

INSPECTION REPORT

WARREN FARM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Kingstanding, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103197

Headteacher: Mrs M A Goodwin

Lead inspector: Ms B Matusiak-Varley

Dates of inspection: 26th – 28th January 2004

Inspection number: 258304

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	279
School address:	Aylesbury Crescent Kingstanding Birmingham
Postcode:	B44 0DT
Telephone number:	(0121) 373 3885
Fax number:	(0121) 382 3409
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr James Wilkes
Date of previous inspection:	11 th January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Warren Farm Primary School is situated in the Kingstanding Ward of Birmingham. The school serves an area of high social disadvantage. It is a large primary school with 279 pupils on roll, ranging in age from three to 11 years. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, 67 per cent, is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is low, at 9 per cent. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, 18 per cent, is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special need, 2.2 per cent, is above the national average. The range and nature of pupils' special educational needs are largely associated with moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural, and speech and communication difficulties. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is poor. There is a small percentage of pupils who are in public care. Many pupils have poor communication, personal, social and emotional, and mathematical skills. The school is involved in the RAIK project (Raising Achievement in Kingstanding), part of the Education Action Zone and Excellence in Cities initiatives. The school is also part of the Sure Start provision for under threes national initiative. In 2003 the school achieved the following awards: Basic Skills Quality Mark, Investor in People award, Healthy Schools, Schools Achievement award, Inspire award, and Keeping up with the children award. The school is participating in national projects aimed at helping develop parents' involvement in their children's learning, adult education, family learning, family support services, first aid and healthy eating. The school has high levels of pupil mobility and, in the present Year 6, nearly 50 per cent of pupils did not start their infant education at the school. The school has a learning support unit for pupils with special educational needs and emotional and behavioural problems, and a Spiral centre aimed at developing pupils' speaking and listening and creative skills. This centre is used by other schools in the area.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19938	Bogusia Matusiak-Varley	Lead inspector	History Religious education Provision for pupils with English as an additional language
9884	Maureen Roscoe	Lay inspector	
10611	Martin James	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Mathematics Design and technology Physical education
11642	Carol Parkinson	Team inspector	Provision for pupils with special educational needs English Art and design Geography
22157	Mike Roussel	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school which is well placed to become a very good school due to the very good leadership of the headteacher. Standards are rising and, from a very low baseline on entry are below average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' achievements throughout the school are good due to the overall good quality of teaching. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave well. Governance of the school is satisfactory. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils reach average standards by the end of Year 2, with the exception of speaking and listening overall, and below average standards in Year 6. Pupils' achievements are good in relation to their prior attainment.
- By the end of Year 6, in spite of good achievement, standards in speaking and listening, spelling, writing, problem-solving, using and applying mathematics across the curriculum, interpretation of data and experimental and investigative science, are not high enough.
- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage of learning is very good and children learn very well. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning, behave well and are leaving the school as well-rounded individuals.
- Attendance is not high enough.
- Teaching and learning are good; support staff make very valid contributions to pupils' learning.
- Assessments are not sufficiently well-developed in religious education and other foundation subjects but they are good in English, mathematics and science.
- Partnership with parents is good.
- Curriculum planning in the infants and juniors, whilst satisfactory overall, needs improving in relation to skills identification, time allocation, and opportunities for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).
- The leadership of the headteacher is inspirational and she is well supported by her senior management team.

Improvement since the last inspection in 1999 has been good. Standards are rising and are now below national averages. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved and is now good. Good improvements have been made in developing the quality of teaching and in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage. Most of the key issues have been addressed but there is further work to be done in developing curriculum planning, assessments and raising standards. The school is well placed for further improvement.

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	C	E*	E
mathematics	C	C	E	E
science	A	A	E	E

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average; E - very low.*

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

The school did not meet its targets in 2003 in English and mathematics. Standards achieved by the end of Year 6 in 2003 were well below national averages in comparison with all schools and were in the bottom 5 per cent nationally in English. That year, Year 6 had many pupils with special educational needs, below average attainers and there were high numbers of pupils entering and leaving the school. By the end of Year 2, standards were well below national averages in comparison with similar schools and too few pupils attained the higher levels. Due to the very good systems of self-evaluation, standards are improving and inspection findings show that from a very low base, pupils achieve average standards by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science and achieve well. Standards in speaking and listening are below the national average. By the end of Year 6,

standards are below the national average in English, mathematics and science and overall pupils are making good progress. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) meet the expectations of seven and 11-year-olds. In other subjects, standards are generally average by the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and achieve well. Higher-attaining pupils generally make good progress but at times they are not taken far enough in their learning due to underdeveloped assessment in foundation subjects. In the Foundation Stage, children achieve well from a very low level baseline on entry but they do not achieve all the expected standards. Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good and pupils have very good attitudes to learning. Attendance levels are well below the national average. There have been no exclusions in the last year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good but could be even better with improved curriculum planning and assessment in foundation subjects. The use of literacy, numeracy and ICT in other subjects is satisfactory but inconsistent. Relationships are very good between teachers and pupils and the school's links with parents, the community and the use of the locality to supports pupils' learning contribute to the very good attitudes pupils have to learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is very well led and managed by an inspirational headteacher who is determined to raise standards. She is well supported by her senior management team. Governance of the school is satisfactory and governors are aware of the shortcomings in information that goes out to parents. Systems for school self-evaluation are very good and the school is committed to improvement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils and parents love their school. They are consulted on all aspects of school life and relish the many new changes that the headteacher has brought about. They feel valued and know that the school has their best interests at heart.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6.
- Develop curriculum planning to ensure that:
 - time allocations for teaching of personal, social and health education are reviewed;
 - more opportunities are provided for pupils to use their skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum; and
 - subject-specific skills are included in teachers' medium-term planning.
- Develop assessment procedures and their use in religious education and foundation subjects.
- Raise attendance rates.
- In order to meet statutory requirements, the governors must ensure that the governors' report to parents and the school prospectus make reference to pupils' attendance levels.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall standards are improving; they are in line with national averages by the end of Year 2 and below national averages by the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievements are good. Standards on entry to the school are very poor and there is a high turnover of pupils which affects end of key stage results. Very good provision for children in the Foundation Stage of learning ensures very good achievement, even though they do not attain the early learning goals in all areas of learning other than personal, social and emotional development. The very good leadership and management of the school, together with good teaching and very good systems of self-evaluation, are reflected in the average standards that Year 2 pupils attain. These standards have not yet filtered through the school to be reflected in end of Year 6 national tests. Most pupils who remain in the school for the whole of their education do well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are not high enough in speaking and listening (in both the infants and the juniors), spelling, writing, mathematics, using and applying mathematics, experimental and investigative science by the end of Year 6.
- Children in the Foundation Stage of learning achieve very well but do not attain the early learning goals, other than that of personal, social and emotional development.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well in relation to targets on their individual education plans.
- Standards in physical education are above those expected nationally by the end of Year 6 and pupils' achievements are good.
- Standards in ICT, history and religious education are similar to those of seven and 11-year-olds nationally, and pupils achieve well.
- The rigorous use of individual target setting is helping to raise standards.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.5 (12.5)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.5 (11.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.4 (14.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	22.8 (26.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	23.5 (26.9)	26.8 (26.7)
science	25.9 (30.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 47 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. In 2003, national test results show that by the end of Year 2 in comparison with all schools nationally, standards were well below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics; by the end of Year 6, standards in English were in the bottom five per cent nationally and were well below average in mathematics and science. Teacher assessments in science indicate

that standards were well below the national average in relation to the percentage of pupils achieving average and above average standards.

2. In comparison with similar schools, pupils in Year 2 achieved average levels in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 6, pupils attained standards that were well below national averages in English, mathematics and science. Too few pupils achieved the higher levels. In the infants there were no differences in attainment by gender and in the juniors the boys did better than the girls in science. In the infants, over three years, the performance of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics fell below the national average. The school did not meet its targets in English and mathematics and in Year 6 there were discrepancies between teachers' assessments and national test results. The headteacher immediately recognised this as an area to be addressed and appointed an experienced member of staff to her senior management team to ensure that this weakness was rectified. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all core subjects was below the national trend.
3. There are several contributory factors as to why standards have been so low:
 - Pupils' attainment on entry to the nursery is poor and throughout the school many pupils experience significant barriers to learning such as a lack of vocabulary, poor sentence construction, inability to retain and apply information in different contexts, paucity of pre-school learning experiences, unsettled home lives and low socio-economic circumstances, which reduce their ability to concentrate on lessons.
 - In 2003 in Year 6, there were many pupils who had special educational needs and who were below average attainers and this naturally depressed test scores.
 - Nearly half of the pupils who took the tests in Year 6 did not start their education at the school. The school has high levels of pupils entering and leaving at different times of the school year.
 - On her appointment to the school, the headteacher had to set about improving the quality of teaching in order to raise teachers' expectations and knowledge of using assessment to plan the next steps of pupils' learning.
 - There had been disruptions to staffing in the juniors.
 - A large number of pupils had become disaffected learners.
 - The school lacked rigorous data for pupil tracking.
 - Pupils with special educational needs did not have sufficiently rigorous individual education plans and their progress was not sufficiently well tracked.
 - Attendance rates were low.
4. Standards are rising and have risen from well below to average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. This is because, since the appointment of the headteacher two years ago, very good systems have been put in place to raise standards. For example, staff have had their roles and responsibilities reviewed and the senior management team is now a strong agent to bring about change:
 - The Foundation Stage has been completely reorganised and is now a highly focused learning environment where children are given every opportunity to develop their language skills.
 - Rigorous procedures for staff performance management, linked to the school improvement plan and staffs' continuous professional development, have been introduced.
 - Governors are receiving detailed information on standards and are kept well informed about pupils' progress and are more involved in all aspects of school life.
 - Teaching and learning are now being monitored regularly and very good assessments in English and mathematics have been introduced to move pupils on in their learning.
 - Provision for the foundation stage of learning has been completely re-organised, including accommodation and staffing.
 - The very good Spiral centre (provision for creative arts and speaking and listening) has been developed to promote pupils' social, linguistic and creative skills.

- Good provision has been made for pupils with special educational needs and very good systems are in place to develop these pupils' skills in emotional literacy.
 - Very good opportunities for parents have been introduced to enable them to participate in pupils' learning.
 - Very good tracking systems for pupils' progress, have been introduced to identify any aspects of underachievement in English and mathematics.
 - Co-ordinators for English, mathematics, science and ICT are developing their roles satisfactorily in order to monitor standards.
5. The very good systems of school self-evaluation and effective implementation of performance management are helping the headteacher and senior management team to keep a very close eye on standards. Already all the systems put in place are having a positive effect on pupils' learning as evidenced by the good progress of all groups of pupils in the foundation stage and in the infants. Apart from speaking and listening, where standards are below average, pupils attain average standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science, ICT, history and physical education. In religious education, pupils attain standards that meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and they achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. By the end of Year 6, standards are below national averages in English, mathematics and science, due to the high percentage of pupils who have special educational needs, below average attainers and the high levels of pupil mobility. They are in line with the national averages in ICT and history, and meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. In physical education pupils exceed the expectations of 11-year-olds.
 6. Standards in speaking and listening are below average, as are standards in reading and writing. Pupils struggle with finding information from texts, explaining their thinking, and they have weak comprehension and research skills. The lack of a well-stocked library prevents them from developing their higher order research skills. Standards in spelling and writing are well below national average. Pupils do not spell subject-specific words correctly, their handwriting lacks consistency and size, and pupils often confuse tenses. They experience difficulty in developing characters in their stories and their descriptions lack detail. Year 6 pupils have not had the benefit of following the presently well-established methods for teaching spelling, guided reading and writing which the new headteacher has implemented. However, they are making good gains in learning, understand and use connections appropriately and have good awareness of story settings.
 7. Standards in mathematics are below national averages. A significant number of pupils find problem-solving activities difficult and too few opportunities are provided for them to use their skills in other subjects of the curriculum. In science there is a weakness in pupils' experimental and investigative skills, pupils do not record their findings in a variety of ways and too few opportunities are provided for them to develop their skills of independent learning. Pupils actually know more than they can write but they have difficulty in writing-up experiments, especially in evaluating their findings against their initial hypotheses.
 8. In ICT, pupils attain average standards and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. They use ICT well to write stories and, in the juniors, pupils with special educational needs make very good gains in learning when working alongside business partners sponsored by the Excellence in Cities initiative.
 9. In religious education, pupils attain the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and achieve well. They have good knowledge of religious festivals of other faiths and the use of symbolism. Pupils with special educational needs and the minority of those with English as an additional language achieve well in relation to their targets.
 10. The recently introduced system of individual target-setting is helping to raise standards, pupils are aware of what their targets are in English and mathematics, and this is proving to have a beneficial effect on learning.

11. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Pupils are now making better progress in English, good progress has been maintained in mathematics, and overall progress is better in science, but there are still weaknesses in pupils' progress in experimental and investigative science.
12. The use of literacy across the curriculum is good. The use of numeracy and ICT is satisfactory but inconsistent.
13. The school's participation in the Excellence in Cities initiatives, such as developing pupils' emotional literacy, working with parents, developing pupils' participation in sports and the creative arts, developing teaching and learning strategies and implementing rigorous assessments, is proving to be very effective in raising standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They respond well to the good spiritual, moral, social and cultural values promoted by the school. Behaviour overall is good. Attendance has declined this year and is now well below that found in most primary schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' interest in the range of the school's activities has improved since the previous inspection.
- Positive relationships are at the heart of this lively school.
- Pupils now behave well in most situations, except in the lessons where expectations of appropriate behaviour are too low.
- Pupils appreciate the very effective systems that deal with instances of harassment.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through awards and pastoral care systems, and also through some aspects of the curriculum.
- The school has procedures for monitoring attendance. These have proved to be ineffective in raising the poor attendance levels mentioned in the previous report or tackling the percentage of above average unauthorised absences.

Commentary

14. Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning because the school provides an atmosphere in which they are valued and well cared for. In return, pupils are self-assured and confident enough to be helpful to their peers and considerate to adults. Most pupils like being at school because they like learning new things in lessons. Frequent praise and recognition of their achievements from staff helps to build self-esteem, and parents agree.
15. Behaviour is good overall. Sometimes it is very good. In a few cases however, high noise levels really do spoil learning and, when behaviour management is weak, pupils do not settle down to activities or make enough progress. Pupils behave well in and around the school. Playtimes are friendly and safe and pupils interact well in mixed gender and heritage groups. This reinforces their understanding of values and beliefs which may differ from their own. Bullying is infrequent pupils say, and their parents agree. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 explained the sensible strategies they adopt for dealing with harassment of any kind. These sometimes involve pupil mediators or staff. Children in the Foundation Stage develop very positive attitudes to learning because they work in a very safe, secure and exciting learning environment.
16. Provision for spiritual development has improved and is now very good. A culture of 'can do' is encouraged by persuading pupils to 'do their best'. Assemblies are thought-provoking and make a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
17. Moral and social development has been maintained well in spite of many pupils joining the school at various times. Pupils' good qualities are frequently highlighted and the staff continue to place high emphasis on pupils respecting themselves, each other and belongings.

18. Parents say that a good range of posts of responsibility encourage a mature outlook in many pupils. Many pupils make an important contribution to the school's family ethos as they help younger ones in the dining hall. Peer mediation is helping older pupils to develop empathy with others and encouraging resolution of conflict.
19. Pupils learn of their own culture through some lessons, assemblies and also on interesting visits, such as the residential visit to Carris in Wales. They undertake work in music, art and design and drama, utilising the Spiral Area and participate eagerly in school productions. Pupils meet cultural diversity through learning about traditional Asian dances.
20. Pupils with special educational needs, and the very small minority of pupils who have English as an additional language, persevere with their work and like their teachers. They know that staff will listen to them, and help them, and so they feel secure, cared for and ready to work at school. They have very good attitudes to learning and beam with delight when they are withdrawn to work with staff in the very well organised base unit.
21. The school ensures that registration practice is accurate and absences are followed up as they occur. Recently, early-bird telephone calls to pupils' homes have begun. Despite these efforts attendance levels are too low and this affects pupils' progress. Punctuality is often unsatisfactory. Until recently not enough has been done to give parents an accurate picture of attendance and unauthorised absence statistics and to enlist their help in bringing about improvements.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.2
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.1
National data	0.4

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

22. There were no exclusions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is good, contributing positively to pupils' good achievement. The curriculum is satisfactory; there is a good range of opportunities provided for pupils to learn outside of lessons. Provision for pupils' care and welfare is good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching in the Foundation Stage of learning is very good overall, with plenty of opportunities provided for pupils to learn using their senses and exploration through play; above all, the teaching of basic skills of literacy and numeracy is firmly underpinning all activities. There is a clear focus on learning as teachers strive to raise standards, contributing positively to pupils' achievements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage of learning is very good and all groups of pupils achieve very well.
- Support staff play a vital role in developing pupils' learning.
- Teachers throughout the school manage behaviour very well, use a good range of teaching strategies to encourage learning and develop very positive relationships.
- In some lessons, plenary sessions are not sufficiently well structured.
- There is a strong emphasis on inclusion.

- In a very small minority of lessons expectations are not high enough.
- Basic skills and guided reading are taught well.
- In foundation subjects teachers do not focus sufficiently on the development of subject-specific skills.
- Homework is used well to support learning.
- The lack of formalised assessments in foundation subjects limits pupils' progress as, too often, pupils of different attainment cover the same work.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	13 (28%)	21 (46%)	10 (22%)	2 (4%)	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.

23. Teaching is good overall and ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Teachers work very hard; they are skilful in their management of pupils and they have a very strong commitment to raising standards and ensuring that pupils leave the school confident in their ability to tackle secondary school. Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection because staff have received good quality training and are now more aware of the skills needed which underpin level descriptors and so raise standards. Support staff are well briefed, they are involved in teachers' planning meetings and play a very active role in developing pupils' learning. Examples of very good teaching were seen in literacy in Year 4/5, 5/6, in mathematics in Year 4/5, Year 1/2, Year 6, in science in Year 2, in ICT in Year 1/reception, Year 4, in religious education in Year 1/2. In the very few lessons where teaching does not meet the required standards, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to think for themselves and develop their skills of independent learning, such as recording their findings in science in a variety of ways. Also, very occasionally, classroom control lapses and pupils are not kept sufficiently focused, resulting in disruptions to learning. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen in science in a mixed Year 4/5 class and in history in a Year 3 lesson.
24. Teachers generally plan very well and give very good explanations, challenge all groups of pupils and ensure that pupils are given sufficient opportunities to practise what they have learnt. For example, in a very good English lesson, in Year 4/Year 5, when pupils were learning how to identify features of myths and fables, the class teacher gave pupils very clear instructions on how to organise their story writing by using the device of a "fishbone" in order to prioritise their thinking. In this lesson, assessment was used very well to challenge all groups of pupils' thinking and, as a result, pupils made very good gains in learning. In a very good religious education lesson in Year 1/Year 2, the class teacher used subject-specific vocabulary to explain how people of different religions pray. Pupils "lapped" this up and, by the end of the lesson, could recall the various practices undertaken in other religions. Where teaching was less secure, expectations were not high enough, subject-specific skills were not taught sufficiently well and the rates of pupils' learning were too slow, especially for the higher attainers. Plenary sessions are variable; whilst satisfactory overall, not all teachers use them sufficiently well to enable pupils to explain what they have learnt and where they have experienced difficulties.
25. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. They are supported effectively by all staff, and every effort is made to help them overcome their barriers to learning. The very small number of pupils who have English as an additional language receive good support from all staff, and have full access to the curriculum. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides very good support when pupils are working directly with her.
26. There is a clear focus on learning in most lessons. Most teachers are confident and many have a direct style which keeps pupils on task. Teachers are good at intervening in what pupils

do by asking very good questions which not only reinforces learning but also provides further challenge to move learning on.

27. Assessment is good. It is very good in English and mathematics and good in science but is barely satisfactory in foundation subjects and is largely dependent on teachers' professional knowledge of how well pupils are doing rather than a formalised system; on occasion this restricts progress because, too often, all pupils follow the same work. Marking is satisfactory overall but ranges from very good to just satisfactory. Where it is less effective it does not provide sufficient guidance about what pupils can do to improve their work. Target setting has been introduced and pupils generally know what they need to do in order to improve. Where teaching is less effective it does not focus rigorously on pupils' prior attainment. Homework, which pupils are keen to do, is used well to support their learning.
28. Teachers are starting to make good links with literacy in their lessons and satisfactory links with numeracy and ICT. The school's involvement in Excellence in Cities initiatives, such as the development of teaching and learning, is having a positive effect on the quality of classroom delivery.
29. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the nursery and reception classes is very good. The teachers have a secure understanding of the social, emotional and educational needs of the children, and they plan a very appropriate range of activities. They have high expectations of both work and behaviour, contributing to the very good progress the children make. The teachers have a pleasant, helpful and encouraging manner with the children, and give them much praise for their work. A suitable range of strategies is used in teaching, and most effective use is made of the classroom space available. Procedures for recording how well children are doing are thorough, and the teachers and the teaching assistants complement each other very well in ensuring that the children are provided with tasks that are suitable to their needs.
30. Teachers use individual education plans and assessments very effectively to plan work for pupils with special educational needs. As a result, pupils learn well. Teachers and learning support assistants receive very effective help from the co-ordinator for special educational needs who provides very good systems and resources to make sure individual education plans are put into effect.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **satisfactory** overall. There is a very good range of learning experiences in the Foundation Stage and a satisfactory range of learning experiences in the infants and juniors. There are good opportunities for enrichment, particularly through learning outside the school day and in the sports and arts. The accommodation and quality and range of learning resources are very good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory through the rest of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision in the Foundation Stage, including the very effective deployment of support staff.
- Provision for pupils with special education needs and the very few pupils who have English as an additional language is good, as is the work of the support staff.
- Very good learning opportunities outside the school day to support and enrich pupils' learning.
- The computer suite is a good resource.
- The Spiral centre (a creative use of accommodation) is used well to develop pupils' linguistic and creative experiences.
- Provision for physical education is good.
- The school's involvement in the Excellence in Cities initiatives has forged very good links with artists.
- There are weaknesses in the planning for the development for progressive skills learning.

- There are too few opportunities for pupils to learn independently and develop their research skills.
- Whilst the curriculum is broad, it is not sufficiently balanced as too much time is devoted to the teaching of personal, social and health education.

Commentary

31. The curriculum is broad, but there are weaknesses in its balance because of the inconsistency in the progressive development of skills and in time allocation for personal, social and health education. The curriculum meets statutory requirements for all its pupils and religious education is taught in accordance with the Birmingham agreed syllabus. The quality and range of activities provided are good. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. However, although there has been improvement in the earlier years, on developing pupils' skills to enable them to learn more independently, this is not yet fully in place with older pupils because some lessons are too teacher directed. All schemes of work are in place, with advice and support from national guidance in the teaching of the subjects. The school's personal, social, health education and citizenship programme is seen as a high profile area in the school and includes teaching sex education and about the misuse of drugs as well as dealing with effective relationships and conflict resolution. The Spiral centre has been very influential in this development and has involved pupils working with artist/author to improve behaviour through story writing, and by giving pupils the opportunity to explore alternative reactions. A further strength is the opportunities it offers in the development of speaking and listening skills. This programme has been very successful in improving pupils' emotional and behavioural attitudes and it has been recognised that attendance levels are up when an artist is in the school. However, this success has also taken curriculum time away from other areas and the school will need to look at the balance of curriculum time necessary to teach skills underpinning foundation subjects in the National Curriculum effectively.
32. The curriculum for children in nursery and reception is very good. Detailed plans are in place, which most successfully incorporate all the areas of learning that should be taught to children before they enter Year 1. Lesson planning is comprehensive, and the children have access to a wide range of interesting activities and learning experiences, both in the classroom and in the outdoor area. The classrooms are well resourced, outings are arranged and the children are very well supported and encouraged by the teachers and teaching assistants. A rich, stimulating and varied curriculum is the result.
33. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and are taught daily. At the present time cross-curricular use of ICT is in its early stages, especially in word-processing and data-handling. However, links with outside organisations, through the work of the Educational Action Zone, promote initiatives that are having a beneficial effect on the development of the curriculum. This was seen with the ICT professional that was working with pupils in the computer suite during the inspection. The effective deployment and work of the support staff ensures that pupils of all capabilities, including those with special educational needs receive their full curriculum entitlement. Opportunities for pupils to undertake roles in the school include representing their peers in the School Council and being a peer mediator; these can be recognised by their red caps. A high priority in the school is the roll of honour and the roll of honour assembly that recognises pupils for effort and good work, including good attendance and punctuality awards.
34. There are good opportunities for pupils to experience an enriched curriculum, with particular strengths in music and sport. Very good support has been given from outside the school that has included visitors coming to the school and teaching the pupils folk dances as part of the Birmingham Schools Folk. Effective links have been created with the Aston Villa Football Academy, a basketball club, an athletics club and the county cricket club.
35. The school has also taken part in 2003 Pupils' Olympics in the Alexander Stadium. Other visitors have included African dance and drums groups. Good parental/school links have been created as can be seen by the project that parents and pupils took part in designing postcards as part of the IKON Gallery Postcard Project. The school provides a daily breakfast club and

pupils engage in a range of extra-curricular clubs that include dance and ICT and design. There are opportunities for pupils to learn recorders and take part in electronic keyboard lessons with a visiting musician. Pupils also participate in other activities such as a residential visit to Corris in Wales and visits to the Hams Hall Environmental Study Centre and the museum and library in the city centre.

36. Teaching staff have the necessary qualifications and experience to meet current curriculum needs. However, there is still work to be done in developing the role of some subject co-ordinators who are unsure as to their role in monitoring the teaching and learning in their subjects. Overall the leadership and management of subjects varies from very good, as in ICT, to satisfactory in most foundation subjects. The work of support staff is good and they work with the teachers as a co-ordinated team.
37. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, with some very effective, imaginative and well-delivered work for pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties carried out separately from lessons. Groups of pupils with specific learning difficulties, and those who are gifted and talented and need a different type of delivery to develop particular skills in a group, sometimes work in the recently renovated temporary accommodation in the learning base in the school playground. They benefit from skilled, meticulously planned and imaginative teaching from teachers and support staff on these occasions. Sometimes they miss different work going on in their classroom but benefit from the focused work provided.
38. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall, but very good in the Foundation Stage. There is a computer suite that allows whole-class teaching and, although the buildings are old, good use has been made of all available space; areas off corridors are often used for withdrawal of pupils from classes who need extra support. Outside facilities include a mobile, where pupils with special educational needs go for extra support, and a mobile that presently houses the school library. However, the school has identified the need for the present library to be developed within the main school. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education, because of the good links with secondary schools.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are well cared for and involved effectively in school development. They receive good support and guidance and this boosts their confidence successfully.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standard of care has been maintained at this good level because staff are tuned in to pupils' needs.
- Arrangements to ensure the health and safety of pupils are good overall but omit to monitor pupil activity at the start and end of the school day.
- Provision for child protection is good. Parents are not informed however through the prospectus of their specific role in these matters.
- Good assessment procedures in some subjects track pupils' progress effectively. The school is aware that target-setting for individual pupils needs improving and plans for this are in place.
- Pupils know their views matter and staff act on what they say.
- More needs to be done in support of those pupils with poor attendance records.

Commentary

39. The level of support, care and guidance that pupils receive is good and the consistently calm atmosphere maintained by staff helps to support learning. Parents are justifiably satisfied with this aspect of the school's work. Most staff support and guide pupils to behave well in and out of lessons. The arrangements for both quiet and boisterous playground activities work well because the midday staff are capable and interact with all children well. Pupils acting as peer group mediators and family group leaders help to ensure that lunchtimes run smoothly. They organise younger pupils, and are as they say, 'always on the lookout for someone who needs cheering up'. This is good practice and is working well.

40. Staff provide good levels of personal support and guidance for pupils, a good many of whom join the school at different points in the academic year. Parents are very happy with the good systems for getting to know children before they start school, and for settling them in well. Pupils are helped through the process of transfer into secondary education. Pupil questionnaires provide strong evidence that they feel cared for and able to approach any adult if they felt worried or needed help in lessons. The outcome is that pupils enjoy very good relationships with adults and other children.
41. Legal requirements for health and safety are met. Staff are aware of most safety considerations. Entry and exit procedures however have not been monitored or assessed.
42. Staff are well aware of child protection issues and training for everyone is up-to-date. However, the school does not publish its policy where cases have to be referred to other agencies in the interests of the child.
43. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored and in some areas of the curriculum, such as English, mathematics and science, is assessed regularly. The school is aware of the need to improve this process further by introducing personal individualised target-setting in subjects other than English and mathematics, so pupils will be more aware of how they can improve on their best efforts, in particular subjects.
44. Pupils' views are sought regularly and always valued. They have recently been consulted about playground markings. Pupils' democratic voice is expressed through the school council.
45. The initiatives for improving attendance levels have just recently included 'early-bird' calls to pupils' homes. Attendance is monitored frequently and absences are followed up as they occur. Plans to raise attendance levels are not specific or robust enough to do so.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and other schools are good. Educational support programmes are of tremendous benefit to pupils and their parents. Links with the community are therefore very good. Published documents for parents do not meet statutory requirements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has strongly influenced many parents to become more involved in school life.
- School provides good opportunities for parents to take part in learning programmes which benefit their children and themselves.
- Day-to-day communication is good but provision to parents of information about the school is still unsatisfactory.
- Procedures to ensure satisfaction and deal with concerns or complaints are very good.
- Parents are very satisfied with the induction procedures but do not know enough about the work their children are doing each term.
- The school is used as a useful resource by other schools.

Commentary

46. Links with parents are good. Verbal and written comments were most appreciative of the improvements that had been brought about in this area of the school's work. Parents praise the way they are received in the school and how well their children are looked after. Parents appreciate the many invitations to join their children in assemblies or to be involved in sharing learning in the classroom. Many do so and some, as a result, have been inspired to enrol for parent education classes.

47. Informative regular and friendly newsletters serve to smooth lines of communication between home and school and cement this improving partnership. Regular opportunities are provided so parents can speak with staff about their child's achievements and annual reports on progress are good. They report on every subject and include a development target.
48. One area of concern is that parents are not receiving enough information about school standards. The published prospectus and governors' annual report to parents do not meet legal requirements because they leave out this essential information. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection and is brought again to the school's attention. Most pertinent to pupils' progress is that the school is missing the opportunity to inform parents of its well below average attendance levels and how it will set about enlisting their help to raise them and reduce lateness.
49. Parents are pleased with the induction of their children into the nursery. The school is planning to provide a brochure for them, and this is good practice. A curriculum overview is provided annually but there is scope for parents to be more aware of what their children are learning each term in each class.
50. Parents' views are frequently sought and they have contributed to discussions about behaviour and healthy eating. Hearts and minds of parents have been captured through an excellent process of open and frank discussion, instigated by the headteacher during her 'surgery' hours.
51. The good range of education support programmes are valued and enjoyed by a growing number of parents, because through them, they are acquiring skills to help their children at home. For example, in a parental workshop session, the methods used to teach 'high frequency' words through play, were explained to a group of parents who created their own resources for doing so.
52. Pupils benefit from their parents' involvement in other workshops laid on at school. For example, the outcome of the family literacy initiative was the measurable improvement seen in some pupils' literacy skills. The increased confidence of parents and their children is also obvious in classrooms during 'stay and read' sessions or Inspire workshops. Here a 'can do' ethos is fostered which is mirrored by pupils in other aspects of their work.
53. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept very well informed and involved in their children's learning.
54. The school reaches out into the community to tap into local services in support of pupils' learning. Other schools use its Spiral Project (creative use of accommodation) facilities and pupils learn alongside others in joint cultural projects. Pupils were thrilled last year to welcome and speak with visitors from Japan.
55. Contact with the local high schools is developing well and is good. This eases the transition process for pupils in Year 6. Links with the community are very good and sponsorship is sought whenever possible. For example the links with a local college of further education is having a very positive effect on raising standards in ICT, and the pupils' breakfast club benefits from a national bakery company meeting the running costs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**. The leadership and management by the senior management team are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership, and she has a very clear vision for the continued development of the school.

- Financial management by all concerned, including headteacher, governors and school business manager, is good.
- There is strong leadership in English, mathematics, science and ICT.
- The leadership of the Foundation Stage of learning and special educational needs is very good.
- Very good systems are in place for school self-evaluation and performance management.

Commentary

56. The overall quality of leadership and management by the headteacher is very good. She leads and manages the school both efficiently and effectively, and her strong leadership gives the school a very clear educational direction. She has achieved much in her short time in charge, and she has contributed very significantly to recent improvements. She has been well supported by the acting deputy headteacher, and she has also received much well-directed help from the special needs co-ordinator, as a member of the senior management team. There continues to be a significant degree of commitment amongst all staff to continue these, and other improvements still further, and the school development plan provides a very clear path for all to follow. The very valid aims of the school are well reflected in its work, and there is a most positive ethos founded on very good personal relationships.
57. Governors successfully fulfil their statutory duties in helping to shape the direction of the school and their involvement in the school is now satisfactory. The chairman and vice-chairman, in particular, are keenly involved in school life, being very supportive of the headteacher and staff. All governors are now active in formulating, supporting and monitoring initiatives for school improvement, especially in relation to the school development plan. They are also frequent visitors, and are most committed to carrying out their monitoring roles in their particular areas of responsibility. They have become much more deeply involved in the school since the arrival of the current headteacher, and this involvement has led to their satisfactory, and developing, understanding of the school's strengths and its areas for development. The headteacher grabs every opportunity to share ideas with governors and the relationship is lively and creative.
58. The overall leadership and management of other members of staff, in their particular areas of responsibility, is good, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science; it is very good in ICT. Until recently, the subject co-ordinators had only a limited role in relation to their subjects. However, since the arrival of the headteacher, staff have been given the opportunity to look at overall provision for their subjects, such as studying plans, analysing test results, where appropriate, and scrutinising samples of pupils' work. This has enabled them to identify strengths and weaknesses in such things as planning, standards and resources, and to begin identifying areas for improvement. Co-ordinators have also had the opportunity to observe lessons taking place, to see for themselves the provision being made and the standards being achieved.
59. The leadership and management provided by the co-ordinator for special educational needs are very good. She ensures that all stakeholders involved with the school are kept very well informed of the needs of this group of pupils. Funding is suitably allocated and the school is committed to meeting the needs of its pupils as well as it can. The senior management and governors have placed heavy emphasis on developing accommodation, resources and training to meet the needs of pupils with a wide range of barriers to learning. Annual reviews are carried out effectively and the school ensured that the requirements of statements of special educational need are met.
60. Very good systems are in place for school self-evaluation and performance management, the headteacher and senior management analyse the school's performance very effectively and take immediate action, for example the appointment of an experienced office manager is already having a positive effect on raising attendance levels. The senior management team are fully aware of any weaknesses and, under the very good direction of the headteacher, immediately rectify any form of underachievement.

61. Financial management in the school is good, and it is now efficiently monitored by the governing body. This management is well supported by a most detailed school development plan, which fully addresses appropriate areas for school development. All funds are carefully matched to the priorities that have been established in the plan. There are clearly defined routines, which enable the head teacher and governors to monitor the deployment of resources. Best value principles are well used when measuring improvements in the quality of teaching and standards achieved, and when purchasing resources.
62. Day-to-day financial management and administration are also good. Routine administrative procedures operate efficiently and unobtrusively. The school's experienced and committed secretarial staff give good support to both teachers and pupils. Good use is made of information technology systems to maintain financial control and accountability, and this administration effectively supports the smooth running of the school.
63. Taking into account the use of available resources, the quality of teaching and learning, the progress achieved by pupils, the improvement since the last inspection and the income that is received, the school gives good value for money.
64. The school's contribution to teacher training is very good.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	855,288	Balance from previous year	81,404
Total expenditure	771,067	Balance carried forward to the next	84,221
Expenditure per pupil	2,764		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**. Children enter the nursery at the age of three years. The induction processes for children are good, and the curriculum provided for them is very good. The leadership and management is very good, as is the children's behaviour. There is very good teaching overall, and as a result, children achieve very well. Provision has very significantly improved from that reported at the time of the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are on course to achieve the expected level by the end of reception and their achievements are very good.
- Children are polite and very well behaved.
- They take turns and share the resources provided.
- Children show some independence in their work.
- Teaching is very good, and this allows children to achieve very well.

Commentary

65. Children have learnt how to behave in school, and be part of a social grouping. In both nursery and reception, children learn to eat their snacks and drink their juice in a most civilised manner. They readily share items, take turns and play together. Children are eager to explore new learning, and most are able to concentrate on the work being undertaken. They are able to move confidently around both the classrooms, and the school, and they ask for assistance where necessary. The teachers and the teaching assistants know the children well, and they respond very appropriately to their individual needs. They provide children with a most appropriate mix of directed activities and independence.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are on course to be below the expected level by the end of reception, but their achievement is very good.
- Children have very limited speaking skills.
- They enjoy handling books, and developing their early reading skills.
- Children readily use pencils to produce simple writing, although few are yet able to produce more than a short phrase of text.
- Teaching is very good, with, in particular, most suitable opportunities being provided to help develop children's speaking.

Commentary

66. Children enjoy listening to stories, and teachers make good use of large story books to encourage this. Children's speaking skills are less well developed. A small number speak clearly, whilst others speak in single words, not possessing the vocabulary or the confidence to make longer contributions. Teachers encourage children to develop these skills by talking to them regularly and making very good use of questioning. Children enjoy looking at books, and they are starting to recognise a number of words that they read to others. Teachers provide

children with suitable opportunities to write, and whilst those in nursery develop their emergent writing skills, those in reception write their names and other simple words.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are likely to be below the expected level by the time they leave reception. However, they achieve very well.
- Children know a range of songs and rhymes that help to develop their understanding of number.
- Whilst most children can count up to ten and beyond, when working together, many are uncertain in relating a number of items to the appropriate numeral.
- Many older children know a suitable range of simple mathematical vocabulary.
- Teaching is very good, with a range of extension activities being provided to suit the needs of different children.

Commentary

67. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to count and use counting rhymes. In nursery, children count snack items and drinks, numbers of children and animals. Children also attempt to identify the correct number of items to match a numeral, but some find this difficult. In reception some pupils are beginning to understand the concept of 'one more', but they are less confident with 'one less'. Many children in reception have an appropriate vocabulary that allows them to talk about various concepts such as 'longer' and 'shorter', and 'heavy' and 'light', as well as to name basic two and three-dimensional shapes. Teachers provide children with a wide variety of mathematical tasks and games, and they give children the opportunities to develop their understanding with suitable extension activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are likely to be below the expected level when they enter Year 1, although their achievement is very good.
- Children are beginning to develop their understanding of people and animals, as well as different times and places, although some have difficulties explaining this understanding.
- Children successfully carry out practical activities, such as making food items, and use ICT well to support their learning.
- Teaching is very good. The rich and varied curriculum allows children to develop their understanding through a range of exciting activities and learning experiences.

Commentary

68. Teachers give children most suitable activities and experiences that enable them to learn about the world. Children in the nursery learn about the parts of the body and the different senses. They also learn about different places, and they know about houses, roads and the shops in the local area. Children in reception learn about different materials, and they attempt to identify which of them will float and sink. They also learn about life in the past, especially how things, such as irons, have changed. Children in both classes have heard a variety of Bible stories. A number of children are able to explain their knowledge with some confidence, whilst others, with more limited language skills, often find understanding and explaining more difficult. Practical activities, such as preparing food, are a regular feature in both nursery and reception. Children are confident with simple functions of the computer keyboard and use ICT well to support their learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are on course to be below the expected level by the time they leave the reception class, but they achieve very well.
- They use a range of large equipment with increasing dexterity and confidence.
- Some children are less competent in controlling smaller items.
- They have sound control of their bodies in physical education lessons.
- Teaching is very good, with many opportunities provided for children to develop their physical skills.

Commentary

69. Children benefit from the range of activities provided daily. Pencils, crayons, scissors, Play-doh and a variety of construction toys and large apparatus are readily available, and children use them with enthusiasm. In nursery and reception, most children cut and stick items, and thread shapes onto a string. However, some need help to carry out these procedures, lacking some accuracy and control. Younger children use outdoor equipment well, for instance using wheeled-vehicles confidently and skilfully. Older children further develop their physical skills during lessons in the hall. Teachers, and teaching assistants, support them well, providing clear demonstrations and much encouragement. They are also most careful to ensure the children's safety at all times.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision in creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are on course to be below the expected level by the end of reception.
- Some children have limited skills in controlling items such as pencils and brushes when doing their work.
- Children are presented with a variety of activities in music, painting and model making, to which they respond very well.
- Children are particularly keen to tackle role-play activities.
- The very good teaching, with a wide variety of activities being provided, allows them to achieve very well.

Commentary

70. In both nursery and reception, a wide range of activities is provided, which the children undertake with enthusiasm. They play instruments, sing songs and produce suitable paintings and models. They show developing skills in all activities, although a significant number still have some difficulty controlling pencils and brushes accurately. Children are especially happy to take part in role-play activities in both the 'star ship' and 'jungle' in nursery, and the 'Warren Farm laundry' in reception! Teachers and teaching assistants complement each other very well in supporting, encouraging and attempting to stimulate the children, and they routinely join in the activities with the children.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average by the end of Year 6, with writing and spelling being well below average.
- Teaching is good, and so are pupils' achievements.

- Standards in speaking and listening are below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Guided reading sessions are well structured and taught well.
- The school makes good use of the Spiral centre to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The library, while it has been improved, needs further development by purchasing more books and to become an attractive area where pupils can work independently.

Commentary

71. Children enter the nursery with very poor standards in literacy. Whilst they learn at a very fast rate in the Foundation Stage, their skills and knowledge in all aspects of English are below average when they enter school. The skills they have learned in the recently reorganised Foundation Stage are maintained and extended in Year 1 and Year 2. Teachers ensure that all groups of pupils have challenging work presented well through a range of strategies. The teaching of guided reading is particularly good, and staff have a good understanding of how to help pupils to improve their reading. For example, in Year 1, pupils have regular training in phonics, reading activities are well linked to the texts, and pupils have a good understanding of a story, making sound predictions and using appropriate language. Standards in reading and writing are broadly average and pupils make good progress, particularly in reading in Years 1 and 2. However, pupils in both the infants and the juniors struggle with using adventurous vocabulary, correct tenses and developing plot and character. Their skills of comprehension in relation to interpreting information in texts are weak. Standards have improved due to the good quality of teaching of basic skills and guided reading. The school has analysed its weaknesses and has set in place systems to bring about improvement in standards.
72. Their writing skills are broadly average in sentence construction, spelling and punctuation. A few pupils with significant special educational needs, although their achievement is good, work at a much lower standard. Most groups of pupils have below average speaking and listening skills and this holds back their reading and writing skills. By the end of Year 6, pupils' speaking and listening skills and reading are below average and their writing, punctuation, spelling and presentation are well below average. This group of pupils has a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and below average attainers, with poor vocabulary and sentence construction, and a number of pupils have joined and left the school at times other than expected. The school did not meet its targets for English in 2003. There are no significant differences in attainment by gender or ethnicity and overall, all groups of pupils achieve well.
73. Teaching is good. Assessment is used well to plan work at a suitable level for all groups of pupils. The school has recognised that it needs to do more to develop pupils' skills of speaking and listening. The school is at the early stages of using the Spiral Centre where pupils can act out ideas in groups in a variety of settings, such as the jungle, the seaside or outer space. Pupils enjoy this very much and relish the thought of their work in this setting. However, opportunities for developing pupils' skills of speaking and listening further, through presentation and performance, are missed in class. Pupils are keen to work and get on well in groups. They are helpful to each other and are keen to learn from their teachers, whom they watch carefully. Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are high and they teach at a good pace. Several examples of very good teaching were seen in both the infants and juniors. In these lessons teachers set very high expectations of pupils. They used technical vocabulary well, explained grammatical structures and gave their pupils plenty of opportunities to work in groups, using a good range of devices to keep pupils focused such as role-play, annotation of text, demonstration and modelling.
74. Pupils with special educational needs receive good, well-planned and imaginative support which gives them confidence and tenacity to persevere and make progress.
75. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator who is well aware of areas for development in the subject. Teachers plan well and place appropriate emphasis on the teaching of subject-specific words. They apply information and communication technology well to advance pupils'

literacy skills. Assessment is good and is used well to plan the next steps of learning. Standards are rising, and improvement since the last inspection has been good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

76. Links between English and other curriculum areas are good. The school has improved the library and has plans to develop it further to make it a more effective learning area. At present, too few opportunities are provided for research and independent learning and there are too few books to support learning in all subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are broadly average by Year 2 and below average by Year 6. However, pupils are achieving well, when compared with their prior attainment.
- Significant improvements have been made since the time of the previous inspection, especially in Years 1 and 2.
- The overall quality of the teaching and learning is good, with assessment being very well used to provide suitable work for the pupils.
- The attitudes shown by the pupils are very good. They enjoy mathematics.
- The role played by the co-ordinator is good, and he has contributed well to the recent improvements.

Commentary

77. By Year 2, pupils are confident in handling numbers in both addition and subtraction. Many know the multiplication facts relating to two, five and ten, and they undertake multiplication and division exercises accordingly. They successfully identify halves and quarters, and they can name a range of two and three-dimensional shapes. Most successfully measure using standard units, and they tell the time on the hour and half-hour. By Year 6, many pupils confidently undertake work in all four aspects of number. However, whilst a number of pupils have a clear knowledge of individual multiplication and division facts to 10 x 10, some pupils find this more difficult. Many pupils have a clear understanding of fractions, and they readily identify equivalent fractions and find a fraction or percentage part of a whole number. Pupils identify and draw a variety of shapes and angles, showing suitable accuracy with their measuring. A significant number of pupils currently have difficulties in tackling problem-solving activities, especially in identifying the correct form of computation required to solve a problem. There are no differences in the achievement of boys and girls, pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and above average attainers, as all groups of pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. However, the very good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, the good teaching of number bonds and mental mathematics, and the good use of assessment are helping to raise standards.
78. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are now very carefully planned, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. All teachers make particularly good use of mental activities at the start of lessons, and this develops pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. They are also most careful to provide problem-solving activities, being aware that this is an area of weakness for some pupils. Teachers make very good use of assessment to ensure that all pupils receive work that is suited to their particular needs in lessons and, in the juniors, the setting arrangements are used most successfully for this purpose. Teachers have good subject knowledge, the pace of lessons is brisk and suitable support is provided both by teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, all pupils, including those with special needs, make good gains in their overall mathematical skills.
79. Pupils throughout the school clearly enjoy the work, the mental activities in particular. They settle to their written tasks with interest and enthusiasm, they work well with other pupils, when

required, and they make suitable efforts to accomplish their tasks. They readily seek advice when necessary. Overall, their attitudes to the subject are very good, and, for example, most pupils take care with the presentation of their work. Teachers mark this work regularly, and a number provide helpful and encouraging advice for their pupils. However, not all teachers provide the same level of written support. Overall the quality of marking is satisfactory.

80. The co-ordinator has played a significant role in raising standards, and his leadership is good. He regularly monitors the work being produced, and on occasions he works alongside colleagues in lessons. He is aware of the standards being achieved and the overall provision being made. He is also well aware of the remaining areas of weakness in the work of the older pupils, especially relating to problem-solving. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory but is not used consistently across the year groups, nor is it identified sufficiently in play.

Mathematics across the curriculum

81. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory but needs to be developed further. Teachers also make suitable allowances for pupils to develop their mathematical skills in other subjects, such as design and technology. Information and communication technology is also used regularly to enhance work in the subject but, as yet, not all medium-term planning is formalised to ensure that regular opportunities are provided for pupils to practise what they have learnt in mathematics lessons in other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well.
- Teaching is good overall.
- Most pupils have a good attitude to their learning.
- All aspects of science are covered in sufficient depth.
- The work of the co-ordinator is good.
- Cross-curricular links with mathematics and ICT are limited.
- The pupils do not take much responsibility for organising and planning their own work.
- There is a good emphasis on experimental and investigative science in the infants, but this is not so consistent in the juniors.

Commentary

82. Standards are in line with those expected by the age of seven and below by the age of 11. However, achievement overall is good because of the good teaching and support given to pupils with special educational needs. There are no differences in achievement by gender or ethnicity, although the school did identify that boys were not writing up their experiences as well as the girls in the juniors. However, this was not apparent during the week of inspection.
83. Good progress is being made by the age of seven, due to the emphasis on the development of thinking and investigational skills. Evidence of this was gained from the scrutiny of pupils' books and the good display of the Electricity Unit undertaken in the autumn term, combined with the very good explanation of what they had done and learned by a group of Year 2 pupils. There is inconsistency in progress from Years 3 to 6 because not all year groups are building upon pupils' previously acquired knowledge. To address the weakness in scientific investigation identified in the previous inspection, the school has targeted this area and there has been an improvement across the school. However, this was not always the case in all classes and in the samples of work seen the better examples were where the teacher had given pupils sufficient guidance for recording their investigations and had ensured that work had been completed. In the poorer examples, investigations had not been recorded

systematically and pupils were not given sufficient guidance on how to record their findings in a variety of ways, nor did they demonstrate that pupils understood fully what they had to do or had learned.

84. Cross-curricular links are not secure, especially in mathematics and ICT where examples in the use of diagrams, tables and graphical representation are limited. Furthermore, the development of independent learning is not sufficient because of too much teacher direction, especially with some of the older pupils.
85. Teaching varied from unsatisfactory to very good, and was good overall. In the better lessons teachers had planned well, challenged and inspired their pupils in their learning through interesting and well-focused tasks for all abilities. This judgement is confirmed by the work in their books, which indicates good teaching. However, in the lessons that were not so successful the learning objectives were unclear and insufficient gains were made because expectations were too low. Combined with a slow pace to the lesson, pupils became restless because they were bored and subsequently valuable learning opportunities were lost.
86. The subject is well led by an experienced co-ordinator with specific expertise in the teaching and learning of the subject. The co-ordinator regularly monitors and evaluates the subject and through this has highlighted areas of weakness in assessment and the progress of pupils in some classes. Assessment procedures are good. An action plan has been produced to address these issues. Resources are sufficient and of good quality. However, in a recent audit the co-ordinator has identified the need to increase the resource provision, especially in the area of information and communication technology. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection. The use of ICT is satisfactory but more emphasis needs to be placed on enabling pupils to use ICT to record their findings in a variety of ways.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good access to a well-resourced ICT suite.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes.
- The management of the subject by the subject co-ordinator is very good.
- Cross-curricular use of ICT is underdeveloped and is inconsistent throughout the school.
- Control applications are developing well.
- There is a need to ensure opportunities are planned to encourage pupils to learn independently through more focused use of the classroom computers.
- In Year 5 pupils with special educational needs make very good progress when working alongside business partners sponsored by Excellence in Cities.

Commentary

87. Standards are average by the age of seven and eleven, but achievement is good overall and constitutes good improvement on the previous inspection. This is because of the well-resourced computer suite, good quality teaching and the very good support given by the teaching assistants. A very good example of support given by a teaching assistant was seen in the Year 1 class. This was where a group of children were learning to sequence a series of instructions to program a Roamer floor turtle forwards and backwards and introducing the left and right turn. Children were encouraged by the teaching assistant to use the language 'forward' and 'back' whilst physically pointing in each direction to reinforce the movement.
88. The computer suite is spacious and has 24 systems, each having a set of earphones and linked to a central printer. In addition, there is an interactive whiteboard that supports the teaching and learning of skills. Software programs can be taught on the interactive whiteboard

for the whole class at any one time. Each class is timetabled for one session in the computer suite each week to learn and practise new skills. However, at the present time there is only one computer system in each classroom and that restricts pupils regularly practising and refining the newly learned skills independently in their classrooms. Furthermore, the timetable during the inspection highlighted ICT lessons in each class up to Year 2 and only one lesson in the Year 4 class. A scrutiny of the use of classroom computers demonstrated that, apart from the younger pupils, limited use was made of classroom computers in the older pupils' classes. The observation of these lessons demonstrated that good learning and progress was taking place and pupils' attitudes to their learning are very good.

89. Displays around the school in ICT mainly covered computer art and some combining text and graphics. However, a particular weakness in ICT currently is the regular use of word-processing for drafting and editing writing and in the use of data-handling; good progress is being made in the early years in the use of control equipment.
90. The co-ordinator has made a very effective start to developing the subject. Her leadership and management of the subject is very good because a lot of work has been achieved in a very short time, such as a well documented website about the work of the school. This has helped to make the subject high profile in the school and wider community. She has identified, through her monitoring of the teaching and learning, that some teachers need extra support and has a timetable to work alongside them, modelling the teaching of lessons. A technician is employed to maintain the ICT equipment on a weekly basis. Assessment and its use is satisfactory overall but inconsistent.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

91. The use of ICT is satisfactory and is developing, although it is not sufficiently identified in teachers' medium-term planning. The co-ordinator has identified this and is initiating an intervention programme to address this issue.

HUMANITIES

Geography

92. No judgement was made on provision for **geography** as not enough lessons were seen. Planning is sound, although there is insufficient emphasis on teaching subject-specific skills through different activities. Assessment of pupils' individual knowledge and skills is not sufficiently developed for teachers to plan work challenging and detailed enough to enable pupils to make good progress. Leadership is sound and resources are adequate. Geography has not been a priority for development and, so far, teachers have not received in-service training for this subject. Planning for literacy, the use of mathematics and ICT is careful, relevant and helpful for pupils.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good; pupils are keen on learning and know many historical facts.
- Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language achieve similarly to other pupils as a result of the good support they receive.
- History makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Insufficient emphasis is placed on the rigorous development of subject-specific skills and independent learning, and plenary sessions are not always sufficiently well structured.

- Pupils' spelling and writing skills are weak and too few opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their skills of independent learning.
- The curriculum is enriched with a good range of visits.

Commentary

93. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are similar to those found nationally but achievement is good because of poor standards on entry to school. This is satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching over time. However, during the week of inspection, one unsatisfactory lesson was seen in Year 3 which did not challenge pupils effectively due to a lack of focus on subject-specific skills and on opportunities for independent learning.
94. By the end of Year 2 pupils know about famous people in the past and make comparisons between Mary Seacole, Florence Nightingale and modern nurses. They know that times have changed and that there are differences between the clothes worn in the past and the present day. Pupils talk at great length about how lucky they are to be in school now rather than during Victorian times.
95. By the end of Year 6 pupils know about the contribution the Romans made to developing roads and towns, how the Egyptians buried their dead, and how young children were forced to go and earn a living in Victorian times. However, too few opportunities are provided for pupils in both the infants and the juniors to work independently in presenting their findings in a variety of ways and, too often, worksheets are used which prevent pupils from having to develop their writing skills. Skills of chronology, cause and effect, synthesis and research are not sufficiently well developed because, at present, curriculum planning has weaknesses in that it focuses too much on developing skills of historical enquiry and research. However, the curriculum is enriched with a good range of visits and visitors, such as visits to museums, which bring learning alive for the pupils.
96. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as pupils marvel at the wealth of the Egyptians, the wisdom of the Romans, and the plight of the poor in Victorian times.
97. The quality of teaching is good, with pupils learning well. Generally, teachers use time effectively, ask good quality questions and intervene well in pupils' learning. This enables all groups of pupils to achieve well. However, not all plenary sessions are sufficiently well structured to enable pupils to reflect upon their learning, and opportunities for research, identified in the previous report as an area for further development, still need to be addressed. The use of ICT is satisfactory but too few opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their research skills.
98. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Assessments are satisfactory but could be improved further to provide a more detailed analysis of pupils' expertise in historical skills.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements are good due to the good quality of teaching.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy lessons about other cultures and religions.
- Teachers give good explanations and have high expectations of their pupils.
- The scheme of work does not have clearly defined expectations of what different groups of pupils should achieve and this limits learning.

- Assessments are unsatisfactory and are not used sufficiently well to plan the next steps of pupils' learning.
- Pupils' written accounts of their work contain too many spelling errors and there is more scope for developing pupils' writing skills.

Commentary

99. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils attain average standards and all groups of pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. They know many stories that Jesus told and they understand the concept of forgiveness. Pupils in Year 2 know that Jesus forgave his friends for many things, and that he wanted us to help one another. They know that Jews celebrate Hanukkah, and that Hindus celebrate Diwali. They know that Christians pray in churches and that Easter celebrates new life.
100. By the end of Year 6 pupils know the different characteristics of various faiths, including Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism and Judaism. They know that Sikhs worship in a Gurdwara and that all religions have holy books which carry guidance for living according to the principles of the faith. However, scrutiny of pupils' work revealed that there was some repetition of work covered, such as the story of the widow's mite, where the outcomes of learning were very similar in both Year 4 and Year 6, this is because the present scheme of work does not clearly identify expectations of what different groups of pupils should be achieving and insufficient emphasis is placed on stretching pupils of differing capabilities, especially in writing.
101. Pupils' written accounts of work covered in both the infants and the juniors are limited and contain too many spelling errors. The school has recognised this as an area for improvement. The quality of teaching is good. In the lessons seen during the week of inspection, teachers gave clear explanations, gave pupils plenty of opportunities to relate learning to their own experiences and challenged their thinking in asking them to explain why they found the lessons interesting. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 1/Year 2, the teacher used very good questioning skills to elicit the meaning of prayer in the context of asking God for what we want. As a result, pupils quickly understood the meaning of ritual.
102. Assessment is unsatisfactory. It is not sufficiently well developed to promote learning and is not rigorous enough in helping to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses in learning. Because teachers are experienced in their craft, they can generally match the content of work to pupils' needs but this is often patchy throughout the school.
103. Leadership and management are satisfactory, but the scheme of work and assessment need to be developed further to ensure the progressive development of skills. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, as the quality of teaching has improved from satisfactory to good, but there are still improvements to be made in ensuring that rigorous opportunities are provided for writing, developing the scheme of work, and ensuring that assessments track pupils' skills acquisition.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

104. During the inspection only one lesson was seen in **design and technology**, and no overall judgement is made on provision. However, in the one lesson seen, in Years 5/6, pupils successfully made a variety of model structures that showed planning and making skills appropriate to their age. The teaching was good, and pupils showed good attitudes to the subject. They were provided with suitable materials, such as wood, and appropriate tools such as saws, and they carried out their work carefully and safely. Resources have improved since the last inspection. A study of other plans and samples of work, show that suitable allowance is made for the subject throughout the school. For example, younger pupils make puppets and wheeled-vehicles, and older pupils make biscuits, litterbins and money containers. No teaching of **music** was seen, therefore, no judgement on provision can be made. However, evidence

was gained through sampling the planning for music, the use of music in the assemblies, recordings made by the school choir and in talking to staff and pupils. From the evidence gathered, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, the pupils can sing joyfully and rhythmically, with good pitch and diction. Recordings were very good and demonstrated high quality children's voices singing in an ensemble. The use of electronic keyboards is taught weekly by a visiting teacher, contributing to pupils' good attitudes to learning. Pupils have composed their own melodies and lyrics and accompanied them with tuned and untuned percussion; they can recognise timbre, pitch, tempo and dynamics. Pupils in both the infants and the juniors have taken part in a Christmas production and the Birmingham Schools' Folk Festival 2003, and many participate in recorder clubs. This has a positive effect on their self-esteem.

105. Information was too limited to make a judgement on **art and design**. The school has not made this subject a priority as it has emphasised the core subjects in the curriculum. It is clear from planning that an appropriate range of activities is covered, but there is no clear definition of how subject-specific skills and knowledge are developed through those activities as pupils go through the school. The school employs an artist in residence on an occasional basis for particular projects with pupils in different year groups. This gives these pupils useful opportunities to extend their experience of different techniques essential to art and design. Leadership is satisfactory and resources are good but the curriculum needs to be more specific and the staff to receive professional development if standards are to rise quickly and pupils achieve as much as they can.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are in line with those expected by Year 2, and higher than expected by Year 6. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- Many pupils are particularly good swimmers.
- Teaching is good, overall, with careful coaching of skills helping pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are usually good.
- Few opportunities are provided for pupils to evaluate their own work.
- Co-ordination is good.

Commentary

106. In the lessons observed, pupils in Year 1 carried out games activities with the control and co-ordination expected for their age. They bounce a ball with suitable skill and, whilst some do not find catching easy, most have mastered the technique. Pupils in Years 5/6 show good skills in passing a ball in a variety of ways. They show accuracy in their passing, and they choose the correct pass to suit a particular situation. They are showing increased understanding of tactics relating to both attack and defence, and they recognise the need to 'put themselves into space' or mark each other, rather than just follow the ball. Pupils in Years 2 to 6 attend swimming lessons and, by the end of Year 6, all can swim 25 metres. Many can swim significantly further, displaying various techniques, as well as having tackled life-saving activities.
107. The overall quality of teaching and learning is now good. Teachers are suitably dressed to join in and demonstrate for pupils, their subject knowledge is good and they provide appropriate apparatus for pupils to use. Safety is correctly emphasised throughout. Teachers provide relevant advice and careful coaching to pupils about their work, and this enables them to achieve well. Whilst teachers often use pupils to demonstrate good practice, opportunities are usually missed to allow pupils to discuss their work. Pupils enjoy physical education and,

although a minority are sometimes a little inattentive, the majority join in with enthusiasm, both when working alone and with others, and their behaviour overall is good. Lessons are fully inclusive, and boys, girls and those with special needs work happily together.

108. The subject co-ordinator provides suitable advice and support for colleagues, and he has contributed well towards the good standards being achieved by the end of Year 6. He has observed lessons taking place, and this has helped him identify ways in which those standards can be achieved; his leadership role is good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

109. Too few lessons were seen to make a judgement on provision. The school places a very high emphasis on developing pupils' learning in personal, social and health education and citizenship but the time allocated is too generous and a more structured approach is needed to ensure that all classes spend an equitable amount of time on these subjects. Pupils are given good opportunities to care for their environment, both ecologically and socially. They take pride in their school and the community, and good examples of work were seen throughout the school. Pupils in both the infants and the juniors are now able to resolve conflict among themselves, and are adult in their approach to those pupils who step out of line. The scheme of work includes work on drugs education and sex and relationships education, and pupils are taught how to look after themselves and not to talk to strangers. Playground buddies and monitors are well trained and show a great deal of maturity when undertaking their responsibilities.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
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	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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