fund raising events such as gardening competitions.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **very good** and have much improved since the last inspection. Links with the community are **good** and have improved since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with parents have improved significantly and are now very good.
- Links with the community are good but there is scope for further development.
- The excellent provision of educational support programmes is benefiting pupils

- Pupils' annual reports are good.
- Full access to school documents is limited for some parents who have English as an additional language.

Commentary

30. Links with parents are very good; they have improved significantly and are helping to raise standards. Verbal and written comments from parents were all appreciative of the improvements that have been made. The open door policy is very effective and the headteacher is frequently in the playground at the start or end of the school day. Parents appreciate the open invitation to join the weekly merit assembly; many do so and this contributes well to the partnership. There has been a dramatic reduction in the number of parental complaints and these are now rare. Most parents have signed the home school contract.
31. The quality of information parents receive is very good and is supported by the school's website. Pupils' successes are shared and celebrated in the informative weekly newsletters. The weekly *Operation Conversation* defines an activity that parents can share with their children and promotes the sharing of homework as well as speaking and listening skills. Pupils' annual reports are good and the sharing of pupils' targets is good practice. Parents have the opportunity to discuss the reports. The termly parents' evenings are well attended and those who do not attend are contacted either in person or by telephone. Some staff speak Urdu and Panjabi and some document translations have been undertaken. The school acknowledges this is an area requiring further development and is presently relying on bilingual family members.
32. Parents value the education support programmes that are developing skills to support their children at home. For example, in *Stay and Play* sessions, the methods used to teach subtraction to pupils in Year 2 were explained to the parents. When their children joined them they were able to share this knowledge. The increased confidence for both parents and pupils was obvious. Parents on the computer course were preparing for an examination at the time of the inspection. A few of the parents help in school, for example hearing children read. Nursery children's speaking skills are developed in school time by parents talking to them in their own language. Fundraising events are organised through parent governors and members of staff. Occasions such as bingo, the Christmas draw and the children's disco are supported well by parents and pupils. Pupils have benefited from the money raised, for example in the computer suite and support for school trips.
33. Parents' views are sought annually through a questionnaire and they have contributed to discussions on uniform and behaviour. Parents suggested the timing of the weekly merit assembly was changed and it is now more accessible to a larger number of parents.
34. Links with the community are good and the school works well with Hodge Hill Girls' School. Contacts with local playgroups or health visitors are more limited and reduce the amount that the school can learn about the children before they join the nursery. The Residents Association was consulted about the plans for the recently completed nursery building and this helps to extend contact with local people.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **very good**. Leadership provided by the headteacher is excellent, and governance and management of the school are good. There has been very good improvement in all aspects since the time of the last inspection, when several elements were judged to be unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has been the dynamic and inspirational force that has resulted in very good improvement in provision and standards since the last inspection.
- Leadership by key staff in the management team is very good and teamwork is a strong feature of the management of the school.
- Governors, very ably led by the chairperson, have tackled with vigour the key issues about their own role that arose from the last inspection report. They are now well informed, know the school's strengths and weaknesses and take a key role in shaping how the school is to develop.
- Governors and senior staff monitor the performance of the school very well and take action to make improvements where necessary.
- There is a very strong commitment to providing the means by which all pupils can achieve well.
- The school's budget is in deficit but the school has agreed procedures with the local education authority to bring it into balance.

Commentary

35. Since her appointment, initially as acting and then as substantive headteacher in March 2003, the headteacher's influence on directing the work of the school has been immense. Through a comprehensive programme monitoring the quality of teaching, the curriculum and pupils' work, she initiated a new and successful approach to dealing with the serious weaknesses highlighted in the last inspection report. She has created a team from existing and new members of staff that works very well in driving forward a rapid pace of change that has affected all elements of the school's work. She has lifted the morale of staff and governors so that they now feel part of a school that is thriving and has high ambitions. As a result, the roles and responsibilities of staff have changed, often recognising the strengths of individuals so that they can succeed. For instance, the deputy headteacher has taken a key role in making very good improvement to the school's system of assessing the progress that pupils make and the school's overall performance. This information is now at the centre of the school's forward planning and influences all decisions. Across the school, improvements are evident in the standards that pupils attain, the quality of teaching and learning, the range of curricular opportunities offered to pupils, pastoral support for pupils, the accommodation and provision for and links with parents. The inspiration provided by the leadership of the headteacher is readily acknowledged by staff, governors, parents and pupils alike.
36. Strong teamwork is a feature of the management of the school. This is evident in the very effective management of the Foundation Stage, as well as subject management in English. Though some staff are new to their posts, they have the support of senior staff and the opportunities for training that are required for them to achieve well and have a positive impact on provision. For example, the special educational needs co-ordinator is effective in ensuring positive learning experiences for pupils with special educational needs. Although only recently appointed, she is already proving to be innovative and enthusiastic. Many new ideas are being developed but as yet there has been insufficient time to implement them all. It is a similar picture in ICT, where the headteacher has taken a strategic role in helping to drive forward the improvements in provision. Aspects found to be good at the time of the last inspection, such as the management of the provision for pupils learning English as an additional language, have been maintained. New aspects, such as the work of the learning mentor and programmes to support the role of parents in their children's education, are also well managed. The administrative staff, support staff and lunchtime supervisors perform their duties well and appreciate the work of the headteacher in making everyone feel valued.
37. The governance of the school has significantly improved since the last inspection. Many governors continued to support the work of the school, despite difficulties since then, and have taken positive steps to improve their expertise through training and a renewed commitment to the school. In this, they have been very ably led by the headteacher and by the chairperson,

who acknowledged failings in the past and has striven successfully to put things right. The governors are at the heart of decision-making and have a good understanding of the performance of the school. All governors and staff have a strong commitment to assisting all pupils, whatever their gender, ethnic background or capability, to achieve well. For example, the governors are keen to support the school in its efforts to provide learning opportunities for parents, who might otherwise find difficulty in doing their best for their children. The headteacher and governors regularly seek out funding to support the wider work of the school, as well as to improve provision for the pupils, for example in the recent improvements to the nursery and reception classes.

38. The governors challenge senior managers very well and know there is more to be done in order to provide the best for the pupils and parents. They have a good overview of financial resources and are clear about how they are to bring the school's budget back into balance. For example, reductions in the size of the staff have been made in order to assist the process. The governors have a good awareness of the principles of good value in financial management and control.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | | Balances (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Total income | 608,053 | Balance from previous year | 35,027 |
| Total expenditure | 627,096 | Balance carried forward to the next | -19,043 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 3,074 | | |

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good** and is a strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Both nursery and reception classrooms provide a stimulating and welcoming environment.
- The quality of teaching is very good overall.
- A very good range of activities encourage role-play, language and mathematical development and also aim at developing children's personal and social skills.
- Very good relationships exist between staff and children.
- Children are happy, motivated and enjoy attending.
- Areas for development are: joint planning between reception and nursery classes, especially now the two are more closely linked; and the development of the outdoor area to its full potential.

Commentary

39. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and is a strength of the school. This is similar to judgements made in the last inspection. Children are admitted annually in September of the year in which they have their fourth birthday. There are currently 36 attending the nursery: 15 in the morning and 21 in the afternoon. In the reception class, there are 30 children attending full time. At the time of the inspection, building work on the reception class and work to link both classes was nearing completion. The teachers have made considerable efforts to ensure the environment is stimulating and exciting for the youngsters. Children are happy and well adjusted to the demands of the school and enjoy attending. The outdoor area, although well resourced, is not developed to its full potential to provide additional activities and areas for play for all the children. The members of staff are aware of this and have already identified how they envisage the area developing.
40. Attainment is well below the expected level on entry into the school: in some areas of learning it is very low. In all areas of learning, only a few children are likely to achieve the expected levels by the end of their reception year. This is below expectations. Children in both the nursery and reception classes make good progress, which is an improvement since the last inspection when children in the reception class were judged to make only satisfactory progress.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because of very good teaching and the high expectations of the staff.
- Every opportunity is taken to enhance children's development but despite this, few children are on course to achieve the expected levels.
- Very good relationships are being developed so that the children feel confident, happy and secure.

Commentary

41. Provision in this area of learning is very good, reflecting the way in which children are learning to respect each other, share resources, take turns and play together. Many of the children have

personal and social skills well below those generally expected of this age so few are on course to achieve the expected levels by the end of the reception year.

42. Teaching is very good. In all activities, adults encourage the children to explore and develop their vocabulary. Often they provide role models to help the children learn the social skills of relating to each other and playing together. This has a positive effect on their learning as they grow in confidence. In group sessions, children are expected to wait patiently for their turn: many can, but some still get so excited they call out. Teachers encourage children to listen to each other and to share their thoughts. All children enjoy coming to school and are aware of the teachers' expectations. They are taught to clear away and to look after resources. In both classes, there is a relaxed atmosphere where children are confident to explore for themselves and are encouraged to share and help each other. Consequently children have settled quickly to the demands of the Foundation Stage.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and nursery nurses use every opportunity to extend and develop children's language skills.
- Teaching is very good and excites the children.
- Books play an important part in the classrooms.

Commentary

43. Many of the children enter nursery with poor language skills. A high proportion of them speak little or no English, so teachers provide very good support to develop this aspect. The quality of teaching is very good. Every opportunity is used to extend children's vocabulary and understanding of the language. This has a positive effect on their knowledge, and children in the reception class are beginning to talk confidently, although a few offer only one word answers. Despite their efforts, only a few children are on course to achieve the expected levels by the end of the reception class. Children are keen to respond to questions. Children in both classes enjoy literacy sessions and the sharing of a big book. In the nursery, the emphasis is on using the pictures in the book to explore the story and encouraging children to express their opinions. Whilst in the reception class, children begin to recognise letter sounds and simple words. They too enjoy a big book of a familiar fairy story. Many can retell stories and particularly enjoy finger puppets to help them act out the story.
44. Most children in the reception class know some letter sounds but few can read simple words. A minority of children are on course to achieve the expected levels by the end of the reception class. The higher attainers in the reception are beginning to recognise a few simple words and can sound out unfamiliar words. These children are on course to achieve the expected level. Similarly in writing, only a minority of children are likely to achieve the expected level. Few can write their name and as yet many cannot form recognisable letters although they know that marks can communicate meaning. There are many opportunities provided for developing writing skills not only in focused but also in free choice activities. Teachers are knowledgeable and interesting in their presentation of lessons; this motivates the children to learn. They respond positively and remain well focused on their tasks.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a wide range of activities to support learning, which ensures children make good progress.
- Every opportunity is used to count and extend appropriate vocabulary.
- Number songs and rhymes help to reinforce counting, making learning fun.

Commentary

45. The quality of teaching is very good. Every opportunity is used to reinforce children's mathematical understanding and appropriate vocabulary. Games and number rhymes are used to capture children's interest and motivate learning. Nursery children count readily to ten, many can show the correct number of fingers to ten and one child knows that one more than four is five. Children count objects to five but do not always count accurately. In the reception class, children confidently count to 20 but find it much harder to count back. They are beginning to recognise two-dimensional shapes and their properties. However, they still need to learn the appropriate vocabulary. There are very few children who will achieve the expected levels by the end of the reception year.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A range of interesting experiences are planned to promote learning in this area.
- Members of staff use questioning effectively to develop children's understanding and knowledge of the world around them.

Commentary

46. Children enjoy a range of activities that forge links with other areas of learning. They are encouraged to use a variety of materials to make a bridge for goats to cross in the story *Three Billy Goats Gruff*. Although they enjoy the activity, they find the task a challenge. Throughout the year, activities linked to science, such as investigating what will float or sink, or linked to geography such as drawing a map to Red Riding Hood's house, enhance children's understanding of the world. Children enjoy a number of visitors, such as the police, musicians, a theatre group and a dental nurse, all of whom add to the children's knowledge. Children also gain an insight into the beliefs of other children in their classroom, which helps to promote positive attitudes towards other cultures.

47. Children have many opportunities to use the computer, sometimes learning specific skills or exploring a variety of programs, the results of which are displayed on classroom walls. Nursery children use a roller ball to help them develop mouse control, whereas in the reception class, children are gaining relevant skills. Despite exciting lessons and tasks, and very good teaching few children are on course to achieve the expected levels by the end of the reception class.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use the hall for developing specific skills.
- Although the outside area is used, there is need to develop this to its full potential by rigorously planning for these sessions.

Commentary

48. Children are given many opportunities to develop physically and although many are on course to achieve the expected levels, a number will still be working towards them. They enjoy sessions on the wheeled toys and confidently ride around the playground. The reception class has recently moved to be adjacent to the nursery and has access to the outdoor area, but as yet planning for this area does not develop its full potential. The teachers already have a vision of the future development of this area. No reception children were observed outside but a session in the hall was observed in which it was evident that the children are developing good body control and spatial awareness. They work cooperatively in a parachute game. Other skills are developed through cutting, colouring, and sticking activities. Tools, such as rolling pins and shape cutters, are used with play dough. Most children hold a pencil correctly but few have the control to write recognisable letters.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Both classrooms have very exciting role-play areas.
- Members of staff provide very good role models as they join the children in these areas to promote playing together.

Commentary

49. There was little opportunity to observe any specific session in this area of learning but in each classroom there are areas dedicated to creative activities. For example, paper and paint are always available, as is play dough or clay. Children are encouraged to explore colour mixing and different media. Displays show portraits, collage, clay work and printing. Any brief time between sessions is used for singing familiar rhymes and songs, which the children greatly enjoy. They participate with enthusiasm and excitement.
50. Wonderful opportunities are provide for role-play in both classrooms. The nursery has a beach with beach bar and café, which the children thoroughly enjoy. Next to this is a winter scene with igloo and snowmen. Children love the beach and the feel of the sand. They use sand to make 'food' and enjoy paddling in a large plastic tray filled with water. They have such fun that they are not keen to come off the beach! In the reception class, children enjoy playing in the theatre and have a range of costumes to use. All these resources provide a very good stimulus for children to develop their personal and creative development. Despite all the opportunities and the very well planned provision, few children are on course to achieve the expected levels.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising and pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, achieve well over time.
- There have been significant improvements in the quality of the provision, including teaching and learning, which are now good.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Pupil mobility has a significant, adverse impact on standards by the end of Year 2.

Commentary

51. Standards that pupils achieve by the end of Year 6 have risen in the past two years and in the current Year 6, pupils are achieving well. Approximately three quarters of pupils are on target to attain the nationally expected level by the end of the year. There are a few more higher attaining pupils achieving very good standards in reading and writing than in last year's Year 6. These pupils are articulate and read fluently and confidently. Pupils who once were at the early stages of learning English as an additional language are among the higher attainers in all junior classes. This is an indication of the quality of the provision and effort that these pupils put into their work. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and take an active part in lessons, as a result of the teachers' clear planning for them and the contribution that classroom assistants make.
52. In the most recent National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils achieving the nationally expected Level 4 was high, at 80 per cent of pupils, and this meant the school exceeded its agreed target. The proportion achieving the higher Level 5 was below the national average of 27 per cent of pupils, but the figure of 17 per cent still compared well with similar schools. The school's next task is to increase this proportion further.
53. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been consistently well below average in National Curriculum tests in recent years and are adversely influenced by very high pupil mobility in younger age groups. In the current Year 2, standards are better. There is the full range of attainment evident in reading and writing but there are above average proportions of pupils with special educational needs and some pupils are at the early stages of learning English, so that overall standards are below average. Overall, their achievement is satisfactory, though pupils at the school the longest make good progress.
54. Improvements in provision have had a very positive impact on raising standards, which was a key issue at the last inspection. For example, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially in the presentation of work and handwriting, have been raised. These aspects are now good. There is a greater focus on improving pupils' speaking skills, for instance through the *Operation Conversation* initiative, involving parents and pupils at home. The monitoring of provision, including teachers' planning, classroom practice and pupils' work, has led to the identification of weaknesses, for example in the level of challenge in the work, and steps taken to eradicate them. Most importantly, the quality of teaching and learning are now good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers make good use of the National Literacy Strategy and frequently timetable together blocks of lessons in order to complete longer pieces of writing. The teachers make good use of classroom assistants, some of whom are very well qualified and have good expertise to help pupils' learning, using initiatives such as *The Additional Literacy Strategy* and *Booster classes*. Teachers manage the pupils very well and consequently pupils put a lot of effort into their work. The marking of pupils' work is good and there are examples of clear advice as to how pupils should improve. Pupils know their

targets for improvement and this is helping to raise standards. Homework is set regularly and makes a good contribution to learning.

55. Leadership and management of the subject are very good and have been instrumental in making improvements. The subject leader has very good expertise for the role and is keen to develop enthusiasm for the subject with events such as the very successful Poetry Project in Year 2 that involved working with a published poet. Procedures to assess pupils' progress are good and help to guide teachers' planning and pupils' targets. A recent analysis of test results indicated how well various ethnic minority groups were achieving in the subject and that the small minority of white British girls were not performing as well as expected. This has led to discussions about the gender bias evident in texts, which the school has chosen to motivate boys' interest successfully, but perhaps at the cost of 'turning off' some of the girls.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. There are good opportunities made for pupils to use skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing in the humanities, personal, social, health and citizenship education, and science. For example, the school encourages pupils to discuss issues in topic work in subjects such as religious education. There are good opportunities to use information books and the Internet to use skills of research. A scrutiny of pupils' books shows that pupils are encouraged to use their own ideas when they recount stories or make reports in history, geography and science. There were very few examples of pupils simply copying teachers' writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- Most pupils achieve well because of good teaching and learning.
- There is a strong focus on developing pupils' numeracy skills.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- More emphasis is needed on developing the pupils' skills in investigation and problem solving.
- The use of ICT is under-developed.

Commentary

57. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average and in Year 2 are just below average. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests almost three quarters of pupils in Year 6 reached the expected standard and of these, a quarter achieved above expectations. However, in Year 2 less than two thirds reached the expected standard, with a very small number achieving above that. The high levels of pupil mobility in the younger age groups have an adverse impact on standards achieved. The raising of standards is a priority already identified by the school and the majority of pupils currently in Year 6 are achieving well. The pupils in Year 2 achieve well especially as attainment on entry is well below that expected. All pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress and achieve well. The last inspection report judged that support given to pupils for whom English was an additional language lacked continuity and consequently their achievement was below that of their peers. Currently, these pupils are often out performing their peers and support is now having a positive effect on their achievement.
58. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. There are many strengths. Carefully planned lessons with clear learning objectives have a positive impact on pupils' learning and understanding. Teachers' enthusiasm motivates pupils to succeed, and there is a good emphasis on the use of the correct vocabulary. The pupils are encouraged to explore different methods to solve calculations. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and give pupils the

confidence to respond, even if they are unsure of their answer. Classroom assistants are briefed well and lead groups on specific tasks very effectively. Questioning is used well to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers use the final sessions of lessons well to reinforce or extend learning. However, tasks, although well matched to the needs of lower attaining pupils, do not always provide sufficient challenge for the higher attainers. In some lessons, the pace is a little slow, pupils begin to lose their focus on the task and consequently less work is completed. Where the pace is brisk, pupils respond by producing a greater volume of work.

59. Assessment is now used well to track pupils' progress and to highlight problems. Day-to-day assessment is used well by teachers in their planning as they amend it to take account of pupils' needs and provide reinforcement or extension work as required. However, there is still insufficient challenge provided for the higher attaining pupils to ensure they reach the higher levels. Marking is inconsistent and does not always indicate to pupils how they can improve.
60. The subject is well led and managed. The monitoring role, judged unsatisfactory in the last inspection report, has been fully developed to include checking pupils' work, looking at teachers' planning and observing lessons. Analysis of test results to highlight weaker areas of understanding provides a focus for planning. This is having a positive effect on raising standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. Satisfactory use is made of mathematics in science, design and technology, geography and history, particularly measurements and data handling. There is limited use of ICT and a greater range of experiences would enhance the pupils' appreciation that mathematics can be used in other situations.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Higher attainers are not achieving as well as they should.
- The recording skills of some pupils, particularly in Years 1 and 2 are weak.

Commentary

62. Standards are below average by the end of Year 2 and are broadly average by the end of Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were well below average by the end of Year 2 and below average by the end of Year 6. While most pupils achieve the expected level of attainment in the tests for eleven year olds, too few achieve the higher level. There is evidence of boys outperforming girls by the end of Year 6. Overall, the pupils' achievement is good.
63. By the end of Year 2, the pupils investigate the characteristics of different materials. They understand that some materials occur naturally, whilst others are man-made. The pupils investigate pushes and pulls as forces and they make a simple electrical circuit light up bulbs. They use their mathematical skills well to measure the distance travelled by objects. The pupils investigate the growth of cress seeds in different locations and this helps in their understanding of the conditions necessary for healthy plant growth. However, pupil mobility has an adverse impact on standards by the end of Year 2, and the recording skills of many pupils, including higher attainers, are often weak.

64. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the scientific skills of prediction, fair testing and careful observation, as they carry out practical investigations into topics such as floating and sinking, sound proofing, dissolving and evaporation. The pupils make good use of their mathematical skills in drawing accurate bar graphs. The pupils understand how plants and animals are adapted to their environments and they use branching keys to identify a range of organisms. They make good use of their literacy skills in describing their investigations and recording their findings, though lower attainers find this more difficult. Presentation of work is generally very good. Lessons provide good opportunities for the pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills.
65. Teaching is good, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The teachers plan their lessons well and share learning intentions with the pupils. There is a strong focus on practical activities. At times, however, insufficient opportunities are provided for the pupils to plan their own investigations. The teachers make effective use of learning resources, such as a model of a human mouth, which helped pupils in Year 3 to learn about the different types of teeth. In an enrichment lesson (*ACE*) for pupils in Year 4, the teacher brought a tank of stick insects into the classroom and this helped the pupils to learn at first hand about camouflage and how animals adapt to their environment. In this lesson, the teacher encouraged the pupils to undertake further research from books and from the Internet. The teachers generally match work well to the pupils' varying needs. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, the teacher encouraged higher attainers to use correct symbols in their diagrams of an electrical circuit. Classroom assistants offer effective support. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly and positively.
66. The subject leader has made a good start in managing the subject. A clear action plan seeks to address the need to raise standards further and to plan more activities that challenge higher attaining pupils. The subject leader checks the quality of planning and teaching and is developing a new way of assessing pupils' progress. The curriculum is enhanced through *Science Focus Days* and through participation in the *Together We Learn* project, which links science and literacy. During the inspection, pupils in Year 5 benefited from a visit to Millennium Point. There are plenty of resources to support learning, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection. So, too, is the use of ICT to enhance learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good** and is much improved since the time of the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' confidence with ICT is much improved and teaching is very good.
- Resources, especially the computer room, are very good.
- Participation in the *Laptops in the Primary Classroom* project enriches learning.
- The subject is used widely to enhance learning in many other subjects.
- More use could be made of ICT in mathematics.

Commentary

67. By the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, standards are average, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection. This is the result of better teaching, increased resourcing and more effective management of the subject. The pupils are achieving very well. There is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls.
68. By the end of Year 2, the pupils are making very good progress in developing their skills in using the keyboard and mouse. They word process simple stories, poems and letters, using capital letters and spaces correctly and altering size, style and colour of font. They know how to delete mistakes and insert line breaks. With adult help, they save, retrieve and print their work. They use programs to create effective geometric black and white pictures of the New

York skyline and colourful geometric patterns. The pupils program a floor robot. They use CD ROM to find out about Bible stories.

69. By the end of Year 6, the pupils can access CD ROMs and the Internet, in order to research information in a number of subjects. The pupils discuss their favourite websites. They use e-mail to communicate. They use the school's digital cameras and they attach digital photographs and clip art to text.
70. Teaching overall is very good. During the inspection, a visiting specialist enriched the learning of pupils in Year 1 greatly. The pupils were discovering that computers can be fun, as well as being very useful. The pupils designed and coloured clothes to add to digital photographs of themselves and they created good pictograms of the different ways in which they come to school. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and they are much more confident with ICT than at the time of the last inspection. The Year 6 teacher demonstrated this, as she taught the pupils how to scan photographs of mountain environments and to make use of hyperlinks in a multi-media presentation. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher gave a very clear demonstration of how the computer can locate information much more quickly than an old-fashioned card system.
71. Strategic leadership of the subject is very good and is leading to rising standards and to a much higher profile for ICT throughout the school. All pupils are benefiting from the school's participation in the *Laptops in the Primary Classroom* project. Pupils in Year 5 have the opportunity to attend a summer school. Each class has lunchtime access to the computer room and the take-up for this is good, which indicates that pupils' attitudes towards work in ICT are very positive. The new subject leader updates staff and governors on developments in provision and regularly updates the school's informative website. She recognises the need next to develop whole-school procedures for assessing pupils' progress.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. Overall, teachers use and develop the computer skills of the pupils well in a range of other subjects. In literacy, for instance, the pupils in Year 6 use a program that identifies words and phrases which make their stories more exciting. In a Year 3 literacy lesson, the teacher used ICT very effectively to help pupils punctuate text and to help the word-building skills of pupils with special educational needs. In mathematics, they create effective symmetrical patterns based on an Islamic theme, though more use could be made of ICT in this subject. In history and geography, they create effective multi-media presentations on ancient Greece and on mountain environments.

HUMANITIES

73. Only two lessons were observed in **geography** and one lesson in **history**. No detailed judgements are possible about standards and the quality of teaching. A sample of pupils' work indicates that classes are taught the requirements of the National Curriculum in both subjects.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**. Only two lessons were observed. A sample of pupils' work indicates the curriculum meets the requirements of the locally Agreed syllabus. The subject leader was absent at the time of the inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good focus in lessons on what the various faiths can tell pupils about moral and ethical questions in life.
- There are good opportunities for developing pupils' skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Commentary

74. Improved monitoring by the subject leader, for example by looking at samples of pupils' work as well as teachers' plans, has led to improvements in learning. There is now a greater focus on teaching not just knowledge of the main world faiths but also what messages the faiths can teach pupils and people in general. This was evident in a Year 2 lesson, when the pupils were led to see the moral of tolerance for others in the story of the Sikh Guru Har Gobind. The Guru helped to free his fellow prisoners, persecuted because of their faith, even though he followed a different set of beliefs.
75. As pupils' ability to discuss and to write at length improves in Year 2 and upward, the teachers use religious education lessons well as opportunities for pupils to recount stories from the sacred books, reflect on the meaning of ritual in the various faiths and discuss ethical issues, such as man's responsibility in caring for the environment. There are further cross-curricular links made with English and ICT when pupils use the Internet to research the topics they study. This promotes their skills of reading for information.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Very few lessons were observed in **art and design, design and technology, music** and **physical education**. No detailed judgements about standards and teaching are possible.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The weekly lessons called *Additional Curriculum Enhancement (ACE)* contribute well to the provision in the creative arts.
- There have been good improvements to provision for design and technology but there are still areas to develop, such as designing and evaluating products.
- Pupils have opportunities to perform in concerts, to sing within the community and listen to visiting musicians.
- The use of sketchbooks is under-developed in art and design.

Commentary

76. The *ACE* lessons benefit pupils because of the small number in each group, which allows for more individual teaching and the development of specific skills, for example, in art and design. In one lesson, pupils explored how to make a fish 'move' by the way paint is applied to the paper. The teacher was able to provide individual support so that more pupils achieved well the desired end product. Two lessons were observed in music, both dedicated to singing, one as part of the *ACE* programme and one a class lesson. Singing was tuneful and enthusiastic. The school makes effective use of visiting teachers in the *ACE* programme to enrich physical education, for example in dance and roller-skating. In dance, the pupils moved satisfactorily in interpreting *rap* music. In addition to this programme, there are very good opportunities for pupils in Year 6 to participate in climbing and other outdoor and adventurous activities in physical education lessons.
77. In design and technology, planning has improved since the last inspection and the new subject leader has begun to develop some useful evidence books to demonstrate pupils' work. By the end of Year 6, the pupils design and make satisfactory photograph frames, money containers and slippers. They incorporate simple electrical circuits into satisfactory model fairground rides. Their design sheets, however, are often weak. Labelled diagrams are not clear or are too complicated to follow and there is insufficient detail as to the methods to be used. Evaluations lack detail as to how the products might be improved.

78. Pupils enjoy concerts and singing in the community. Photographic evidence shows the opportunities pupils have of performing or listening to visiting musicians. All of these experiences help to enhance their understanding and appreciation of music.
79. Although pupils have sketchbooks, they are not used as effectively as they could be to develop and explore techniques in art and design, for example, in exploring shading using different types of pencil. This is an area for further development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well planned and taught, encouraging pupils to explore a wide range of issues.
- Participation in activities such as *Citizenship Week* and *Health Week* promote the pupils' understanding very well.

Commentary

80. There is very good provision for personal, social and health education, with opportunities for the pupils to talk about issues such as the global community, relationships, responsibilities and rights. Each class has a weekly session on citizenship on its timetable. There are opportunities for the older pupils to display responsibility as monitors and peer mediators. All pupils are encouraged to become good citizens by participating in a Citizenship Week and by helping to raise funds for the Lord Mayor's charities. The pupils think of people less fortunate than themselves, by attending the Refugee Day in Centenary Square and by contributing to 'Operation Christmas Child'. They consider elderly people and the choir entertains the residents of a local home for the elderly.
81. There are clear policies for sex and drugs education. Questions about human growth are dealt with honestly and openly, with due regard to the pupils' age, and there is formal sex education for pupils in Year 6. Younger pupils learn that medicines are drugs and must be treated with care. Older pupils are made aware of the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and drugs misuse. The pupils are taught the need for a balanced diet and exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle. They participate in a whole-school Health Week and in the National Fruit Scheme.

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 | 2 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 4 |
| Overall standards achieved | 4 |
| Pupils' achievement | 3 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 2 |
| Attendance | 5 |
| 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 | 3 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils needs | 3 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 2 |
| Accommodation and resources | 3 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 2 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 1 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 2 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 3 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 4 |
| The leadership and management of the school | 2 |
| The governance of the school | 3 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 1 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 2 |
| 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).