

INSPECTION REPORT

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL OF ST EDMUND AND ST JOHN

Dudley, West Midlands

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103852

Headteacher: Mrs J Thomas

Lead inspector: Mrs C E Waine

Dates of inspection: 8 – 10 March 2004

Inspection number: 258111

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	242
School address:	Beechwood Road Dudley West Midlands
Postcode:	DY2 7QA
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Patricia Jones
Date of previous inspection:	25 th January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Edmund and St John is an average sized C of E aided primary school in Dudley, which serves an area of considerable social and economic disadvantage. Just over half of pupils are of white UK origin and the number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is high at 47%. They represent a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds, with the two largest groups being pupils of Pakistani and Afro-Caribbean origin. There are many pupils whose mother tongue is not English and 22 pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The local Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) provides support for 76 pupils. The EMAS home/school liaison worker and a classroom volunteer are bi-lingual and act as translators for both pupils and their families. The Afro-Caribbean Improvement Project (ACIP) works throughout the school to help raise the achievement of target groups of pupils. There are several refugees and asylum seekers from a wide range of countries who also receive additional support. The proportion of pupils who enter the school during Years 1 to 6 is higher than in most schools; some who enter have behavioural difficulties and others have little spoken English.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well above average and a higher than usual proportion has a statement of their needs. Several of the special needs are related to emotional and behavioural difficulties and general learning difficulties. Attainment on entry is very low in comparison with most schools.

The school is part of the Dudley Educational Action Zone, which provides additional staffing for support for individual pupils and their families. The school has achieved several awards including the Investors in People Award, the Basic Skills Award and the Healthy Schools Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23081	Mrs C E Waine	Lead inspector	Science; information and communication technology.
11457	Mrs J Beattie	Lay inspector	
30935	Mrs K McArthur	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; geography; history; English as an additional language.
24528	Mr G Muton	Team inspector	English; design and technology; physical education.
23204	Ms C Wojtak	Team inspector	Mathematics; art and design; music; special educational needs.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils, overall, with some significant strengths. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and their results in national tests match those of pupils in similar schools. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but there are variations in quality between classes. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and the leadership of the headteacher is good and leading to rising standards. Although there are many strengths in these areas, many factors combine to limit the effectiveness of the hard work of the headteacher and senior staff. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement is satisfactory overall, and standards are rising, although they are currently below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.
- Provision for the children in the reception classes is good and results in good achievement by the end of the reception year. However, accommodation for the outdoor curriculum is not good enough. This is also the case for the physical education curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6.
- Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology.
- There is inconsistency in the quality of teaching between classes.
- The school is very effective in ensuring that all its pupils have full access to all its activities. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, often very good and that for pupils for whom English is not the first language is very good.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is good and their progress is monitored very well. Provision for their cultural development is very good. Although most pupils respond well to the provision, the behaviour of a small minority of pupils sometimes slows the learning of others.
- The curriculum is greatly enriched by a wide variety of clubs and events and support for learning outside the school day is very good.
- The school makes very good provision for families in the school community.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection and standards have risen at the same rate as those nationally, despite the many obstacles to progress.

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	E	C
mathematics	E*	E	E	D
science	E*	E*	E	C

A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E - in the lowest 5% of schools nationally. Similar schools are those with similar levels of free school meals.*

Overall, achievement is satisfactory. Children achieve well in the reception classes, but the proportion of those who are likely to meet the learning goals set for them is well below average, except in personal, social and emotional development and physical development, where standards are average. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory; standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well below average by the end of Year 2; this reflects test results. By the end of Year 6, standards in English are below average and in mathematics and science are well below average, which reflects some improvement in English from the tests results in 2003. Results in tests in both Years 2 and 6 are similar to those in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Standards in tests are improving at a similar rate to those nationally. The school has identified areas

where pupils could achieve more and has taken good action to improve them, although progress has been slowed by difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers of appropriate expertise. The school is taking effective action to resolve this problem. Girls achieve higher standards than boys.

The promotion of pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall; that for their cultural development is very good. In response, most pupils behave well and develop good attitudes to school but the poor behaviour of a small minority sometimes affects the learning of others, despite the good management skills of many teachers. Attendance is satisfactory; the school has very good procedures to improve attendance but a minority of parents do not co-operate in getting their children to school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning are satisfactory; they are good in many lessons but there is some variation between classes, despite a well-established programme of checking quality. This creates unequal patterns of learning over time. Assessment procedures are good and used well to target some groups of pupils but information is not used well enough to inform pupils how to improve their work or to set specific targets for all pupils.

The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched very well by the very wide range of out of lesson activities provided. There is an effective partnership with most parents. The school supports parents very well in learning to help their children and improving their own expertise through a good variety of activities and training. This is enhanced very well by the work of ethnic minority support services and the Dudley Educational Action Zone. Links with the wider community and other schools are good. The school provides a good standard of care for its pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, but the leadership of the headteacher is good. Throughout a difficult period she has kept a firm eye on improving the school and taken effective action, so that despite the many difficulties it faces, standards continue to rise. Several key staff are newly in post and there is good potential for the senior management team to lead the school forward and raise standards. Governance is satisfactory overall and all statutory requirements are met. Governors are very supportive of the school and its work.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils have positive views of the school. Both groups have concerns about the behaviour of some pupils, and a small number of parents have concerns about bullying. The inspection confirms their concerns about the behaviour of a minority of pupils but finds that the school deals appropriately with any instances of bullying.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Raise the quality of all teaching to that of the best.
- Improve the behaviour of the minority of pupils who impinge on the learning of others.
- Improve outdoor provision for the physical education curriculum and for the children in the reception year.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are well below average overall. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory; it is good in the reception classes, in information and communication technology (ICT) and for those pupils with special educational needs or who have English as an additional language.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average in the reception classes and by the end of Years 2 and 6, although test results at the end of Year 6 match those in similar schools, overall.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well because of the good support they are given.
- Standards are above average in art and design by the end of Year 2.

Commentary

1. When children enter the school their attainment is very low, and lower than at the time of the previous inspection. Many have had no nursery or playgroup experience and some do not speak English. Social skills are poorly developed. Children make good progress in the reception year and achieve well but standards remain well below average in most areas of learning on entry to Year 1. They make very good progress in developing their personal, social and emotional skills and in their physical development and standards in these areas are average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.2 (13.7)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.0 (12.1)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	13.5 (13.1)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 40 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Standards in Year 2 are well below average in reading, writing and mathematics and reflect those recorded in the results of the national tests in 2003. Whilst the majority of pupils achieve the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics, there are many pupils with special educational needs or who are at an early stage of learning English who do not, despite achieving well.
3. Since the previous inspection, standards in national tests in reading and writing have improved faster than those nationally because of the school's focus on improving the basic skills of English. This work is enhanced by the quality of support provided for those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. In mathematics, test results are not as high as at the previous inspection. This partly reflects the changed intake but also reflects the fact that the school's first priority is necessarily on teaching pupils the basic skills of speaking and listening and literacy. The school has

recognised the need to improve standards in mathematics in this age group and is monitoring work closely.

4. Standards in science are below average overall. Although most pupils achieve appropriate standards, there is a significant group of pupils whose speaking skills and range of vocabulary limit their progress because they do not have the skills to discuss their work or record it independently. Standards in ICT are average and pupils achieve well.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.7 (24.6)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	24.7 (23.9)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	26.6 (24.4)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 44 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. Standards in Year 6 are currently well below average overall and are consistently so in national tests, although results are rising in line with the national rate of improvement. Most pupils are attaining the levels expected for their age but overall standards are depressed by the high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or who are at an early stage of speaking English. Test results are similar to those in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, overall, and the latest data to show the value that the school adds to pupils' achievement is above average. The school is successful in meeting its targets.
6. Current standards represent satisfactory achievement for Year 6, as their test results at the end of Year 2 were low. Achievement and standards are improving, which reflects the impact being made by recent initiatives. This is encouraging, as the school faces many barriers to raising standards such as:
 - there is a well above average level of special educational needs, with an above average proportion related to emotional and behavioural difficulties;
 - many pupils enter the school during Years 2 to 6; for example, only 12 of the current 30 pupils in Year 6 entered in Year 1 and four entered only at the start of Year 6;
 - the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is high and many enter the school in all year groups with little or no spoken English;
 - there are a number of refugees, some of whom have little previous educational experience;
 - there is an unusually high level of teacher mobility and there are difficulties in recruiting and retaining good teachers;
 - aspirations of the local community are not high and some parents do not value education.
7. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in English but standards are below average, overall, by the end of Year 6. The school has recognised this and put strategies into place to raise standards, focusing initially on developing pupils' vocabulary and improving their speaking and listening skills. The effect of these initiatives is promoting improvement. Standards in mathematics are well below average, although improvement can now be seen and achievement is satisfactory.
8. Standards in science are well below average because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language who find it difficult to discuss

their work or record it accurately. An improved curriculum is promoting good progress in many lessons because of the practical approach to learning, and standards are rising. Pupils achieve well in ICT and standards are average by the end of Year 6.

9. In other subjects, standards are average in music by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In art and design standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and average by the end of Year 6. Standards in geography are below average by the end of Years 2 and 6 and standards in design and technology are below average by the end of Year 6. No judgement could be made on standards in design and technology in Year 2 or in history or physical education by the end of both Years 2 and 6 because these subjects were only sampled and there was insufficient evidence for secure judgements.
10. The attainment of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average in English when they enter the school, due to their limited spoken English language skills and this also has an impact on their attainment in other subjects. Very good support, particularly from the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) staff, enables them to make good progress and they achieve well. The school has noted that, in national tests, Pakistani pupils are the highest achieving group in the school and that white and Afro-Caribbean boys are the lowest attainers. The Afro-Caribbean Improvement Project (ACIP) is now working effectively with groups of pupils to improve achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory and their attitudes to extra-curricular activities are good. Behaviour is satisfactory overall; most pupils behave well but the behaviour of a minority is unsatisfactory. Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils have good attitudes to school life and are keen to take part in the wide range of extra curricular activities the school provides.
- The school has good procedures to encourage pupils to attend. However, a significant minority of pupils have low levels of attendance for reasons beyond the school's control.
- Pupils are expected to behave well and behaviour is at least satisfactory in most lessons. However the behaviour of a small minority of pupils sometimes affects other pupils' learning and results in some unacceptable incidents.
- The school's procedures to promote racial harmony are effective.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and that for cultural development is very good. There are few opportunities for reflection in assemblies or lessons.

Commentary

11. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and take an enthusiastic part in the range of activities provided. Pupils in the reception classes achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development so that most meet the levels expected by the time they enter Year 1. In Years 1 to 6, attitudes to learning are generally good in lessons, sometimes very good, and most pupils listen and respond well to questions, concentrating well on their work and

discussing topics with each other. However, in a minority of lessons some pupils are restless if the lesson fails to capture their interest. Pupils who speak English in addition to their home language have good attitudes to learning, because they are well supported in all activities. The diverse cultural groups in the school work and play harmoniously together, and mix well at the school clubs. The Urdu club and cultural evenings recognise and celebrate the diverse cultures represented in the school, and further promote pupils' good attitudes. There is a harmonious mixture of home cultures, and relationships in school are good with very few racist incidents.

12. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to learning because work is matched well to their individual needs. When pupils go out of class to work in a small group their commitment and determination to succeed is evident. Pupils are given good opportunities to talk about their progress and they are fully involved in the review process.
13. Behaviour in school is satisfactory overall and pupils know that the school expects a high standard of good behaviour. Most pupils behave well but, throughout the school, a minority are involved in incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour. Where these pupils are supported well, such as in the 'Magic Group'¹, or are motivated well by their learning, such as in ICT lessons, they work well. However, in lessons where they have no additional support, they sometimes find it hard to control their own behaviour and disrupt learning for other pupils. This is particularly so for the older ones, towards the end of the school day when they do not respond well even when teaching is good, and slow the pace of learning for the whole class. There is no external support available for these pupils. Last year five pupils were temporarily excluded, and this year two pupils have been temporarily excluded.
14. Some parents and pupils have raised concerns about bullying incidents. The school always records incidents of unacceptable behaviour and these are treated seriously. The headteacher and staff work very hard to deal with every incident fairly. They are aware that some parents' concerns about bullying are not always met immediately and have good plans to involve parents even more closely in dealing with any incidents which affect their children.

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	128	5	0
White – any other White background	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	15	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	59	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	14	0	0
Black or Black British – African	6	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0

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

¹ The Magic Group is the provision for pupils in Years 5 and 6 with special educational needs.

15. Attendance is satisfactory overall and the majority of pupils have good attendance records. The school has many good procedures to encourage pupils to attend and staff from EMAS, ACIP and the Dudley Educational Action Zone (EAZ) are very active in promoting attendance. However, some parents take their children on extended holidays during term time and others are unco-operative in ensuring that their children attend regularly and on time; sometimes some respond badly to the school's attempts to raise levels of attendance.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.7	School data	0.5
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.

16. The provision for pupils' personal development is good overall. Spiritual development is satisfactory; pupils are considerate of each others' beliefs and values, but there are insufficient opportunities for reflection in assemblies or lessons. Social and moral development is promoted well, and contributes effectively to pupils' personal development. As they move through the school, pupils take increasing responsibility and develop personal independence. Some are elected as School Council representatives; others help prepare for the clubs and Assemblies. Pupils are particularly helpful towards those who have special educational needs or disabilities.
17. The diversity of cultural groups who attend the school ensures all pupils are well prepared for adult life in a multi-cultural society. Special events, including cultural evenings, and a wide range of activities develop pupils' cultural awareness very effectively. A wide range of clubs, run before and after school, are well attended, and include ICT, Urdu, cookery, art, music and sports. Local history and culture is promoted well by visits, such as to nearby Dudley Castle and the Black Country Museum.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory and promotes pupils' academic and personal development appropriately. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and there is a sound curriculum, which is very well enriched by out of formal lesson activities. The standard of care and pupils' welfare is good and pupils receive good support and guidance. There are good partnerships with parents, the community and local schools.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and not as good as it was judged to be at the previous inspection. Assessment is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the reception classes, in ICT, for the pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language is good.
- Teaching is often good in lessons, but there are inconsistencies in quality between classes. Some teachers engage pupils' interest and motivate them to learn very well but others are less successful in stimulating a desire to learn.

- Most teachers manage behaviour well but occasionally poor behaviour by a few pupils slows learning for other pupils.
- Teachers plan well to provide opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills in all lessons and widen their vocabulary.
- Support staff provide a valuable contribution to the learning of their target groups of pupils.
- Assessment procedures are good but are not being used fully to inform pupils how they might improve their work.

Commentary

18. During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory overall; it was at least good in two fifths of lessons but unsatisfactory in just under a tenth. This marks a slight decline on the previous inspection, when fewer unsatisfactory lessons were observed. This is partly a reflection of the increased difficulties that the school has faced which have resulted in many changes of staff over the recent past. The school has problems in recruiting and retaining staff of high enough calibre but is now addressing these difficulties effectively though improved conditions of service. The examination of pupils' books confirms that teaching is usually at least satisfactory and often good.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0 %)	6 (14 %)	11 (26%)	21 (50%)	3 (7 %)	1 (2 %)	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. Totals do not equal 100% because of the effects of rounding.

19. As at the time of the previous inspection, teaching for the children in the reception classes is good. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for children of this age and plan an interesting range of activities to meet their needs and promote achievement well. Whilst there are ample support staff, each providing good individual support, they are not used as well as they might be because different staff work in these classes at different times. This results in a variation of approach, which reduces its effectiveness.
20. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is often good in lessons but there is too much variation in the quality between classes, even within the parallel classes. Teachers' planning is good and ensures that all pupils in the same year groupings learn about the same topics in a similar way. Teachers are aware that some pupils' listening and comprehension skills are weak and spend a great deal of time carefully explaining work. This sometimes reduces the time that pupils have to carry out their own work and a few find it difficult to sit and listen throughout extended teacher talk sessions. In better lessons, teachers provide clear and concise explanations and allow pupils ample time to work independently. Teaching of ICT is good; teachers are confident and plan well to develop each aspect of the subject. They make good use of the available resources to motivate pupils, allowing them ample time to work independently.
21. Some teachers manage the pupils who have behavioural difficulties very well, but others find it difficult and the pace of learning slows as they maintain control of the lesson. Towards the end of each day even those teachers with strong class management skills find it very difficult to maintain a good learning ethos when there is no additional support.
22. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall and very good for pupils with a statement of their needs because the emphasis is placed on accelerating their learning within a realistic time period. Individual education plans generally enable pupils to take manageable, measurable steps towards improvement. Work is usually well matched to meet pupils' needs and basic skills are taught effectively. Adults are approachable, informed and helpful and pupils benefit from the increasingly skilled support staff who help them take a full part in whole class discussions and motivate them to learn. Very good procedures identify pupils with learning difficulties at an early stage.
23. Teaching is good for the pupils who speak English as an additional language. A very strong contribution from staff from the ethnic minority support services and EAZ and the school's support assistants aids pupils' progress and language development, both in whole class sessions and in individual tuition sessions.
24. Assessment procedures were found to be unsatisfactory at the previous inspection but there are now good, thorough and detailed procedures to collect and analyse data. Pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science is regularly tested and tracked. Data, including that for different groups of pupils, is analysed carefully. It shows, for example, that Pakistani pupils make better progress than other ethnic groups in the school, whilst white and

Afro-Caribbean boys do not achieve as well as others. Additional support is then directed to where it is needed most.

25. Assessment information helps teachers to identify weak areas in their pupils' knowledge and plan the next steps in learning. It is used to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils, although these are not yet fully effective in informing pupils how to improve. Similarly, marking by some teachers is good but others do not use it as a means of informing pupils how to improve their work. The school is refining procedures to make them more manageable, and to ensure they have greater impact on raising standards and achievement.

The curriculum

The quality and range of the curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and the local agreed syllabus for religious education. Opportunities to enrich the pupils' learning are very good. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.
- The range of additional opportunities to enrich pupils' learning is very good.
- Equality of opportunities is good. Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language and those pupils with statements of special educational need is very good. Provision for other pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Provision for pupils personal, social and health education is good.
- The match of support staff to the needs of the curriculum is very good.
- Outdoor facilities for physical education and for the children in the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

26. The headteacher has a strong commitment to ensure that pupils learn the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. One of the strategies to meet this commitment has resulted in a school timetable that allows for long lesson times, particularly in literacy. Pupils are also arranged in sets for literacy and numeracy that are based on age and prior attainment levels and therefore all pupils in each phase of the school are taught these subjects at the same time. There are three unintended but significant consequences of this organisation:
- the school has difficulties in timetabling the minimum recommended time for physical education because of the pressures on time for use of the school hall and the unsatisfactory outdoor facilities;
 - time available for other subjects is limited to the minimum recommended;
 - opportunities for linking work in different subjects are missed. This situation is made more difficult because the school does not have a document that gives a complete overview of its long-term curriculum plans.
27. The commitment to prioritise the learning of basic skills is particularly successful and is supported by an appropriate range of teachers and very good provision of well qualified support staffing for pupils who need extra help to take a full part in lessons. This work is now being extended into other areas of the curriculum. For example, teachers plan speaking and listening opportunities into most lessons, with a focus on improving skills and confidence

and extending vocabulary. Planning to incorporate ICT into lessons is good and enables pupils to develop their skills in a meaningful way.

28. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall and very good for those pupils with statements of special educational needs. Very good care has been taken to adapt the curriculum for them and support is put in place swiftly. Very good levels of additional support are provided for those with statements of their need but in some lessons there is no additional support for other pupils with special needs. Their progress in these lessons is satisfactory rather than good, as it is in lessons where additional help is available. The provision for those pupils who speak English in addition to their home language is very good. They have equal access to and are fully included in all activities provided by the school. The very good range of enrichment activities helps them broaden their experience.
29. A full programme is in place for pupils' personal, social and health education. This part of the provision has many very good features including the termly 'focus days' when many aspects of pupils' development are covered. The programme for drugs education is satisfactory; it is currently under review, with a number of changes planned.
30. A particularly strong feature of the curriculum is the quantity and quality of opportunities provided outside of the school day. Activities cater for a wide range of interests and reflect the school's commitment to increasing cultural awareness. As well as more traditional after school clubs, pupils can, for example, learn Urdu or practise Pakistani stick dancing. The efforts to encourage pupils' participation in sport are very good and, despite the lack of facilities, the school is involved in a great number of sporting tournaments and events. Participation in the arts is good, especially the opportunities to learn musical instruments and events involving the school choir. There are a large number of visits and visitors to enrich learning in the classroom. Homework clubs provide effectively for those pupils who wish to take advantage of the school's resources to support their work. Lunchtime computer clubs also support learning, particularly in mathematics.
31. The encouragement pupils receive to participate in all of these activities reflects the school's wider commitment to equality of opportunity. Access to all parts of the curriculum by pupils with special educational needs or those for whom English is an additional language is maximised by the assistance they receive from support teachers and assistants.
32. Recent improvement to the interior layout of the school has improved the size of some classrooms but there is very limited space available for the teaching of small groups. The library provision has improved well since the previous inspection and a computerised borrowing system is being set up, with the support of parent volunteers. The unsatisfactory amount of outdoor space available for play, the outdoor curriculum for children in the reception classes and physical education makes the organisation of the school day difficult.

Care, guidance and support

The school has good procedures to provide for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety and provides a good level of support, advice and guidance to all pupils based on careful assessment of their capabilities, their achievements and their personal development. Staff provide very good support for any pupil's additional specific needs and have very good procedures to help them through any difficulties that might hinder their academic or personal progress. Good procedures are in place to involve pupils in the school's work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has good policies and procedures to monitor pupils' achievements and personal development.
- Very good monitoring of pupils' special needs results in good provision for them in class and group work so that they make good progress. The school has good support from several outside agencies but the lack of external support for pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties or speech difficulties limits the care provided.
- Link workers from the Dudley Educational Action Zone, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service and the Afro Caribbean Improvement Project make a very good contribution to pupils' development and well-being.
- Procedures to act on pupils' views and involve them in the work of the school are good. The school has good procedures to introduce pupils into the reception class.
- Procedures to promote health and safety in school and on visits are good overall but the school needs to check on portable electrical equipment.

Commentary

33. The school has good policies and procedures to make sure that pupils work in a secure environment in school, in the playground and on visits. Risk assessments are in place and the premises are checked regularly for safety. However, checks on portable electrical equipment are overdue. Supervision at playtime and at lunchtime is good and pupils benefit from a good choice of activities during their free time.
34. Children entering reception classes are carefully introduced to school life. All pupils' work and progress are monitored to ensure that they make appropriate progress. Class teachers and classroom assistants provide a good level of care and support and the headteacher and deputy head teacher provide good additional support, particularly at lunchtime. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good overall but is limited by the lack of external support and guidance for those pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties and for those who have speech difficulties. Pupils' good individual educational plans are implemented very well by class teachers and support staff. In all lessons care is taken to ensure that pupils have equal access to the whole curriculum, including extra-curricular activities. When one pupil was asked if he would miss his teaching assistant, he said, "I would just have to build a wall around myself!"
35. The additional level of care provided by the link learning workers from the ACIP, Dudley EAZ and EMAS makes a significant contribution to the standards of care for all pupils in school, whatever their needs and circumstances. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported very well, which enables them to participate fully in all activities. Their progress is carefully assessed and monitored to target support where most needed. Local initiatives including the Language Achievement Project and the ACIP to support Afro-Caribbean pupils, are effective in promoting their achievements and raising the aspirations of pupils and their families.
36. Pupils' views are represented well on the school council and they are keen to discuss school matters in class and in the council. Some pupils have trained as peer group mentors so that they can support each other better. Pupils help to formulate the rules for each classroom and the older pupils take responsibilities about the school and in assemblies.

Outstanding practice

Staff from educational partnerships make an outstanding contribution to the achievements of pupils in school. The school makes a determined effort to provide all pupils with good educational support, whatever their needs and circumstances. Teachers and the special needs co-ordinator work closely with the learning link worker from the Dudley Partnership for Achievement to raise levels of attendance and to work in partnership with parents, to include them in the school community and to enable them to help their children. The special needs co-ordinator and teachers from the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service and from the Afro-Caribbean Improvement Project support pupils who may have difficulties in achieving their potential and they supplement the learning of pupils with specific needs. They make excellent use of the school's good ICT provision to provide support for pupils. They give parents support and advice so that they can help their children and take a full part in the school community.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good procedures to work in partnership with parents. Links with the wider community, other schools, colleges and other partnerships are good and enrich the school community. There is very good provision for the families in the school community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Courses and activities arranged for parents by the school and link workers make a very good contribution to parents' skills, their support for their own children and their contribution to the school community.
- Written information is well presented and is translated for parents of pupils with English as an additional language.
- Links with colleges and with the Dudley Educational Action Zone, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service and the Afro Caribbean Improvement Project contribute very well to the school's partnership with all parents.

Commentary

37. The school has many good procedures for work in partnership with parents. Most parents respond well to the initiatives in place but some are reluctant to become involved. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are accessible to parents before and after school and they, together the special needs co-ordinator and link workers, work with parents to help their children through any difficulties. A few parents say that they are not sufficiently informed about their children's progress or about the school's response to incidents of bullying. Inspectors found that the school has good procedures to consult with parents and to be fair to all pupils. In response to parents' requests:

- the school is to consider providing them with an additional opportunity of individual consultation with their child's teacher during the autumn term; and
- will increase their consultation with parents following any bullying incidents.

The school is committed to extend the already good provision by following the guidance that will lead to the award of "Investors in Parents".

38. Written information provided by the school is very good. Parents of pupils new to the school have helpful guidance booklets, and all parents have frequent newsletters, which are translated into Urdu. The prospectus and governors' annual report are presented well and include all statutory information, which is an improvement on the previous inspection. Parents are encouraged to share with the school any special talents that their children are developing out of school. The school message book maintains a day-to-day contact with parents so that essential information and any concerns can be dealt with immediately.

39. The Dudley EAZ link worker and the EMAS and ACIP support teachers provide excellent help and support for parents. They have developed very good relationships with parents, and provide support for parents and pupils with strong home school links and a wide range of initiatives that benefit both parents and their children. Parents are involved in their children's education via family literacy and numeracy courses, the active Parent Teachers' Association, and the course for classroom assistants. They have contributed to school performances and celebrations, provided special support for families who are new to the country, and run parents' clubs such as ICT and keep fit. Parents of ethnic minority pupils are particularly happy with the education provided by the school, which has a positive impact on their children's learning and attitudes.

40. The school has good community links with the church, the police force and with the neighbouring community centre, which has provided venues for meetings and crèche facilities. Local colleges of further education have funded adult learning and courses such as

first aid. They have also supported the school's work in developing a website with older pupils. Family learning courses are well attended and support parents in helping their children. The parent volunteer programme, provided by the college, is well-designed and monitored using portfolios of work completed by course members. The school provides placements for college students and trainee teachers and good links with the high schools provide for a smooth transfer for pupils moving on to secondary education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership, management and governance are satisfactory overall. Leadership is satisfactory overall and that of the headteacher is good. Management is satisfactory overall. The governance of the school is satisfactory overall and governors are very supportive of its work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is good and is leading to rising standards.
- Parents are appreciative of the caring, Christian family ethos that provides well in including individuals of all abilities, races and background in all activities.
- The leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are very good.
- The development of ICT has been well managed; the leadership has driven forward the development of the subject and promoted good achievement for pupils.
- There are sound procedures for checking the quality of teaching and learning and these are now being becoming more rigorous.
- The school runs like clockwork on a day-to-day basis, due to the very effective administrative systems and the focused efficiency of the office team.
- The targets in the school development plan are well-chosen but the systems to link strategic planning with financial projections are limited.
- The governing body is extremely supportive to the school but lacks rigour in the way that it holds the school to account in seeking to raise standards.

Commentary

41. A firm commitment to including all individuals is at the heart of this school, and its Christian ethos is evident in the way that pupils, parents and staff are treated. This owes much to the effective leadership of the headteacher, who is perceptive and organised and communicates well. She has a high profile in the school and generates an atmosphere of calm in which pupils know what is expected of them. Her vision is very good but it has not been fully realised in its impact on learning because of the many barriers to raising achievement faced by the school. Good progress has been made on most issues identified at the previous inspection although there is still more work to be done in improving standards, assessment and the outdoor area and curriculum for the children in the reception classes. The senior management team and the governors have a strong commitment to ensuring high quality provision for all pupils that is shared by the staff and there is good potential for further improvement.
42. Performance management is effective in focusing attention on areas where professional development is needed. Management procedures to check the quality of teaching and learning have been effective in identifying the unequal quality of teaching. Some good action has been taken, such as training, in-class support, retention policies for key staff and careful deployment of skilled staff, but differences remain. Procedures are now becoming even more rigorous, with a closer focus on the link between teaching and learning. Management systems

ensure that day-to-day administration is very effective. The school office works efficiently, as an administrative centre and as a focal point for parents, staff and visiting governors.

43. The school is making good use of self-evaluation procedures and assessment of pupils' performance to identify areas for improvement and information is used well to target resources. Most co-ordinators do this well, linking their findings to the school's overall development plan, a thorough document that includes appropriate targets for further improvement. This has been effective in the development of ICT throughout the school.
44. Leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are very good and owe much to the skill, enthusiasm and drive of the co-ordinators. Much has been accomplished due to very strong leadership and teamwork. Instead of the two teams working in parallel, systems have been overhauled. The special educational needs co-ordinator has laid on training and introduced new practices so that work is not duplicated and support is targeted according to the needs of individual pupils. This has resulted in a well-organised support staff body. The management of spending for special educational needs is very good. Those working with pupils with specific needs such as hearing impairments have made special efforts to attend additional training and this is reflected in the high quality provision. Careful monitoring and assessment procedures provide valuable information on pupils' progress.
45. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities appropriately. It has effective policies that promote full access to activities for all pupils, including those for special educational needs, racial equality and disability. These policies are applied consistently and successfully and the provision for the different groups of pupils is a strength of the school. The achievement of different groups is carefully monitored and effective action taken where weaknesses are highlighted. Governors have a good working knowledge of the school's strengths and know where improvements are needed. They have developed beneficial links with the school and played a key role in supporting developments. They have actively promoted the close relationship between the school, the church and the community. Governors ask questions of the school but do not always challenge its thinking on contentious issues. Although financial control is good, the budget is not fully linked to strategic planning for the future. A large surplus of funds had been accrued but this has been reduced substantially this year; funds have been used to significantly enhance resources for learning, particularly in ICT. The governing body pays satisfactory attention to obtaining best value for money in its spending decisions.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	790,906
Total expenditure	781,012
Expenditure per pupil	3,039

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	80,362
Balance carried forward to the next year	90,256

46. Parents trust the school and have confidence in its leadership and management. They feel that the staff create a warm and caring environment in which children are well nurtured in their educational development and general well being. Balancing the satisfactory provision, pupils' sound achievement with the relatively high expenditure per pupil, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

What is the effectiveness of community provision?

Provision of initiatives that involve and include the families in the school community are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good climate of community involvement is created by senior management and school staff.
- Very good support for pupils and parents is provided by staff from the Dudley Educational Action Zone, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service and the Afro Caribbean Improvement Project.
- Many parents are very pleased with the school's initiatives and the benefits to their families.

Commentary

47. Very good community provision promotes the school's determination to involve and include all families, whatever their needs and circumstances, in the education of their children. The school, in co-operation with local colleges of further education provides a range of courses for parents, which enable them to develop their own skills and well-being, such as ICT and keep fit, and to help them to support their children's learning, such as courses in family literacy and numeracy. Parents value the opportunities highly, as a means to develop skills, to help their own children with their learning and to become involved in and part of the school community. Parents, teachers, support staff, staff from Dudley Partnerships, Ethnic Minority Achievement Service and the Afro-Caribbean Improvement Project all work together very effectively to do their best for the pupils. Families are supported in many ways, sometimes involving home visits from staff working in school. The whole community comes together during such celebrations such as the Pop Idol concert and the forthcoming cultural evening.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall quality of provision is **good**, as it was at the time of the previous inspection.

48. When children enter the school, their attainment is very low, particularly in the key areas of personal, social and emotional development and in vocabulary and speaking skills. English is the second language for a number of children. Achievement is good overall and very good in personal, social and emotional development and physical development. The majority of children meet the early learning goals in these areas. In the other areas, achievement is good, but by the end of their time in reception, children's overall attainment is still well below that normally seen.
49. Good achievement is due to good quality teaching in each of the separate areas of learning. The teachers know the early years curriculum well, and provide a good variety of well-planned activities. Children with special needs and those for whom English is not their home language are well integrated and supported, and make good progress. However, different support staff work in the reception classes at various times during the week, leading to some inconsistencies in approach. Children are taught in two reception classes, which they visit regularly before starting school. This helps them feel secure and they leave their parents confidently when they come into class. Some parents help in class and they appreciate the Family Learning courses that the school provides to help them support their children and develop their own skills. The co-ordinator does not work in the Foundation Stage but provides satisfactory leadership and management. Assessment procedures are thorough, and children's progress is carefully monitored to help teachers plan the next steps in learning.
50. The narrow outdoor area was found to need improvement at the time of the previous inspection, and this is still the case. There is no soft play space or an area for gardening and the storage facilities occupy much of the ground. There has not been sufficient improvement and the range of outdoor learning opportunities available to the children remains restricted.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good.
- Teachers use lots of praise and rewards to encourage the children.
- Good relationships make the children feel secure and they co-operate together well.
- Children are encouraged to become independent and develop a sense of responsibility.

Commentary

51. Teaching is good, sometimes very good. The majority of the children have had no pre-school or nursery experience and staff place a strong focus on making them feel secure in school. Staff quickly establish good routines and friendly relationships with children and make good use of praise and rewards to encourage good behaviour and learning. The children co-operate

well with each other, share and take turns to use equipment. They queue up sensibly whilst waiting their turn on the apparatus in physical education, and are very conscious of safety when using the climbing frame. They tidy the classroom willingly and prepare themselves for PE efficiently. Regular opportunities to “plan, do and review” enable them to become more independent and take some responsibility for their own learning. The strong emphasis on the children’s personal and social development leads to very good achievement. By the end of their time in reception, the great majority meet the early learning goals in this area.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many children enter school with very limited vocabulary and communication skills, and a number speak English as their second language.
- Teachers provide many opportunities for the children to increase their vocabulary and knowledge of language, although occasionally teachers may talk for too long a time.
- Most children recognise their own name, and are beginning to recognise the sounds represented by some letters.

Commentary

52. Teaching is good; because many children start school with a narrow vocabulary and limited communication skills there is a strong emphasis on language skills. Staff encourage children to talk about their activities but most answers are limited to one word or a brief phrase. For example, the children loved investigating various fruits, but struggled to find the words to describe the tastes, textures and smells. “It’s bumpy” was the most inventive and only after a lot of prompting could children suggest ‘juicy’ or ‘tangy’. Occasionally teachers talk for a long time; children listen well but then have less opportunity to extend their speaking skills. They enjoy stories and books, and select favourite books confidently. Most children correctly sequence pictures of the main events in a familiar story and, during the inspection, a higher attaining child eagerly retold the story “Handa’s surprise”, which she had heard before. Many recognise the first sound in words because teachers enunciate very clearly to help them discriminate the sounds. Most children recognise their name but many need help to write it. Higher attaining children write simple sentences such as “I went to the park”, and use their knowledge of letter sounds well to find and build words. Lower attaining children are still at an early stage and have yet to develop pencil skills to write letters legibly. There is regular reading practice, and children take books home, but progress is slow for most. By the end of reception, children achieve well, but do not meet the early learning goal in communication, language and literacy.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are provided with varied practical activities.
- Displays and resources support learning well.

Commentary

53. Good teaching, using a varied range of activities, makes learning interesting for the children. Resources are used well, and children may go outside to play number games. For example, their understanding of ordinal numbers was reinforced well by running races to see who came first, second, third and fourth. Most children count accurately to 10, and many count back to 0. Good displays of number digits help children recognise and write numbers. Early practical addition activities, using a good range of resources, help children as they count and combine different amounts. Only higher attaining children have sufficient knowledge of number to spot the missing number from a sequence. Most put three objects in order of size. Teachers make good use of two and three-dimensional shapes, and when exploring fruit, one child knew the orange was “like a sphere”. Most name squares, circles and triangles. By the end of reception, children achieve well, but the majority do not reach the early learning goal in mathematics.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have very limited general knowledge when they start school.
- They experience a wide range of practical learning activities.
- They are competent users of the computer.

Commentary

54. Good teaching and a well-planned range of activities successfully broaden the children’s limited knowledge of the world, and link science, religious education, geography, history and ICT well. Children follow the main festivals in Christianity and other religions. After studying families in religious education lessons, they learn how they have changed over time in history. They plant beans and sunflowers, carefully observing the changes and growth, and investigate what happens when plants are kept in different conditions. Teachers link this well to a computer program to consolidate the children’s understanding of the life-cycle of a bean and of a butterfly. Children enjoy working in the ICT suite, and manipulate the computer controls competently to move pictures into the correct position. They achieve well, but do not meet the early learning goal by the end of reception.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children move with increasing control, balance and co-ordination and achieve very well.
- They use equipment and apparatus safely and sensibly.
- The outdoor area does not provide opportunities for physically challenging activities.

Commentary

- 56 Good teaching builds on children's enjoyment of physical activities with a range of activities and resources that develop their large and small bodily control skills. Children observe safety instructions, and use apparatus sensibly. They show increasing control and move with good co-ordination, such as when balancing confidently on a bench, patiently taking turns. Teachers give children good opportunities to demonstrate their skills, increasing their self-confidence effectively and celebrating success. Most children use scissors, brushes and small tools competently but some are still learning to control a pencil. As the small outdoor area does not offer opportunities for challenging physical activities, staff ensure that children gain these experiences by using the large apparatus in the school hall. Children achieve very well, and meet the learning goal by the end of the reception year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy singing songs and playing small instruments.
- Many children do not know how to engage in imaginative play.
- Children express ideas through a varied range of media and materials.

Commentary

55. Teaching is good and children experience well planned activities that encourage them to develop imaginative ideas and express them in a variety of ways. They enjoy music and singing, and know the words to several simple songs. They vary the sound of small percussion instruments from loud to soft in response to the conductor. They were very interested in the colours and shapes of the different fruit they investigated using their senses. Children lack sufficient vocabulary to communicate and express their ideas. Some children do not know how to play when they start school, so staff participate with them in the role-play activities. They soon interact with each other well, buying and selling flowers in the “garden centre”. Children express their ideas through a variety of materials, and achieve well in this area of learning. They are close to the early learning goal by the end of the reception year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

The provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained by the end of Year 2 are well below average and are below average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent.
- Teachers provide good opportunities to develop pupils’ speaking and listening skills.

Commentary

56. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve satisfactorily in all aspects of English including reading, writing, speaking and listening. However, there is a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including communication difficulties and emotional and behaviour difficulties. Many of these pupils and those for whom English is an additional language make good, and in some cases very good, progress. However overall standards are well below national averages, which reflects the national test results in recent years.
57. In Years 3 to 6, achievement is also satisfactory although standards are below national averages. Many pupils, especially those with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language make good, sometimes very good, progress because of effective

support. However, there is a great deal of change in the school population during these years, with many pupils joining or leaving the school. Pupils in the current Year 6 have achieved satisfactorily overall, despite the fact that almost two thirds of them entered the school late. A whole school effort to improve spelling is proving successful but handwriting standards are too low.

58. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but is inconsistent between classes. Some very good and good teaching was observed during the inspection but there were other lessons where the teaching was satisfactory but did not sufficiently engage pupils in learning. Teachers were so careful in their explanations to pupils that they sometimes talked for too long, losing the attention of some pupils. This also meant that pupils did not always have enough time to work independently. In better lessons, teachers link learning to pupils' own experiences by, for example, developing arguments for and against a school tuck shop or by learning how to make notes using the characteristics of the classroom assistant. There are differences in the quality of marking in pupils' books, with some teachers doing their utmost to help pupils to improve their work. In other books, teachers provide too little guidance so that pupils are not sufficiently aware of what they have to do next to improve. Teachers make good use of computers to support learning in literacy lessons. A consistently good feature of the provision for English is the quality of the support given to the pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language, which is targeted well to meet the needs of individuals. These pupils also have good access to computers to support their learning.
59. The quality of pupils' learning and behaviour varies with the quality of the teaching. Where the teachers have good relationships with them, the pupils are responsive and keen to learn. Pupils apply themselves and work hard when tasks set for them are imaginative and relevant. In some lessons the teaching fails to enthuse the pupils. In pupils' books there are differences of expectation from teachers in both the quality and quantity of work produced. Some teachers are more successful than others in planning writing projects that culminate in a final piece of extended writing. The school has placed a great priority upon the teaching of literacy. Standards are gradually rising and there has been satisfactory improvement from the time of the last inspection. However, teachers have generally not managed yet to instil in pupils the joy of reading.
60. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The subject coordinator has a firm grasp of procedures and standards for the lower school but does not yet have a clear overview of performance in the subject across the whole school. For example, there are some very useful and thorough assessment procedures in place but there are differences in the way they are being used by teachers in planning to meet the needs of individuals. The target setting procedures lack that small refinement which would make them really useful to teachers in planning challenging work for groups of pupils of different abilities.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. A significant strength of teaching is the opportunities teachers provide for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills. Teachers do this in all subjects because they realise the importance of talk to their pupils in the development of their literacy skills. Opportunities to use writing in other subjects are not well developed. Pupils do write reports and explanations in history and religious education but opportunities for creative writing are missed. A lack of literacy skills and below average speaking skills generally inhibits achievement for many pupils in other subjects including science.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have been consistently low for a number of years but are now rising.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. The standard of marking and expectations varies from teacher to teacher.
- Standards in investigations are higher than in the other elements of the subject because of a suitable emphasis on reasoning and explanation.
- Teachers are introducing innovative techniques combining ICT and numeracy.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs in the 'Magic Room' and support staff throughout the school often give skilled, high quality help.

Commentary

62. Standards are well below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 but are improving in the junior classes. Both boys and girls improved their performance in the national tests in 2003. In Year 6, overall standards are affected by the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the group. Another key factor is linked to the significant number of pupils who have entered the school during Years 2 to 6, with mixed educational experiences. Some of these pupils have needed further explanations in order for them to grasp new concepts, and several pupils joined the school with a limited command of the English language and have needed time to fully understand the language of complex mathematical concepts. There is less evidence of improvement in the infant classes and no pupils attained the higher levels in last year's national tests. Learning and achievement are satisfactory because teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have devoted a lot of time and effort to explaining concepts. This has helped pupils to develop confidence in investigating problems, but has been at the expense of pupils practising and consolidating their skills in calculations and interpreting and data. Standards are in better in investigation than in other aspects of mathematics because of the focus on understanding of vocabulary and the explanation of methods and answers.
63. There are inconsistencies in teaching, which is satisfactory overall, but ranges from poor to very good. The best teaching not only communicated efficiently, with no wasted words but also motivated and encouraged pupils to interact and improve their skills independently. Some good innovative techniques combining ICT and numeracy were seen in the junior classes during the inspection. Year 5, for example, cheered excitedly when they correctly guessed the size of the angle as it appeared on the interactive whiteboard in front of them. This use of whiteboards, where they are available, is good and motivates pupils well. It is being extended to all the other classes, to allow all teachers to make use of the hyperlinks that make lessons fun, interactive experiences. All teachers place a well-chosen emphasis on reasoning and explanation and encourage pupils to explain their thinking. Good attention is paid to the correct use of mathematical vocabulary, which pupils use well to explain and discuss their work. Written plans are consistently good but teachers do not always follow them sufficiently to promote good progress. Whilst there are good assessment procedures in place and information is used well to identify groups of pupils for support, the use of information is inconsistent between teachers. Some match work very well to the needs and interest of their pupils and pupils know what they need to do to improve but others are less

effective and pupils are unsure what they need to do next. This is also reflected in marking; and in some classes it does not provide enough guidance on how pupils could improve their work.

64. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, pupils were inattentive and not fully engaged because they were not inspired to listen. The time taken to manage their behaviour slowed the pace of learning for other pupils. Sometimes teachers are so eager to explain concepts that they talk too much and give too little time to the practice element of the subject. As a result, pupils have limited time to record their calculations and to hone their skills. Pupils are encouraged to experiment with independent written methods in the junior classes but there are fewer opportunities to investigate in infant classes. Pupils in the infant classes spend time writing out the lesson objective, which limited the time available for them to record their work. Pupils in some classes have not learnt the importance of accurate presentation. Homework is set regularly and it is given value in class-work. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.
65. Throughout the school, there are many skilled support staff who give high quality individual feedback to pupils and use a range of questions to help pupils to make the learning steps they need. The provision for the pupils who have English as an additional language and those in the Magic Group is particularly good and helps these groups of pupils achieve well.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. Pupils' numerical and mathematical skills are below average but most teachers provide some good opportunities to apply them in other subjects. However, there is no structured whole school approach to this and so no consistency. Good practice was seen across the school in science and geography. For example, pupils in Year 6 plotted line graphs of their heart rates before, during and after vigorous exercise.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average by the end of Year 2 and well below average by the end of Year 6 but are improving because of the introduction of an effective new curriculum.
- Teaching in many lessons is good, with a strong emphasis on practical independent investigation and on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- Pupils enjoy the practical approach to learning and most behave well in lessons and develop good attitudes to work.

Commentary

67. Whilst pupils achieve satisfactorily, standards of work are currently below average in Year 2 and well below average in Year 6. This reflects the results of the 2003 teacher assessments in Year 2 and tests in Year 6. Although the majority of pupils achieve the levels expected nationally, there is a significant group who does not. This is particularly so in Year 6 because of the high level of movement of pupils in and out of the school. Whilst pupils have a sound bank of scientific information, in both Years 2 and 6, their weak speaking and listening skills hinder their ability to discuss their observations and findings and explain their ideas. This

limits their development of scientific understanding. The school has identified this problem and is placing a strong focus on developing pupils' scientific vocabulary and providing good opportunities for pupils to talk with each other about their work. Many pupils' writing skills are below average, which hampers the recording of their work.

68. The school identified that many pupils had difficulty in recalling learning from previous years and re-arranged the curriculum so that pupils return to topics more frequently. This is proving successful in helping pupils build up their knowledge and skills more consistently. Pupils make sound progress in developing skills of investigation and knowledge and consequently they achieve consistently well. They build up a good bank of knowledge in all areas of the subject, and are now more capable of drawing upon this when carrying out their own investigations. Most understand how to carry out a fair test and collaborate well with each other. Those pupils with special educational needs or with English as an additional language are supported well by class teachers but most do not have additional help in science lessons. Their achievement is satisfactory and they make similar progress to that of their classmates.
69. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in many lessons. However, evidence in pupils' books shows that it is too variable between classes. Activities are planned well to provide appropriate challenge through independent observation and investigation. Resources are used well to engage pupils' interest and most work with enthusiasm, collaborating well with members of their group. A few find it hard to maintain concentration and listen carefully to each others' points of view, often despite good teaching, and this limits their own progress. In the better lessons, teachers question pupils well and challenge them to explain their answers, making them think hard about what they have learned, and this consolidates their learning. During lessons, teachers provide good guidance and oral feedback to pupils as they work but this is not reflected in the quality of marking, which is largely congratulatory and does not often guide improvement. Computers are used appropriately to support learning and there are often good links to numeracy as pupils handle scientific data and produce graphs.
70. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has a clear view of standards and learning across the school and has taken effective action to improve the quality of provision. An improved assessment system is being developed to support teachers in planning work to meet the needs of all pupils. Tests results are analysed and areas of relative weakness acted upon effectively. Since the last inspection the school has made good improvement in provision, which is now being reflected in rising standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- Teaching is good and pupils develop good attitudes to learning because they enjoy using computers.
- The subject is led and managed well, despite several changes of co-ordinator in the past few years.
- ICT clubs provide good opportunities for pupils and their parents to improve their skills.
- Resources are good and used effectively to support learning.

Commentary

71. Pupils achieve well and standards are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Many pupils have little previous experience with computers and, of those who have them at home, most use them only for competitive games. They quickly adapt their keyboard control skills and make good progress in using word processing and data handling programs. The regular use of computers to practise and develop literacy and numeracy skills motivates pupils well and helps them to improve their progress in these subjects.
72. Pupils learn to control events through computers, making independent decisions on how best to achieve their learning target for the lesson. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn how to control the sequence of traffic lights, observing carefully and measuring timings. Those who are higher attainers adapt a sequence to that for a pelican crossing. Pupils throughout the school make good use of computers in art and design to broaden their range of skills. They do not yet use the electronic measuring equipment consistently and this aspect of learning is below average; this is because the equipment is somewhat dated and it is in the process of being replaced. Pupils are confident in using the Internet for research, and use email to support learning. For example, they contacted a children's author in Sweden to discuss his work. Pupils create satisfactory presentations, with sound, graphics and animation.
73. Teaching is good and promotes good attitudes to learning. Teachers are confident in the use of computers and give clear instructions and demonstrations. They allow pupils ample time to investigate for themselves, using the good resources available. The number of computers means that pupils have sound access to them and a wide range of programs supports their learning. Staff enhance this further, such as when the co-ordinator filmed a video clip of traffic lights which was incorporated into the program Year 5 and 6 pupils used in their lessons, to guide them in making their decisions. Pupils are motivated well to learn and behave well because they are engrossed in their work.
74. The ICT clubs are popular and provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills further, particularly through programs to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills. A family learning ICT club is effective in developing pupils' own skills and in helping parents to support their children.
75. The subject has had several co-ordinators over the past few years but despite this, good quality leadership and management has been maintained and provided for good improvement since the previous inspection. The school buys in strong support from the local authority ICT support network, which is very effective in providing up-to-date resources and training.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory overall. Teachers plan appropriately to allow pupils to practise and develop their skills in many lessons. They make some good links with other subjects, such as mathematics, literacy, art and design and science, and are seeking to extend this further. The support staff for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language use computers well with those pupils to promote good progress in basic literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils are competent in using computers to research and record their work in and enjoy this aspect of their learning. Where interactive whiteboards are available, teachers make good use of them in explanations and demonstrations in many lessons. This work is to be extended very soon when all classrooms will have a board fitted.

HUMANITIES

As the school is an aided faith school, **religious education** was subject to a separate inspection by the diocese.

Insufficient work was seen in **history** to form overall judgements about the current quality of provision and standards. Teaching and learning were satisfactory in the one lesson observed. Scrutiny of pupils' books showed appropriate coverage, based on a nationally recognised scheme of work. History studies alternate with geography in blocks of work. There is a long gap between history topics, which makes it hard for pupils to recall and build on previous work.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although pupils' achievement is satisfactory, standards are below national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Limited speaking skills and vocabulary often prevent pupils from explaining ideas clearly.
- There are some good links to other subject areas.

Commentary

77. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory from a low starting point on entry to the school, including that for those pupils with special needs, and those who speak English as an additional language. Standards are below national expectations throughout the school, which is a decline since the previous inspection partly due to staffing changes and the increased emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.
78. Year 2 pupils study their local area and show local shops and the cinema on a simple map before studying a larger map of Dudley. They consider the impact of features on the lives of residents, and could see that cars are the most common form of local transport from a block graph showing traffic. They discuss leisure activities with a partner and report back to the whole class but their speaking and listening skills are below average and they find it hard to express their ideas clearly.
79. Year 6 pupils use keys and are beginning to use scale when looking at plans. They conducted a survey in the centre of Dudley; using their computer skills, they designed a questionnaire to canvass the opinions of local people about transport and facilities, and the conclusions were plotted on a graph. Pupils drew on their mathematical skills to plot graphs and measure scale. Work on bridges linked well to art and design and design and technology. In all classes, pupils' limited literacy skills and vocabulary hinders their ability to record work, read quickly for research and express ideas orally in class discussions.
80. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Planning, based on a nationally recognised scheme of work, ensures full coverage of the curriculum. Teachers use geographical vocabulary and provide sound opportunities for language development by using talking or response partners in class. Local visits enrich the curriculum. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership and management, and has identified areas for improvement. These

include reviewing the way geography alternates with history, as it has been identified that pupils find it difficult to retain their knowledge between the units of study.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Only a very few lessons could be observed in art and design, design and technology and physical education and these subjects were sampled.

Evidence indicates that standards of work in **art and design** are above average in Year 2 and are average in Year 6. Pupils achieve well in the infant classes because teaching is well prepared and engenders very positive attitudes to the subject. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their skills using a range of media, and teachers celebrate pupils' success in the classroom and corridor displays. These reflect a wide and interesting curriculum and promote pupils' self-esteem well. Links with other subjects are used effectively to enrich pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of artists are well-developed and there are good opportunities for using computers to broaden the curriculum. The scheme of work has been developed to include appropriate emphasis on creativity and includes a simple assessment system, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Pupils discuss the subject with enthusiasm, displaying good attitudes to learning.

It was only possible to see one lesson in **design and technology** during the inspection, so no overall judgement on the quality of provision can be made. Examples of work on display and in the Year 6 lesson were examined, along with work in pupils' design and evaluation books. It is clear from this evidence that the standard of work produced by Year 6 pupils has not improved from the time of the last inspection and remains below expectations. No evidence was gathered for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and no judgement can be made on standards by the end of Year 2. The headteacher's efforts to raise standards in this subject since the last inspection have been thwarted by changes in teaching staff; there have been three different subject leaders since then.

Only two lessons in **physical education** were observed during the inspection and it is not possible to make secure overall judgements on either standards achieved or the quality of teaching and learning. However the subject is led by an energetic and committed member of staff who is doing all he can to improve the provision. The outdoor facilities are unsatisfactory and there is limited time available when the school hall can be used. However, all pupils are taught swimming during Years 3 and 4, and whenever possible, the school uses other facilities nearby to teach tennis skills, gymnastics and athletics. Some of these facilities are an inconvenient distance from the school so that it not possible to use them on a regular basis. There is a good range of sporting clubs and events that enrich the curriculum very well.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved throughout the school since the previous inspection because of the new creative arts policy.
- Lessons are thoroughly planned and a manageable system for assessment has been developed.
- The leadership has been strengthened by the arrival of a music specialist on the staff.
- Extra-curricular provision has improved since the previous inspection and instrumentalists participate in assemblies.

- The subject has a high profile through enriching cultural evenings, participation in the local festival and through productions such as 'Fame Academy 2003'.
- Behaviour in some lessons could be better.

Commentary

81. Standards are now in line with expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and achievement is satisfactory. This is a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection when standards were below average and pupils did not achieve enough. This is because of the positive impact made by a new co-coordinator, who has raised the profile of the subject and developed a creative arts policy. Evidence of this can be seen in the number of visitors who provide enriching experiences for the pupils and staff. For example, dance to music is part of the curriculum and the school recently hosted a visit from Bhangra dancers and musicians. Cultural evenings are a regular feature and are arranged by a member of the support staff. Extra-curricular provision includes tuition for instrumentalists who perform at assembly, with singing provided by the choir. Both groups took part in the 'Strawberry Prom' during the summer term.
82. Lessons are planned carefully and pupils' skills are assessed at the end of units of work. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although it ranged from unsatisfactory to good in the lessons seen during the inspection. Good features of teaching included good links to religious education, drama, literacy and ICT. For example, pupils compose music on computers as well as in music lessons. In a successful lesson with Year 3 and Year 4 pupils, tasks were designed to encourage collaborative working within a good-humoured atmosphere that was conducive to hard work. The teacher ensured that all pupils were fully involved and were confidently improving their skills as they prepared a dragon performance to show to the rest of the class. Similarly, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 composed their own 'Blues' verses to sing to the class, and performed these with great gusto. Both of these lessons worked well because the teachers managed their classes confidently and positively. Where this is not the case, the lesson is less successful and too much effort is exerted on controlling behaviour, sometimes with limited success.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This aspect of learning was only sampled so no overall judgements can be made on the quality of teaching and learning. The school provides a good curriculum to support the progressive development of pupils' skills and knowledge, in specific lessons and as part of other subjects. For example, pupils learn about the impact of a healthy lifestyle on their bodies in science. In themed "*Focus Days*" on 'right and wrong' or 'express yourself' and specific weekly lessons such as personal, social and health education lessons and class discussions, called 'circle time', pupils have good chances to share ideas and talk about their experiences and feelings in a supportive and secure environment. Most pupils listen to others with respect but others find it hard to listen or to express their own thoughts clearly because of their below average skills. Where these lessons are at the end of the school day, some older pupils find it hard to maintain control over their own behaviour and disrupt lessons for others. The school promotes healthy eating, aiming to help pupils make sensible diet choices. There is a suitable programme for sex and relationships education for older pupils and the drugs education programme is currently being reviewed in response to new local authority guidelines. Overall, most pupils develop a sound understanding of how their decisions affect their own and others' lives and learn to be responsible members of a community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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