

INSPECTION REPORT

THE DAME ELLEN PINSENT SCHOOL

Ardencote Road, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103615

Headteacher: Sylvia Rodgers

Lead inspector: Sue Aldridge

Dates of inspection: 15 – 18 September 2003

Inspection number: 259007

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	5 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	125
School address:	Ardencote Road Kings Heath Birmingham
Postcode:	B13 0RW
Telephone number:	0121 4442487
Fax number:	0121 4647295
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mary Higgins
Date of previous inspection:	8 th June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Dame Ellen Pinsent is a large special school, serving the whole of the south Birmingham area. It caters for an ethnically diverse population of day pupils with a wide variety of special educational needs (SEN). Pupils' attainment on entry is very low because of their learning difficulties; older pupils often enter the school because they have fallen behind their peers in mainstream schools. More than half of the pupils are eligible for free schools meals. There are more than twice as many boys as girls. All pupils have a statement of SEN. Most pupils have moderate learning difficulties; for a small number this is associated with visual impairment, hearing impairment, emotional and behavioural difficulties, or physical disability; there are six pupils with speech and language difficulties as their main learning difficulty. There are 17 pupils with severe learning difficulties, and 36 with autism. Most pupils are white; approximately one third are from ethnic minorities. For 36 pupils, English is not their first language.

Since 2001, the school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark, a Healthy Schools Award and a Leading Aspect Award for its work in implementing a national system of assessing pupils using P Levels. Since the last inspection, the school has developed an outreach service to support staff in six mainstream primary schools.

Since the school was last inspected it has had to vacate its building several times. It moved to temporary accommodation whilst drainage work was undertaken to rectify a serious flash flooding problem. It occupied accommodation that was not a purpose built school for a year, until May 2000.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8810	Sue Aldridge	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Information and communication technology; religious education; personal, social and health education; music
9189	John Horwood	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
14691	Jenny Hall	<i>Team inspector</i>	Special educational needs; science; geography; history
21822	Helen Maskew	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; English as an additional language; art; design and technology
16227	Jim Phillips	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation Stage; mathematics; physical education

The inspection contractor was:

VT Education
Old Garden House
The Lanterns
Bridge Lane
London
SW11 3AD

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	4
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	6
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	11
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	13
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. A small number of pupils with speech and language difficulties do not achieve as well as they might because there is too little speech therapy provided; this is outside the school's control. Pupils' attendance, attitudes and behaviour are good. Good relationships amongst all members of the school community create a harmonious learning environment, in which good work and behaviour are rewarded well. Teaching and learning are good. The school is well led, and management is satisfactory. The cost of educating pupils is relatively low and the school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children in Reception Year achieve well; all pupils achieve well in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT);
- Teachers use ICT very well to help pupils learn;
- Pupils are happy and secure in the school, and their involvement in school life is good;
- A very good range of residential experiences is provided;
- Arrangements to encourage pupils' personal development are very good;
- The school's outreach service is of good quality and is valued by colleagues in mainstream schools;
- There is a very clear vision of how the school will develop its role in supporting inclusion in mainstream schools;
- Pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) do not take sufficient account of their individual needs; pupils and their parents are not involved well enough in drawing up IEPs;
- Assessment information is not analysed to see whether there are differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils;
- Incomplete records are kept of pupils' progress in science, religious education, art, design and technology, history, geography, music, and physical education;
- Subject co-ordinators' roles are not all well developed;
- Risk assessments are carried out but are not recorded;
- Statutory requirements for providing information to parents are not met fully.

Despite a period of significant disruption and the admission of pupils with more complex learning difficulties, the school has improved well since the last inspection: all the areas for improvement identified at that time have been acted upon. Improvements to drainage on the site have ensured that the building no longer floods when there is heavy rainfall. The accommodation has been enhanced and resources for ICT have been improved dramatically. Detailed curriculum plans have been produced and these guide teachers well in preparing their lessons. The school has also extended its role to include support for mainstream primary schools.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	In relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 2	Satisfactory	Good
Year 6	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor

Overall, in relation to their different attainment levels and prior learning, pupils' achievements are **satisfactory**. A small number of pupils who need specialist help from speech and language therapists, do not make as much progress as they should in developing their communication skills. For all other pupils, achievement is good. Pupils from homes where English is an additional language (EAL) achieve as well as others because they receive good support. Since the last inspection, the achievement of pupils with autism, and achievement in mathematics and ICT in general have improved.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education the school provides is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** and assessment is **satisfactory**. The curriculum is **satisfactory** and is enriched **well** by activities outside the classroom. The school's accommodation is **satisfactory** overall and learning resources are **good**. **Good** levels of care, guidance and support are provided for pupils. The school has established **good** partnerships with parents and the community. The school's outreach service is well regarded by mainstream schools; it is successful in supporting the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in six mainstream primary schools in south Birmingham.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership of the school is **good**. There is a very clear, shared view of how the school might develop in the future, and the headteacher, senior management team and several co-ordinators lead well in their areas of responsibility. There is a strong commitment to providing equality of opportunity for all pupils. Management is **satisfactory**. Staff development has been successful in creating a skilled staff team, well able to teach pupils with the existing range of learning difficulties. Leadership and management of the outreach service are **good**. Governors have many relevant skills and their governance of the school is **good**; they support the school well, and have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They also question the senior management team appropriately about important decisions.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents feel that the school is **good**. They find that they are welcome in school, and they think that teaching is good. They find that their children are treated fairly and that staff expect pupils to work hard. Parents appreciate the efforts that the school makes to encourage pupils to become mature. Several parents at the meeting expressed concern about the lack of speech therapy and a few feel that the school should ask parents their views about the school. In fact, parents do have an opportunity to express their views at annual reviews, but they are not routinely involved in setting targets for their children's individual education plans. Pupils are very positive about the opportunities offered to them. They particularly value the school council, through which they have a stake in the running of the school. They would like more lunchtime activities and the school is working towards providing these.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Follow the SEN Code of Practice in relation to targets in pupils' IEPs;
- Analyse assessment information by gender, ethnic group and disability;
- Maintain records showing pupils' progress in all subjects;
- Support subject co-ordinators in developing their roles;
- Produce written risk assessments;

And to meet statutory requirements to:

- Ensure that subject reports sent to parents include levels that pupils reach in Years 2 and 6 in English, mathematics and science;
- Ensure that assessment results in the prospectus are accurate.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Children in the Reception class achieve well. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children in the Reception Year achieve well.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Achievement in English is satisfactory; pupils who require programmes of speech and language therapy do not achieve as well as others.
- Pupils make good progress against their individual personal and social development (PSD) targets;
- Girls achieve as well as boys; there are no differences in levels of achievement between pupils of different ethnic groups or those with a different home language.

Commentary

1. Children in the Reception Year get a good start to their education. They soon settle into the school, as good relationships are quickly established with members of staff. Skilled teaching and a broad range of learning experiences, ensure that all make good progress in the six areas of learning.

2. In Years 1 to 6, pupils make good progress in mathematics and ICT, and they achieve well; both subjects are well taught and pupils have a broad range of learning experiences. This is an improvement since the last inspection when progress was judged to be satisfactory. Good leadership in both subjects has helped to secure this improvement. Much development work has been undertaken, including the provision of significant additional resources and the training of staff. In both subjects, members of staff have improved their teaching skills

3. Pupils make good progress against their PSD targets, because these targets are selected well and are worked on throughout the school day. Evaluations of individual education plans show that most PSD targets are achieved in the time-scales identified; analysis of the school's results, available for 2001 only, shows that pupils compare favourably with those in similar schools participating in the same national project.

4. In English, most pupils achieve well in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Achievement is best for older pupils, those in Years 5 and 6, where there are fewer pupils who need regular intervention from a speech and language therapist. Improvements in standards of writing have been secured by providing a wider range of opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes. The school achieved the target it set to raise standards in this skill. For a small number of pupils who require the intervention of a speech and language therapist, progress in speaking and listening is unsatisfactory. Interruptions to provision of speech and language therapy are a limiting factor, as is the reduction in its level. The school has done what it can to rectify this, but a national and local shortage of qualified speech and language therapists makes a solution difficult to find.

5. Despite a significant change in the school's intake since it was last inspected, all groups of pupils, apart from those with marked speech and language difficulties, achieve equally well in all subjects. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when pupils with autism were not being managed and taught as well as others. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported by skilled bilingual assistants, and this helps these pupils to achieve well. The

increased levels of the skills of members of staff have helped to ensure that all groups achieve equally well.

6. In science, achievement is satisfactory. Although teaching and learning are good, occasional weaknesses in the use of assessment information mean that a few pupils are not set sufficiently challenging work. The school has increased opportunities for pupils to develop practical science skills; this represents an improvement since the last inspection.

7. In religious education, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Although teaching and learning are good and pupils have a broad range of learning experiences, teachers do not maintain records of pupils' attainments. As a result, they cannot be sure that they continue to build on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

8. In other subjects, it was not possible to make judgements about pupils' achievements because too few lessons were observed.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

9. Pupils' personal development and their relationships with each other are very good. Attitudes and behaviour are good, and there have been no exclusions in the past year. Attendance is good and pupils are punctual, except infrequently when transport problems occur. Arrangements for pupils' spiritual and moral development are good; cultural and social development are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- There are very good relationships between pupils, and between staff and pupils;
- Pupils are able to take a range of responsibilities in the school;
- Pupils join in the many school activities;
- Social and cultural development is very good.

Commentary

10. The pupils arrive at school with their guides and are greeted by the staff, with whom they clearly have very good relationships. They are happy to be at school and are pleased to see their friends. Many pupils are admitted from main stream schools, and have low self-esteem; activities such as circle time or the end of day activities, are very well used to ensure that these children are accepted by the others and begin to make friends. There is a clear sense of community amongst those pupils who have been at the school for some time and many examples of excellent relationships were seen in lessons; this contributed well to pupils' learning. There is also a high degree of racial harmony in the school. Attendance is good and compares favourably with similar schools nationally.

11. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility and to develop their personal qualities. There is a school council, which is very well organised and is an effective way for pupils to contribute to the running of the school; it contributes to increasing pupils' confidence and trust in adults. Those pupils who were on the school council last year learnt very good social skills. Within the lessons, there are also very good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, and in at least one of the classes for older children, every child has an identified duty.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	9.95
National data:	N/A

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	0.11
National data:	N/A

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	80	0	0
White – Irish	5	0	0
White – any other White background	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	28	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	5	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	0	0

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

12. As well as being keen to join in lessons by answering questions, the pupils are enthusiastic about taking part in other activities available to them, particularly residential trips and after-school clubs. They participate very well in practical lessons such as music, and freely contribute to circle time activities. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 are offered a residential visit wherever possible each year: it was only impractical for one pupil this year. The creative partnership to which the school belongs gives pupils many additional opportunities and they join in these enthusiastically.

13. Social and cultural aspects of personal development are particularly strong. Social development is well supported by residential trips, visits in the local community such as to the local church, and through the creative partnership. The multi-cultural nature of the school gives pupils opportunities to share their experiences of home life with others from different cultural backgrounds, and this complements the school's strong provision of cultural education through the curriculum. Within food technology, pupils are taught about food from around the world; the school has links with a school in Africa, and projects such as a comparison between life in Leicester and Delhi are undertaken. Religious education provides many opportunities to explore other cultures and religions at first hand.

14. Reward systems and class rules are determined in each class, and pupils are absolutely clear about how systems work. This contributes well to pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

15. The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good. The curriculum is satisfactory, and pupils' care, guidance and support are good. The school maintains a good partnership with parents and the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The skills of staff are systematically improved to ensure that teaching and learning are strengthened;
- Teachers make very good use of ICT as a learning tool;
- Good relationships between staff and pupils contribute to effective learning;
- Assessment is satisfactory; it is better developed in English, mathematics, physical education and ICT than in other subjects;
- When planning for pupils' individual needs, the school does not take sufficient account of the revised SEN Code of Practice (DfES November 2001).

Commentary

16. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. There is now less unsatisfactory teaching, and a higher proportion of teaching is good or better. Teaching and learning are good in the Reception Year, and in Years 1 to 6.

17. In the Reception class, staff make very good use of prompts, praise, encouragement and rewards of stickers to increase children's involvement, and to improve behaviour and attitudes to learning. Opportunities for developing communication, numeracy, personal and social skills are incorporated well into all sessions.

18. Since the last inspection, there has been much professional development to ensure that staff have the necessary skills to teach pupils with a wider variety of SEN; staff appointments, peer observations and performance management have also contributed well to an improvement in staff skills. For example, specific training in teaching of pupils with autism has resulted in the use of visual timetables so that these pupils are supported in making the transition from one lesson to the next. Sensory methods are used for pupils with severe learning difficulties, and the widespread use of signing by staff supports pupils' understanding well. Pupils for whom English is a second language are well supported. For example, in an art lesson, pupils worked with the bi-lingual support assistant, who used a mixture of mother tongue and English to help them learn the names of colours and shapes. By the end of the lesson, these pupils could use the English they had learned to identify the primary colours and the different shapes that they had been working with.

19. Information and communication technology is used very effectively to support pupils' learning. Staff are skilled in the use of computers, interactive whiteboards and digital cameras. Pupils are engaged for quite lengthy periods by tasks that involve the use of ICT. For example, in a literacy lesson, Year 5 and 6 pupils were seen searching a poem on the interactive whiteboard for words with the 'ay' sound in them. This task held pupils' attention well; they rapidly improved their ability to identify such words, discovered that different letters combine to make this sound, and in doing so learned from one another.

20. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils ensures that pupils know that they are valued. They are keen to do their best and receive rewards for their efforts. Praise and encouragement are used wisely. Pupils' work is well celebrated, reinforced and rewarded. However, pupils are not involved enough in their own assessment. Teachers are careful to explain the learning objectives for each lesson and review pupils' work at the end of each lesson. However, pupils are not always told what they have to do to show that they have achieved the learning objective, and not all teachers set different learning objectives for pupils of different abilities.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in [number] lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	11 (22%)	26 (54%)	10 (20 %)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

21. Teachers have used assessment information well to group pupils by ability in Years 5 and 6 for English and mathematics. This grouping works well and simplifies the planning task for teachers. Some very effective sub-groupings were seen in these lessons too. This strategy was effective in enabling pupils to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding, and also provided good opportunities for pupils to work independently. This represents an improvement since the last inspection: at that time, teachers gave too few opportunities for independent learning.

22. Literacy and numeracy targets set in pupils' IEPs are not linked to pupils' particular needs, but are derived from the next element of the school's record keeping systems for English and mathematics. This is out of step with the SEN Code of Practice and is a wasteful duplication of effort, as teachers are keeping the same records twice. In addition, IEPs are not reviewed as frequently as recommended in the code. Few pupils were able to tell inspectors what their targets were, or what they needed to do to improve skills such as reading and writing.

23. The inspection took place very early in the new term. Unsatisfactory teaching resulted from weaknesses in the management of pupils on the first day of the inspection. There was a noticeable improvement in the management of pupils with challenging behaviour as the week progressed.

The Curriculum

Overall the curriculum is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good;
- The curriculum is enhanced by the provision of residential and creative experiences;
- Access to the curriculum for small number of pupils with marked speech and language difficulties is limited by the lack of sustained input from a fully qualified speech and language therapist.

Commentary

24. The school recognises its need for a curriculum that can be adapted to the changing profile of pupils' special needs. The range of the school's academic curriculum closely mirrors that of mainstream schools, but is customised to the more specific needs of its pupils. Curriculum planning is good and incorporates strategies for teaching and learning, modified to match the needs of the pupils; this contributes well to pupils' learning. However, IEPs do not reflect the most important needs of all pupils, except in relation to their personal and social development. Although ICT is applied well in most subjects, English and mathematics should be taught and applied more consistently across the curriculum.

25. Overall provision for pupils with additional SEN is satisfactory. The curriculum is reviewed regularly to ensure that its development is relevant to the wider needs of its pupils. For example, with the help of the speech and language therapist (SALT) assistant, teachers and teaching assistants are taking such steps as they can in the classroom to provide support to a significant number of pupils with more general speech and language difficulties. However, the needs of some pupils are such that they require SALT programmes, which teachers are not qualified to provide. Whilst the school continues to lobby for increased provision of a qualified SALT, it has taken steps to ensure that staff are as skilled as they can be in supporting the development of pupils' communication skills; this includes training a teaching assistant to implement programmes devised by a SALT.

26. The school provides a good variety of enrichment activities. A programme of PSHE is well supplemented by extra-curricular activities. Residential experiences are very well planned and tailored to pupils' needs. Greater parental confidence as a result of work carried out by the bi-

lingual worker, has resulted in Asian pupils now taking part in these residential trips. As pupils get older, their length of stay is increased and locations are linked to appropriate curriculum activities. Venues for older pupils include London, France and Ullswater, which is visited for outdoor activities. Younger pupils visit Stratford-on-Avon and Edale.

27. Participation in creative activities is good and supports the pupils' learning through a range of experiences both within and out of school. For example, through the creative partnership project, Year 4 pupils are participating in a collaborative musical production with other local schools. This will culminate in a performance at the Birmingham Hippodrome next March. The planning of extra-curricular visits takes full advantage of the cultural opportunities within the city. The varied experiences of high quality provide support for pupils' academic and personal development.

28. Levels of support staff mean that the school is limited in the extent to which it is able to provide opportunities for pupils to learn alongside their mainstream peers. The Reception children join a mainstream class at a local nursery and infants school for a morning each fortnight, and the school ensures that higher attaining pupils who are likely to return to mainstream schools have one or two days there as part of preparation for transition. Recently, a combined performing arts project with local schools enabled pupils in Years 1 and 2 to spend a week working with an infants' school class.

29. Accommodation is satisfactory. The flooding problems have been resolved and flash flooding has now been eradicated. Storage systems have been improved. Resources are good overall and very good in the area of ICT.

Care, guidance and support

30. The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good overall. Pupils have satisfactory access to the support and guidance they need as they progress through the school. The involvement of pupils in the work and development of the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils have very good and trusting relationships with adults in school;
- Pupils know that senior managers take their views very seriously;
- Risk assessments are carried out, but are not recorded;
- There is not enough external support for pupils' speech and language development.

Commentary

31. Child protection procedures and support for looked after children are secure and well embedded.

32. Staff take care to provide for the safety of pupils when in their care. A revised health and safety policy has been drafted, although it has yet to be adopted formally by the governing body. Staff carry out risk assessments, for residential visits for instance, but actions taken as a result of these are not recorded. This is out of step with local and national guidance.

33. Pupils have very good and trusting relationships with the adults in school. Pupils know that there is always someone there to help them. Care and support for pupils is good and contribute to their being very positive about coming to school. Indeed, older pupils would like to extend their school day by attending more activities after school before the transport comes to take them home. The adults in school are a caring and supportive team, ably led by senior management.

34. The process of writing new targets at the annual review of Statements of SEN ensures that every year each pupil receives increasingly challenging work from the national programmes for English, mathematics, and personal and social development.

35. Because there are local shortages in the availability of visiting speech and language therapists, there is too little support for pupils who need specialist programmes devised by a SALT. Parents have rightly expressed concern about the inadequate amount of SALT available for their children.

36. Two bilingual learning assistants provide good support in class for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English, and one of them visits parents and pupils at home. Assistants also lead well planned meetings at school each fortnight, for mothers to learn more about their children's school work so that they are better able to support them at home.

37. Through the work of a highly successful school council, pupils learn to express their views about school very well. Their approach to the work of the school council is thoughtful and responsible. Where practicable, senior managers are very willing to act on the pupils' views. Most recently, pupils' ideas for the refurbishment of the toilets and cloakrooms have been adopted.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents, the community and with other schools. Parents have positive views of the school with no significant concerns.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Partnership with parents is good;
- The creative partnership with other organisations is good;
- Good community links enable the school to provide residential and other visits;
- Parents should be involved more formally in the target setting process;
- The outreach service is highly valued by staff in mainstream schools.

Commentary

38. Informative and helpful reports about children's progress contribute to the building of good partnerships with parents, most of whom attend annual reviews. There are good newsletters that keep parents informed, and the school web site has received praise locally. Parents have a home/school book to enable them to monitor work done, and they are encouraged to come into school, for example to attend the monthly coffee morning. A strength of the partnership is the support available for Asian families through the bi-lingual support staff, who meet groups of mothers as well as supporting pupils at school throughout the day.

39. The school is part of a creative partnership that was initiated in January 2002 and involved six local schools. The Birmingham Royal Ballet chose the school as one of its partners. The experiences available to pupils through this partnership are being shared across the school, so that all pupils have some experience of the creative partnership over an eighteen-month period. The partnership is also effective in supporting the professional development of staff and in creating closer links with other schools.

40. The school has developed good community links for the benefit of pupils. The most significant of these are the opportunities for all the pupils to undertake residential and other visits. The appropriateness of the location and duration of these visits is reviewed each year by the school. The school has other community links through its outreach work and is developing good links with local industry. The school is seen as part of the community and consequently its buildings do not suffer from vandalism.

41. Whilst parents are happy with the information they receive on progress and most attend the annual reviews, the parents do not have an opportunity to suggest specific targets for their children. The involvement of parents and pupils in this process would ensure that parents understand what is being expected of their child, and enable them to support their learning at home. However, there are opportunities for parents to support learning, as the school sends information home about topics to be covered in each class each term.

42. The school's outreach service to six mainstream primary schools is effective in supporting the development of more inclusive practice in these schools. Headteachers' audit information shows that support is enabling local schools to improve methods and procedures to meet a range of SEN, and to provide an inclusive curriculum. Whilst the school's main focus for inclusion is the expansion of outreach provision, some opportunities for pupils to learn alongside their mainstream peers are also provided. It was too early in the school year for these to be seen in action.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the quality of school leadership is **good** and management is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The headteacher, senior management team and governors share a clear vision for the development of the school's outreach service;
- Governors carry out their responsibilities well; they are most supportive and hold senior managers to account through their questioning;
- Co-ordination of English, mathematics and ICT are effective in raising achievement, but the roles of other subject managers are under-developed;
- Analysis of assessment data is at an early stage of development;
- At the time of the inspection, there was no detailed plan for development in the current academic year, only broad priorities.

Commentary

43. The headteacher and senior staff provide good leadership, with a clear vision of school development, particularly in having a prominent role in supporting the inclusion of pupils with SEN in mainstream primary schools. The outreach project is very well managed by the deputy headteacher, and an assistant headteacher plays a key role in directly supporting mainstream staff. All leaders contribute well to the creation of a positive learning environment, in which pupils' are valued as individuals and empowered to express their views, which are considered seriously. There is strong support for innovation in the school and this is reflected in the many awards that the school has received for developing particular aspects of its work.

44. Good leadership was demonstrated by the governors in the resolution of the major upheaval caused by flood damage. Each governor has responsibility for monitoring the work in a class and they are kept well informed of curriculum developments through subject reviews which are later presented by the subject co-ordinator at a governors' meeting. In this way the governors achieve a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, enabling them to speak knowledgeably about them. Their efforts to improve staffing levels in accordance with the changing pattern of SEN for which the school is being required to cater, have resulted in recent, but limited success. Recently, governors have been involved well in determining the school's internet policy, through the establishment of a working party. Quite rightly, there was considerable debate about the inclusion of images of pupils on the school's website.

45. Procedures for school self-evaluation include a staff survey that provides good indications of the perceived strengths and weaknesses in school provision. This has heightened staff awareness of strengths and areas for further improvement, and involved them well in evaluation and planning

for further improvement. School development plans suitably cover the identified broad areas for improvement over three years, with details of costing and responsibilities for the current year. However, a detailed plan for this academic year (2003/4) has yet to be drawn up.

46. In the recent past, co-ordinators for English, mathematics and ICT have carried out significant work to develop their subject areas in conjunction with national projects. Co-ordinators for other subjects, such as history and geography, have carried out considerable curriculum development work, and all have ensured that resources are available to teachers. However, most have not yet had a role in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning in their subjects. In general, co-ordinators have too little time to extend their roles in this way.

47. Assessment data collected by the school enables pupils' progress in English, mathematics, ICT, and personal and social development to be tracked using a computerised recording system which has recently been introduced. The manual analysis of the available assessment data led to the organisation of Year 6 pupils into sets for English and mathematics, in order to improve the match of learning targets and teaching approaches to the wide range of pupils' learning needs. However, the data has not yet been analysed to ascertain whether all groups of pupils are doing equally well.

48. Financial management is good and benefits from the full involvement of governors. For example, after investigating the cost of cover for staff absences, governors agreed an appropriate strategy to meet the school's needs in the best way. The budget surplus accrued from using temporary accommodation during the flood damage, was used substantially to update the ICT provision following a review; it was also used to help to enhance the school environment and play facilities. These initiatives have had a good effect on raising standards in ICT and on improving the quality of learning across the curriculum. The large surplus indicated in the most recent out turn statement was largely due to invoices that had not been paid; a prudent contingency is maintained each year.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,180,680.00	Balance from previous year	27,230.00
Total expenditure	1,086,272.00	Balance carried forward to the next	94,408.00
Expenditure per pupil	8,806.00		

49. Overall, satisfactory improvements have been made since the last inspection.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

50. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in all the areas of learning, reaching standards within the early learning goal appropriate to their SEN and degree of learning difficulties.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Staff quickly establish good relationships with children, who soon feel secure, settle in well and make good progress in developing skills of independence.

Commentary

51. Circle times are used well to develop children's awareness of and consideration for others. Children become used to sitting in a circle, waiting to take turns and sharing. The teacher and teaching assistants promote these skills very well throughout daily routines and activities. For example, sharing the playground toys and equipment, and taking turns to choose items or greet each other, are all encouraged. Children become more self-confident, greet and interact readily with visitors and perform confidently in front of the class. They make good progress in attending to their own dressing and toileting needs, and know that they need to wash their hands before lunch.

52. Staff praise and encourage children, helping them to adapt to new situations. For example, when using the hall for the first time for physical activity, the staff helped overcome some distress and challenging behaviour to establish suitable routines, and extend children's ability to learn to learn. After less than two weeks, children were already settled into the class routines and activities.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Communication skills are reinforced and developed well throughout the school day.

Commentary

53. All classroom staff use very well formed Makaton signs and gestures to support communication throughout the day. Children quickly develop good listening skills and soon become more confident in copying these signs and gestures, vocalising or speaking. The children enjoy action songs and these are used very well by staff to extend children's expressive language.

54. Children become very interested in books, following the story by looking at pictures. They know the sequence of events in familiar stories and enjoy acting out key incidents, such as 'jumping' a toy animal into a 'pond'. They make good progress, and by the end of the Reception Year most are likely to achieve many of the steps towards the early learning goals. More able children can put pictures of a familiar story in the correct sequence, and begin to copy letters and words.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Staff provide a good range of mathematical experiences;
- Children particularly enjoy counting songs and rhymes.

Commentary

55. Many children can place items correctly *on*, *in* or *under* when working with large play equipment, such as a table, box or chair. Children enjoy number songs and rhymes, and soon begin to join in with actions that accompany these. They are regularly involved in counting out items up to five, and every opportunity is taken during daily activities to develop children's awareness of number. Some can count by rote. Children develop good ideas of shape as they choose from a variety of items to make patterns. Some can identify a circle and find examples of circles within the classroom. More able children respond to 'how many fire-engines?' and match items for colour and shape. By the end of the Reception Year, most children have a good knowledge of shape and colour, can identify objects as big or small, and count items up to five accurately.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good use is made of the school environs and local amenities, such as the local park, to develop children's knowledge and understanding of living things and the seasons of the year.

Commentary

56. Children soon learn to identify parts of their own bodies through action songs and during physical education lessons. Many can recognise and name a range of farm and zoo animals. By the end of the Reception Year most children know the main parts of a plant and what pets need to be healthy and happy. They can group pictures of animals according to whether they can fly or swim. They have a good knowledge and understanding of switch control of music, lights and equipment, and can access a computer by use of a touch screen or mouse. They recognise and name a variety of foods, and know that eating fruit is good for keeping healthy.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- In the classroom and playground children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills.

Commentary

57. Pupils run well and with good control of direction, avoiding collisions with others, and they respond to slow or fast music. They begin to copy body movements to create different positions and shapes.

58. They assist in dressing, pushing arms into sleeves, pulling T-shirts over the head, and putting feet into shoes. Most need help with fastenings. They show good control and propulsion of bikes, scooters and pedal cars on the playground at play-times. Fine movement control is developed well through such activities as mixing icing using a spoon, joining construction kit items, drawing and writing.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good opportunities for creative development include music, drama, drawing and painting.

Commentary

59. Children respond well to music and songs, and many move expressively to music during 'dance' sessions. They enjoy dressing up and playing roles such as those of policeman, astronaut, cowboy, and doctor, and imitate adults and other pupils as they develop imaginative play. They act out being 'quiet as a mouse' relating to the rhyme *Hickory Dickory Dock*. As they grow in confidence they perform in front of the group. By the end of the Reception Year, most children become competent in using a glue-stick to paste pictures in the correct place on a work-sheet, draw closed circles to represent a face and, with verbal prompts, add in marks for eyes, nose and mouth. They become used to working with a variety of materials and the most skilled use paints to produce a picture and shape blocks to print patterns.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school does all that it can to support pupils with marked speech and language difficulties, but a shortage of SALT adversely affects the progress made by pupils who require specialist help from a SALT assistant;
- Good teaching and learning, and the positive attitudes of pupils, promote achievement well;
- Those pupils whose mother tongue is not English receive good support from the bi-lingual support assistants;
- Teachers are inconsistent in their encouragement for pupils to gain literacy skills cross the curriculum.

Commentary

60. Younger pupils make satisfactory progress overall in improving their speaking and listening skills. There are a significant number who have marked difficulties in speaking and acquiring language. Although limited by time, the input from the SALT assistant does support some pupils in the acquisition of speech and language, and the majority do benefit from the teaching in the classroom; this is specifically targeted to improve the communication skills of all pupils. For lower attaining pupils, and those with some speech and language difficulties, teachers encourage

communication well through a range of suitable strategies and resources; for example, good use is made of Picture Exchange Communication (PECS) and Makaton signing. Pupils are regularly encouraged to repeat letter sounds as a whole class activity. Higher attaining pupils talk fluently about their work and show their understanding.

61. Younger pupils take pleasure in all aspects of reading and make satisfactory progress overall. Teachers make the lessons fun and provide an interesting range of resources which engage the majority of pupils well. They follow the print in big books and some can join in with the teacher. When challenged, a few recognise simple words from the text, although they need to be prompted. Higher attaining pupils make good progress. They remember words seen previously and begin to predict what will happen next. Lower attaining pupils handle books and turn their pages correctly. They begin to identify single letters and make the corresponding sounds.

62. Achievement in writing for younger pupils is good. There is some evidence of the beginnings of legible writing by higher attaining pupils, who begin to form letters independently. Very low attaining pupils hold a felt tip pen correctly, make marks, and colour in worksheets. Teachers choose good strategies to encourage confidence in writing. The use of individual whiteboards enables pupils to correct themselves, which improves their skills and increases their self-confidence. As a result they are keen to show what they can do and they take a pride in their achievements.

63. Achievement for older pupils is good overall. The range of additional SEN amongst older pupils is less evident and many are achieving well, and sometimes very well. Higher attaining pupils have an increasing understanding of language. They have good opportunities to improve their verbal communication skills. They contribute to the school council and participate in circle time. They are confident when speaking to adults. In the classroom they are keen to participate in feedback sessions at the end of lessons. Lower attaining pupils, while less confident, increase their skills through the prompting of staff, who encourage others to listen and give them time to answer. As with younger pupils, lack of SALT input has an impact on standards of achievement in speaking and listening for a few pupils.

64. Older pupils make good progress with their reading. They enjoy being read to and make contributions to stories. In a very good lesson in which information and communication technology was well used by the teacher, pupils confidently read a story together from the interactive whiteboard. Higher attaining pupils read simple sentences fluently, remembered what had happened previously and were able to predict the likely outcomes of the story. Lower attaining pupils in Years 4 and 5 read from pictures and could remember rhyming words. Many pupils are confident in the use of the library to support their learning. They select books for both pleasure and study, and can tell the teacher why they have made their choices.

65. Older pupils make good progress and show increasing skill in writing. They move from scribbling and showing poor control of their pencils, to interpreting and copying shapes of letters. Pupils' work shows that those who have individual support have mastered hand-over-hand writing; in one case a pupil could join the dots to form his name. Higher attaining pupils are able to write their names unaided and copy sentences accurately. One pupil revised a jumbled sentence and re-wrote it unaided.

66. Teaching and learning are good. Learning is well supported by planning of the curriculum and modifying teaching styles to suit the abilities of all pupils. The National Literacy Strategy is enhanced by the effective use of ICT in many lessons. Relationships in the classroom are good. Lessons move at a brisk pace and teachers challenge pupils to be creative in their thinking. Partnerships between the adults in the classroom provide effective support to learning. Bi-lingual assistants support pupils well; they strike a good balance between use of the pupils' mother tongues to help them understand, and use of English words to encourage language acquisition and use. All staff are trained in Makaton signing, and two are trained in the use of PECs; these are well used across the school to increase skills in communication.

67. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is skilled and enthusiastic. Support staff are well deployed and appropriately skilled. The co-ordinator has had a half-day each week, as well as a whole week each year, to monitor and develop the subject.

68. Improvement since the last inspection has been good overall. Older pupils have made good improvement in speaking and listening. Higher attaining pupils have improved their reading and writing. There has been satisfactory improvement in all areas of literacy for younger pupils. Opportunities for writing for different purposes, especially for lower attaining pupils, have increased.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

69. This aspect is satisfactory. Teachers' plans do identify key words associated with topics. At best, teachers introduce new vocabulary carefully, and give pupils opportunities to say, read and write words. However, the practice is not yet consistent across all subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The overall quality of teaching and learning is good;
- Co-ordination of the subject has raised standards and improved pupils' achievement;
- Improvements in the curriculum and in assessment have been significant, but assessment information is not yet used as well as it should be.

Commentary

70. Standards in mathematics range widely according to the nature of pupils' SEN and learning difficulties. Overall, pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Lower attaining pupils count to five by rote, match shapes and can name or identify a circle. Others recognise numerals and the main geometric shapes by name. They combine groups of objects, then find the total number of as many as ten items by re-counting them. Higher attaining pupils name and draw shapes, know number bonds to ten and understand simple practical subtraction. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make good progress. During Years 3 and 4, some pupils count and order numbers to ten, others understand addition and subtraction when using groups of objects, and begin to understand *more than* and *less than*. More able pupils recall number bonds to ten mentally, find the missing number in a sequence up to 50, and add by counting on. During Years 5 and 6, lower attaining pupils learn to record simple addition statements using plus and equals signs, and to sort items by a single attribute into different sets. Higher attaining pupils use a range of measures for weight and length, interpret simple charts and graphs, and can explain how they solve numerical problems such as dividing 40 items into 5 groups. Overall, the standards reached are in keeping with those expected for pupils with this range of learning difficulties and represent slightly higher levels of achievement than those recorded at the time of the last inspection. Since the last inspection the school has catered for an increasing diversity of pupils' needs, so this represents good improvement in achievement in mathematics.

71. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are generally well planned and prepared, with good use of continuous assessment, to ensure that learning activities and tasks are well matched to pupils' learning needs. Pupils are well supported in their learning by effective grouping and strategic deployment of teaching assistants, who work well as part of skilled class teams. Good practical use is made of objects and 'counters' for supporting pupils' emerging understanding of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. However, on occasions when the tasks are too abstract and not supported with real, practical materials, pupils become confused and

learning is hindered. Teachers consistently use good questioning to involve all pupils in lessons, and are skilled at probing pupils' understanding by asking them to explain the thinking behind their answers. Increasingly teachers make use of ICT, enabling pupils to practice their mathematical skills by using a range of appropriate software. The new interactive white-boards are used well to illustrate ideas and concepts, such as counting on and back, and creating graphs and charts to represent collected data from a simple survey. This is having a very good effect on the quality of pupils' learning.

72. A particular strength is the quality of relationships, which enables pupils to enjoy their activities. Most staff are skilled in managing pupils' behaviour, and capturing and holding the attention of those pupils who can be easily distracted and become disruptive. For example, with younger pupils, creating a mystery such as 'What is in the box?', or hiding part of a large shape or numeral and challenging the pupils to predict. Very good use is made of praise and rewards of 'stickers' and certificates so that pupils really want to do well. The grouping of pupils in Years 5 and 6 into three ability groups for mathematics has improved the quality of learning for all the pupils. This has simplified the task of planning for the range of pupils' abilities. In lessons, teachers divide the groups into sub-groups and set different tasks, thus ensuring that all pupils are suitably challenged.

73. Provision for mathematics has been well managed and developed over the last two years. Curriculum planning is good; assessment is based on clear, finely graded steps that are used well to promote and identify the progress pupils make. The co-ordinator, supported by the allocation of a half-day per week, has monitored the work of colleagues and provided good training opportunities for them to improve their teaching of numeracy. Systematic review by both the co-ordinator and local education authority personnel has been effective in improving the quality of provision.

Mathematics across the curriculum

74. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to use and develop their mathematics skills in other curriculum areas.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **satisfactory**. Pupils' achievements at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Girls and boys are taught and supported well overall, and they enjoy their science lessons;
- Pupils learn to experiment and find things out for themselves;
- Science lessons help girls and boys to develop their personal and social skills;
- Pupils do not always learn at a high enough level because teachers do not make the best use of the assessment information passed on to them;
- Pupils are not given equal opportunities to succeed;
- The role of the science co-ordinator is not developed well enough because no time is allocated during the school day to do the job effectively.

75. Standards in science at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are well below the national average because of the range of pupils' learning needs. No pupils in Year 6 reached National Curriculum attainment Level 3 in 2001, contrary to the data published in the school brochure. The school offers two convincing explanations for this; firstly that pupils are often admitted to the school in Years 3, 4 or 5, and secondly that higher attaining pupils in Year 6 attend mainstream schools part-time, to prepare them for transition to secondary mainstream provision. However, assessment information is not always used to plan work that is challenging enough. For example, a Year 6 pupil who had achieved elements of Level 3 when in Year 5 was seen working on a task at a lower level.

76. Teachers are given the flexibility to determine the time allocation for science in their classes, provided that there is at least an hour each week. As a result, the amount of science teaching time varies between classes; overall time allocated to teaching science does not compare favourably with similar schools.

77. In the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching and learning were good, and most pupils achieved well. This is because teachers use time and resources effectively, and they plan interesting activities that encourage all pupils to participate. The strong and trusting relationships in lessons give pupils with challenging behaviour the confidence to take part, and mainly to overcome their difficulties. Teachers successfully promote pupils' personal and social skills. In a very good lesson about naming the parts of the body, Year 1 pupils, who had only known each other a few days, learnt to wait for their turn, co-operate when sharing materials, join in a song together, and listen and observe each other during whole-class teaching. In a good Year 5 lesson, boys and girls practised their social skills whilst visiting a large local supermarket to learn about classes of food and their storage. On one occasion when teaching was not successful and pupils did not achieve enough, the difficult behaviour of a small minority of pupils was not managed well.

78. Leadership and management in science are satisfactory given the constraints under which the subject is co-ordinated. The co-ordinator does not have non-teaching time to develop the subject, to monitor teaching and assessments, to complete subject plans, or to seek advice from other professionals outside school. The senior management team has quite rightly identified the need to review the science provision.

79. There has been satisfactory improvement in the provision for science since the last inspection. Opportunities for pupils to investigate in science have improved. Older pupils, for example, investigate the conditions needed for seeds to grow. They also observe and record the effect of dissolving substances in water. Older pupils begin to learn that some reactions are reversible but others are not. For example, younger pupils investigate electric circuits and observe what happens when substances are mixed together. The quality of teaching of science has also improved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils make good progress because they frequently use ICT as a learning tool across the whole curriculum and their progress is carefully charted using detailed records;
- Staff are skilled in the use of the school's very good resources, which capture pupils' interest and motivate them well;
- Strong leadership by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator has underpinned good improvement since the last inspection.

Commentary

80. Both the skills of staff and teaching resources have improved significantly since the last inspection. For example, the school now has networked computers and interactive whiteboards in most classrooms, and internet access and digital cameras in all classrooms. Much staff training has taken place as part of a five-year development plan for the subject. Teachers and support staff are confident and skilled in using all the equipment and software to support learning in all subjects. The co-ordinator has worked steadily with staff to plan how ICT can be an integral part of every subject, and this work continues. The school has also introduced a recording system that is simple to use, is accessible on all class computers, and enables teachers to record small steps in pupils' attainment, track pupils' progress and plan the next steps in learning. This ensures that pupils

continue to progress, and that gaps in learning are filled. It also provides a means by which information on pupils' attainment levels can be collected over the period of their attendance at the school.

81. Pupils are confident users of new technology. There is always a clear rationale for using ICT, and pupils enjoy using computers and other devices. By Year 2, pupils are quite familiar with the computer; they match objects on the screen, and the most skilled activate a switch to control horizontal movement. Pupils have visited websites to find information, and all listen to themselves on audio-tapes. A few operate devices such as toys, using a switch. All pupils are involved well in making pages for the school's website. By Year 6, all are able to start up, log off, choose and use a programme. Pupils make choices and decisions about the use of ICT, and they have developed sufficient skills to enable them to exploit the potential of different items of software. For example, they use games, word processing and painting software. Pupils were seen confidently and competently using the internet to find out about the Coronation, retrieving text and pasting it into a publishing programme. The most skilled pupils independently store, retrieve and print their work. They are able to make a robot move forward, backward and round. They also use the TV, video and tape machines competently.

82. The co-ordinator has driven development well, and staff feel well supported. There is a part-time technician who helps with trouble-shooting. Staff have very good skills in using ICT, developed well through training and support, and they make very good use of the school's high quality resources. Much staff development has been carried out as part of staff meetings, and the co-ordinator has used her non-contact time wisely and well, mainly to map possible links with ICT in other subjects. Improvement since the last inspection is good, and the subject is a strength of the school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

83. Staff make very effective use of ICT across the curriculum. Computers are used widely, as are interactive whiteboards and digital cameras. For example, a projected image of a flower enabled pupils to see its parts very clearly. The internet is used extensively as a source of information. Software to help develop literacy and numeracy skills is frequently used to reinforce learning in these subjects.

HUMANITIES

84. Three lessons of religious education were seen, two of history and one of geography. The work in all three subjects was sampled.

85. Not enough evidence was collected to judge the overall achievement of pupils in history. The quality of teaching and learning in history for older pupils in Years 4 to 6 is satisfactory overall. There are some very good aspects of history teaching in Year 6. Here pupils learnt very well to research and write about the Queen's Coronation, making very good use of the internet. Good use was made of visitors to school to help pupils in Year 4 to learn about Roman soldiers. The overall weakness in history teaching is the assessment system, which is still at an early stage of development.

86. Not enough evidence was collected to judge the overall achievement of pupils in geography. In one lesson observed, Year 1 pupils learned how to recognise different locations in school, such as the dining hall and the library, from photographs.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Although teaching and learning are good, and there is a broad range of learning experiences provided, there are no records showing pupils' attainment or progress;
- Resources for religious education are very good; they are accessible and well organised;
- The subject contributes well to pupils' personal development.

Commentary

87. Pupils' achievements in religious education are satisfactory. They are given a wide range of suitable learning experiences, and steadily increase their knowledge and understanding of the five main world religions. In a Year 1 and 2 lesson, pupils developed their understanding of thanksgiving, by identifying the things for which they would like to give thanks. All could sign *thank-you*, and they joined in a final song of thanksgiving. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 developed their awareness of the differences between animals and human beings. The teacher used a story about farm animals, pupils' own experiences, and role-play to tease these out the difference between fact and fantasy. By the end of the lesson most pupils were able to identify things that people could do that animals can't, such as talk, sing and buy tickets! Pupils in Year 5 were able to empathise with the hungry five thousand in the Bible story, and in Year 6 the teacher skilfully used simple resources to lead pupils to an understanding of the difference between a trick and a miracle.

88. Pupils' attainments are not systematically recorded, and teachers rely largely on written evaluations of lessons and their own memories when it comes to writing reports. As a result, reports make little reference to attainment, and often merely describe topics covered.

89. Assemblies support the subject well; pupils celebrate religious festivals, taking parts in acting out stories such as that of Rama and Sita. Teachers have access to a very good range of learning resources of high quality and use them well. There are artefacts, books, videos, posters and pictures. The co-ordinator has ensured that resources are well organised and accessible, by storing them in boxes associated with the main religions. Visits to places of worship form part of the curriculum, thus providing pupils with good experiences of cultural diversity. The religious education co-ordinator has too little non-contact time to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

90. Two music lessons were seen, and one lesson each of art and design and design and technology. Judgements on pupils' achievements in these subjects could not be made because there was insufficient evidence available.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching and learning are good, but no records of pupils' attainment and progress are kept;
- The co-ordinator does not have sufficient time to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in art and design.

Commentary

91. Teaching and learning was good in the single lesson seen. Younger pupils were encouraged to use their observational skills to recognise a range of colours and basic shapes. Work was suitably modified to suit the needs of each group and individual. Higher attaining pupils were challenged to draw the shape of the face of their partner, fill in their features, and colour hair and eyes correctly. Those who completed the task then cut out their portraits for mounting and display. The teacher was provided with good teaching support in the classroom, which ensured that even the pupils with difficult behaviour were fully engaged and completed their pictures successfully.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching and learning are good, but no ongoing records of pupils' attainment and progress are maintained;
- The co-ordinator does not have sufficient time to monitor teaching and learning.

Commentary

92. In the single lesson seen, Year 6 pupils were challenged to design and make containers in card. Following discussion and demonstration by the teacher of a range of bags of all shapes and sizes, pupils worked on templates to make their own. The teacher and teaching assistant had prepared the lesson well, so that most pupils could work independently for much of the time. They were encouraged to measure accurately, and carefully fold their card to produce stylish finished results. The atmosphere in the classroom was purposeful, but relaxed. Pupils behaved in a very mature way, and good relationships contributed well to pupils' learning.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching and learning are good, but no ongoing records of pupils' attainment and progress are maintained;
- The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic, but does not have enough time to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning.

Commentary

93. It is not possible to judge how well pupils achieve because there was insufficient evidence of progress. In the two lessons seen, teaching and learning were good. Teaching was lively and enthusiastic in a Year 4 lesson, and this helped to keep the pupils interested and engaged. They made good progress in learning to beat a rhythm. Older pupils were seen using a range of percussion instruments; they followed the teacher's commands to start and stop, and as the lesson progressed, they improved in their ability to control ways of playing the instruments. This lesson was curtailed somewhat by the failure of a computer, but the teacher improvised well, and the learning objectives were achieved.

94. Leadership of the subject is good. Pupils benefit from links with the community, as part of the creative partnership. The co-ordinator is not a specialist music teacher, but has undertaken development work to support other teachers, who appreciate this. There is too little time for subject management, and the lack of records in music make the task of monitoring achievement very difficult.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social, health and citizenship education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- A very broad curriculum is provided;
- Teaching and learning are good.

Commentary

95. The subject was not a particular focus for this inspection, so insufficient evidence was gathered to make overall judgements on pupils' achievements. However, pupils make good progress against their individual targets in IEPs. They improve their independence, and skills in paying attention and interacting with others. The school attaches a high priority to pupils' PSHE. The taught programme is enhanced very effectively by experiences that go beyond the classroom. For example, pupils take part in elections for class representatives, who sit on the school council. There are also extra-curricular residential opportunities that give many pupils their first taste of being away from home without their parents. This programme of residential trips is progressively more demanding as pupils get older, and they are linked well to other subjects. For example, one residential features a good range of challenging outdoor pursuits. These experiences also challenge pupils to extend their skills of independence. Leadership of the subject is good, but the co-ordinator does not have sufficient time allocated to monitor teaching, learning and achievement.

96. Teaching and learning were good in all three lessons seen in this subject. Year 4 pupils changing for physical education were encouraged to be independent; staff prompted and encouraged, but did not give physical help unless it was absolutely necessary. Modesty and good manners were also encouraged. In a Year 5 lesson, good use was made of circle time to encourage social interaction, turn-taking and a sense of community. The message of the previous day's assembly was reinforced well, as pupils discussed the importance of sharing. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils played social games in pairs. They showed awareness of the rules, such as needing to throw a six to begin, and were able to resolve minor disputes themselves.

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	6
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
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	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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