

INSPECTION REPORT

ALUMWELL INFANT SCHOOL

Walsall, West Midlands

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104143

Headteacher: Mrs Cynthia Hughes

Lead inspector: Mrs Sue Chesters
Dates of inspection: 7th – 9th February 2005

Inspection number: 266304
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	266
School address:	Primley Avenue Walsall West Midlands
Postcode:	WS2 9UP
Telephone number:	01922 720886
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Price
Date of previous inspection:	26/04/1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Alumwell Infant School is situated in Walsall in the West Midlands. It is larger than most infant schools with 266 pupils on roll. This is about the same number as at the time of the last inspection. The movement of pupils in and out of the school is high. The school serves a socially and ethnically mixed community with most pupils drawn from the estate surrounding the school. There is a very high measure of deprivation in the area and unemployment is high. Just under half of the pupils are from a white British cultural heritage background. Twenty-four per cent are from Pakistani backgrounds, 12 per cent Indian and the remainder from a variety of minority ethnic groups including Caribbean and African. For about 50 per cent of pupils, English is an additional language and many are at an early stage of acquiring English. There are 11 per cent of pupils listed as having special educational needs which is below average. The needs of these pupils range from moderate learning difficulties, behaviour and emotional problems to autism and speech and communication problems. There are many more pupils in school with special educational needs than represented by the listed 11 per cent. The low number identified is a reflection of the way in which the school adjusts its curriculum to meet the majority of pupils' needs. This enables it to keep specified needs to a manageable level. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. Overall, children's attainments on entry to the school are well below average. Communication skills are particularly low for many children when they start school. There are 29 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals. This is above average. The school has substantive evidence to suggest that there is a significant number of parents who are entitled to claim free school meals but who choose not to take up their entitlement. The school received an Investors in People re-assessment award in 2003. The school has adopted the Ruth Miskin Literacy Project as its literacy strategy (referred to as RML in the main report).

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23196	Sue Chesters	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, special educational needs, English as an additional language, information and communication technology, music.
13746	David Russell	Lay inspector	
22516	John Williams	Team inspector	Science, personal, social health education and citizenship, physical education, religious education.
32308	Sue Molloy	Team inspector	Mathematics, geography, history.
11608	Anna Dawson	Team inspector	English, art and design, design and technology.

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very effective** school with many strengths and few weaknesses. It gives **very good** value for money. The school has high numbers of pupils with special educational needs, the majority of whom receive most appropriate challenge within the main curriculum. This enables them to achieve very well. In addition about half of the pupils have English as an additional language. The school has bravely and innovatively adjusted its curriculum to match this profile. It has a strong philosophy of giving pupils practical experiences by teaching through the arts. It is an outstandingly inclusive school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- It has an excellent head teacher. She is an inspirational and visionary leader who is very ably supported by staff and governors.
- Standards of the current Year 2 are average in most subjects. They are well above average in art and design and in design and technology.
- The very good quality teaching results in very good quality learning and ensures that pupils achieve very well, the contribution made by the teaching assistants is outstanding.
- Children have a very good start in the Foundation Stage and achieve very well.
- The school provides very well for pupils with special educational needs and for those pupils for whom English is an additional language. It does this by ensuring that the curriculum meets their needs very closely. Provision is greatly enriched by a very interesting range of extra-curricular opportunities.
- Overall assessment is good and there are some very good assessment systems in place; for instance in special educational needs, English as an additional language, the Foundation Stage, English and information and communication technology. The school has identified that this very good practice needs to be spread throughout the school. It also recognises that assessment needs to be used more efficiently to help subject leaders monitor and evaluate their subjects.
- Despite the school's relentless efforts, some parents are not sufficiently conscientious in ensuring that their children attend school regularly.

The school has addressed the issues raised at the last inspection very well and continued to improve its provision. Pupils achieve very well with their speaking and listening skills, helped by the very good opportunities that they have for role-play and drama. Achievement in mathematics is now very good and standards have risen. The attainment and progress of boys has improved. The gap between their performance and that of girls is narrowing and no longer significant. The school's commitment to inclusion is now excellent.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
Reading	D	E	D	B
Writing	D	E	E	C
Mathematics	D	D	C	A

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Achievement is **very good**. The table above shows that, in 2004, pupils' results in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics were below average in reading, well below average in writing and average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, results were above average in reading, average in writing and well above average in mathematics. The majority of children start

school with low-level communication skills and well below average knowledge and understanding of the world. They achieve very well in the Foundation Stage and about half are likely to reach the goals set for the age group by the time that they start Year 1. Pupils continue to achieve very well in Years 1 and 2. They reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics in the current Year 2.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **very good**. Pupils behave very well in lessons and at play. They show very good respect for other people's feelings and beliefs. Relationships are very good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**.

The quality of teaching and of learning is **very good**. Teachers, throughout the school, have very good subject knowledge and understand the needs of their pupils very well. All staff work very efficiently together and relationships are very good. The support given to pupils by the teaching assistants is excellent. All staff are fully committed to providing equal opportunities for everyone. This is an excellent aspect of the school's work. Teachers keep their own records and assess pupils' achievements effectively. In some subjects the practice is very good. However, the information gathered is not always used to drive teaching and learning, nor is it consistently shared with pupils.

The school provides a very good and innovative curriculum. It is enriched very well by the way in which teachers encourage pupils to take part in arts activities. The curriculum is outstandingly inclusive, ensuring that all pupils have access to a wide range of practical activities, visits and visitors. Accommodation is good and staff use it very successfully to broaden pupils' experiences. The school cares very well for its pupils and has good relationships with parents and with the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance are **very good**.

The leadership of the headteacher is **excellent**. The leadership of other key staff is **very good**. Governance is **very good**. Management is **good**. The headteacher has an outstandingly clear vision for the school. She is an exceptionally good motivator and all staff and governors share her determination and aspirations. The school is outstandingly inclusive in everything that it does. It values all of its pupils, whatever their ability or background, and ensures that everyone is enabled to do their best. The school embraces the wider community into its midst. It is a warm and welcoming family. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents who attended the meeting with the inspectors, and those spoken to during the inspection, were pleased with the school and support it well. The pupils like their school very much.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- spread the existing very good assessment practice consistently throughout the school
- use assessment data to enable subject leaders to monitor and evaluate their subjects
- continue to seek ways to improve attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are **average**. Pupils achieve **very well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children begin school with well below average levels of attainment. They achieve very well and reach average standards in most subjects by Year 2.
- Children in reception make a very good start to their education.
- Standards in art and design and in design and technology are well above average.
- All groups of pupils achieve very well because of the school's excellent commitment to inclusion.
- The gap between boys' and girls' attainments is narrowing and is no longer significant.

Commentary

1. Children's levels of attainment, as they start school, are well below what is expected for the age group in all areas of learning. There is a wide range of ability but the majority of children have low-level communication skills and well below average knowledge and understanding of the world. They make a very good start in the reception class because of the very good provision. They achieve very well throughout the Foundation Stage¹, particularly in developing their social, linguistic and creative skills. However, indications are that, by Year 1, only about half of the year group is likely to reach the goals set for language and literacy and for knowledge and understanding of the world. The majority of children are likely to reach the goals set for social and personal development, mathematical development and physical development. It is likely that the majority will reach, and about one third exceed, some of the goals in the creative area of learning.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.3 (13.8)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.4 (12.1)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.1 (15.8)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 90 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The above table shows the results for six-year-olds in 2004 national tests. It shows that results in reading were below the national average and in writing they were well below. However, in mathematics, they were in line with the national average. When these results are compared with those of schools in similar settings, they are above average in reading, average in writing and well above average in mathematics. This is because pupils achieve very well and move from well below average standards when they start school to average standards overall by Year 2.

¹ There are six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage; personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. There are average goals set in each of these areas which it is expected children will reach by the time they start Year 1.

3. Pupils achieve very well in Years 1 and 2. Consequently, standards continue to rise. By the end of the academic year, the current Year 2 group is likely to reach close to average standards in reading and writing, average standards in information and communication technology and below average standards in science. Indications are that a good number of this year group will reach above average standards in mathematics by the end of the year. In art and design and in design and technology standards are likely to be well above average. Standards year-on-year fluctuate because of the varying numbers of pupils with special educational needs, the increasing numbers of pupils coming to the school at an early stage of acquiring English and the level of pupil movement leaving and joining the school in each class.
4. All groups of pupils achieve very well throughout the school. This includes pupils with special educational needs, (SEN) those for whom English is an additional language (EAL) and those who are at an early stage of acquiring English. They achieve so well because of the school's excellent inclusion practice. The total commitment that the school shows to ensuring that all pupils have access to all aspects of school life, whatever their ability or background, is reflected in the
 - very good quality teaching which enables pupils to learn very effectively
 - very good curriculum which the school regularly adjusts to meet the needs of the majority
 - very good challenge and interest for pupils, through the practical activities and the visits and visitors that the school provides.

This excellent, inclusive philosophy, which respects and values each pupil and ensures that they are fully integrated into school life, also helps them to achieve very well.

5. In previous years, there has been evidence that boys underperformed in both reading and writing. The school has identified a number of reasons for this and put in place initiatives to address the issue. As a result, the gap between boys' and girls' attainment is steadily narrowing and is no longer significant. Boys are performing better. This is an improvement since the last inspection when to 'raise the attainment and progress of the boys' was an issue for the school. Boys' reading and writing standards are improving because of the:
 - very good quality teaching that enables them to achieve very well
 - excellent support that they receive from teaching assistants
 - small teaching groups which enables staff to focus closely on individual needs
 - tight focus of RML² which moves pupils' skills forward in small, achievable steps.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour towards learning are **very good**. The development of pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**, Attendance levels and punctuality are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- During their time at the school pupils develop very well in an environment where racial harmony is the expected norm.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their learning. They express themselves freely in the all-encompassing family atmosphere created at the school.
- Pupils know how to behave at all times of the day. There have been no exclusions over the last few years.
- Whilst attendance levels are not as high as they should be, the school has very good practices to promote and monitor pupils' attendance.

² RML refers to the Ruth Miskin Literacy Project which the school has adopted.

Commentary

- The school has created a very good working environment to meet the wide range of pupils' multicultural needs. Pupils understand, at a very early stage, the need to follow a set of simple instructions that affects their attitudes, behaviour and how to respect other people's beliefs and feelings. The family atmosphere encourages positive relationships with each other. The ability to be truthful is actively cultivated.
- The school consistently develops spiritual and cultural provision through collective worship. It reinforces understanding of how matters relate back to pupils own cultural background. These, and many other initiatives, help pupils to respect each other. Very effective moral and social development enables pupils to acquire skills to know right from wrong and how to implement this knowledge in their day-to-day activities. Pupils work and play well together. The simple-to-follow code of conduct is a key feature of every classroom.
- There have been no exclusions at the school over the last few years. Progressive personal development allows the pupils to mature into well-adjusted individuals with a burning desire to learn. It enables pupils to build on relationships and to be able to convey their feelings.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	8.3	School data :	0.0
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

- Staff work tirelessly and with determination to promote and monitor pupils' attendance levels. In any one year group there is no difference between boys' and girls' attendance. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Whilst lateness does occur it does not unduly disrupt lessons or other pupils' learning.
- Up to 20 per cent of the authorised absences can be assigned to parents taking their children out of school for holidays, including extended holidays to Pakistan. The remaining absences are as a result of illness. It has been recently reported in the local press that Alumwell has been named as "the most polluted place in the West Midlands - sparking health concerns for children." Scrutiny of pupils' identified medical conditions reveals unusually high incidences of asthma and other respiratory conditions amongst the young pupils. This may explain the higher than normal level of authorised absences.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides **very good** quality education. Teaching and learning are **very good**. The curriculum is **very good** and very successfully enriched. The school takes **very good** care of its pupils and they feel valued and secure. There are **good** links with parents, with the community and with other schools and colleges.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **very good**. The assessment is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make rapid progress in learning basic skills because they are taught very well.
- There is very good teamwork among the staff. The teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning.
- The curriculum is planned very well and very good use is made of time to teach a range of subjects within each topic.
- EAL pupils are helped very effectively to learn.
- The quality of assessment is very good in English, information and communication technology and in the Foundation Stage. In other subjects, the quality of assessment is good.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	13	6	3	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.

11. The quality of teaching is very good. The staff are experienced and knowledgeable. For instance, teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of their subjects. This enhances their professional expertise and leadership roles. It means that they enable all groups of pupils, including those with SEN and EAL to learn very well. There is a lot of informal discussion between staff, which improves teachers' knowledge about the pupils as well as their own subject expertise. Courses undertaken to improve the quality of teaching and learning are shared between the staff so that methods and practices become an integral part of the school's curriculum. This is successfully demonstrated in the teaching of English. All the staff have undertaken training to implement the RML programme in English. Because of the training they received and their professional expertise, the teaching of RML is taught very effectively across the school. As a result, pupils are learning basic skills in English very well. Care is taken to meet the personal and academic needs of the pupils. Teaching groups are flexible to accommodate the needs of all pupils.
12. The consistency in the high quality teaching and learning reflects the teamwork of the staff and their dedication to improve the quality of their work. All staff insist on high standards of behaviour and, as a consequence, little time is wasted in lessons. There are high expectations set for pupils' work. The pupils succeed because this is what is expected of them. When problems arise the staff find ways round it, such as changing the groupings or making changes in teaching methods so that the pupils do not slip through the net. As a result, the pupils achieve very well. There are very good relationships between the staff and the pupils. Consequently, the pupils feel confident and secure and are happy to work hard. The range and depth of the work that the pupils do is enhanced by the excellent contribution made by the teaching assistants. They are skilled in helping the pupils to do their work. Without their help in literacy lessons, for example, the small group teaching which is very successful would not be possible.
13. Most lessons, apart from RML lessons, which have their own tight structure, are planned very well to make maximum use of time and to increase pupils' enjoyment in learning. The school places a high priority on the development of creative subjects such as art and design and design and technology. Work is often planned to link subjects together under a topic heading such as transport, buildings or kings and queens. Pupils say they enjoy this work and proudly show what they have accomplished. In this respect the work the pupils do is displayed very well for all to see and admire. The children who shine in these subjects gain a sense of achievement while their accomplishments in other subjects may not be as great. Because the topics are whole school events, the enthusiasm among the pupils gains momentum. Some

children bring in artefacts, or research they have done using ICT while others find out information from library books. For example, one pupil brought in research, using the computer at home, about the lives of some famous artists that they were studying.

14. The quality of teaching of the EAL pupils, and for those at an early stage of acquiring English, is very good. This results in very good quality learning and enables the pupils to achieve very well. Pupils are very efficiently grouped so that they work with peers of similar ability. They work in small groups constantly supported by the EAL teacher, class teachers or teaching assistants. Planning is meticulous and pupils are set achievable targets in small steps. This maximises their learning and they make rapid progress. Their achievements are closely monitored and tracked and any deviance from the expected level of progress is quickly identified and addressed. This is a measure of the very good provision for EAL pupils.
15. The school has very good systems for taking account and meeting the personal needs of the pupils. There are also very good systems to assess pupils' attainment and achievement in English, ICT, SEN, EAL and the Foundation Stage. The teachers take care to consistently meet the needs of all the pupils. They use effectively the information gained from the assessments of pupils' work to plan and set targets. Any pupil who needs an extra boost in learning is quickly identified and the teaching ensures that the pupils get back on track. However, in mathematics, science and other subjects, although teachers keep their own records and assess effectively, the next learning steps are not shared with the pupils as well as in English. In the humanities and arts, teachers record pupils' progress thorough the scheme of work and assess their National Curriculum levels at the end of the year. This is a summative record rather than using assessments to challenge the pupils in their work over the course of the year. Consequently there are missed opportunities to ensure that that work is planned as well as it can be. For example, in science, pupils' knowledge of the subject vocabulary is not as good as it could be.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **very good** and there are **very good** opportunities for enrichment activities. Accommodation and resources are **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is very well balanced has very good breadth and has very good planned links between subjects.
- It is very effectively enriched by a very good variety of visits and visitors.
- Provision for pupils with SEN and for EAL pupils is very good.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good and pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.
- Accommodation is good and improved provision for outdoor activities is under development.

Commentary

16. The curriculum covers all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, as well as meeting the national guidance for children in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum is very well planned with a broad range of activities and tasks which excite and motivate the pupils. The school is to be commended for maintaining breadth in the curriculum, for example, the very good provision for art and design and technology, whilst ensuring a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Curriculum planning for mathematics and English is very good and the successful introduction of RML and the embedding of the National Numeracy Strategy have been very effective in ensuring lessons have a clear and consistent structure. Regular meetings to plan pupils' work in mathematics and English offer clear guidance to teachers so that they can ensure there is continuity in pupils' learning and there are opportunities for all pupils to achieve very well. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

17. The staff have ensured that the long term curriculum planning is on a two year cycle. This enables pupils to build on their experiences in Year 1 and progress onto more advanced skills in Year 2. Lessons are organized to ensure that both year groups experience tasks that are well matched to their age and stage of development. In mathematics and English, the pupils are streamed into ability sets. This enables the teachers to focus on appropriate levels of work. Other subjects of the curriculum are taught as topics across the ability range in all classes and in these lessons the planning is very effective in ensuring that work is prepared to match the needs of all pupils. The emphasis on valuing every member of the school ensures that all pupils have full access to learning opportunities and other experiences on offer.
18. The curriculum is enriched very effectively by a variety of visits and visitors. For example, players from Walsall Football Club help to train older boys and girls in football skills and the pupils visit the Club once a year to play on their pitch. Educational visits are deemed to be very important events and are planned into schemes of work. They give pupils many opportunities to extend and develop their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Every effort is made to encourage every child to take part. This includes collecting children from home and taking them to the destination if necessary. Violin tuition is available for twelve pupils and touring theatre companies visit the school as part of the topics being studied. The 'Animal Man' visits annually, bringing four different animals each time.
19. There are high numbers of SEN pupils in school and just over 50 per cent of pupils have EAL. The school innovatively adjusts the curriculum to cater for the large numbers. This enables all pupils to take an active part in all lessons. Teaching assistants support pupils very well and thus all groups achieve very well. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. The process of helping pupils understand the needs of others and raising pupils' self esteem is firmly embedded in the school's procedures and teaching provision. The school has a clear policy for sex education and the misuse of drugs and alcohol. There is a good induction policy and satisfactory links with the nursery school and good links with the junior school ensure smooth transfer. The Year 2 pupils visit the junior school to use their computer suite and the schools have joint assemblies in the summer term. Staff from the junior school get to know the pupils well before they transfer.
20. The school has a very good number of qualified teachers and extremely knowledgeable teaching assistants. The school's accommodation makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. For example, the grounds are used as environmental areas and an attractive library supports both literacy and research skills. Four new classrooms have been added since the last inspection and refurbishment is about to be started in the Foundation Stage. The outdoor provision is still under development. It is a pleasant area and used well but does have the disadvantage of high levels of air pollution because of its proximity to the motorway. Most curriculum areas are well resourced. The school has recognised the need for improved ICT resources and whiteboards and new computers are being purchased as part of a rolling programme.

Care, guidance and support

The school's approach towards pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. Support, advice and guidance are **very good**. The processes for seeking pupils' views and involving them in the school's work and development are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This is a very caring school where pupils' care, welfare and well-being are a priority.
- Pupils easily access very effective teaching staff who support and encourage them in every stage of their learning.
- This is an all-inclusive school. Teachers know their pupils very well and actively seek their views.

Commentary

21. The school pays a lot of attention to the well-being of all its pupils. All staff know their pupils very well and have been fully trained in child protection matters. This is an all-inclusive school and “every child matters” is a philosophy that truly reflects the approach taken by every member of staff. Nothing is too much trouble for staff when it comes to supporting and guiding pupils and sorting out problems.
22. Risk assessments are carried out for all educational visits. Similarly, safety audits around the school ensure pupils learn in a safe and secure environment. However, whilst the school is a safe place, there are accidents occurring each day in the playground. The school has identified that more use made of outside play equipment might help resolve this issue.
23. Teaching staff are very well supported by very able teaching assistants, who also act as dinner supervisors. This makes learning and playing a seamless event. This is a very effective strategy for getting to know the pupils. Pupils are very open and take a keen interest in visitors to the school. They are easy to talk to and willingly share their feelings. They work and play well together.
24. Staff listen to pupils and thus get a grasp of any difficulties that they may be experiencing in their learning or in their relationships with others. Staff make copious, useful notes on pupils’ personal development which supports most effectively the informal tracking of how well pupils develop. Staff actively seek pupils’ views and take appropriate action to help them. They involve pupils in the school’s work by getting them to take registers back to the main office each day. Pupils show great delight in undertaking this responsibility and helping their teachers.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **good** links with parents. A **good** feature of the school is using the community to enrich pupils’ learning. The school has **good**, effective links with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school communicates well with parents and meet their needs both in and out of school.
- The school is proactive in developing effective links with the community to help to enrich pupils’ learning and with other schools to ensure smooth transition between them.
- The school works to make its partnership with parents a two way process. Sadly, this philosophy is lost on a large proportion of parents who find it hard to work with the school.

Commentary

25. Communication links with parents are an important feature of the school. Letters to parents reinforce compliance requirements relating to attendance, and other matters, as well as informing them of events taking place at the school. For example, on introducing the RML initiative, parents received details of the work and an invitation to attend workshops with the younger children. The governors’ annual report to parents and pupils’ progress reports to parents meet statutory requirements. The school prospectus is well structured, covering all areas of school life. The school informs parents of places of interest, where they may take their children free-of-charge at weekends or holidays to enhance their learning and to support work done in school.
26. The school realises the importance of using facilities within the community to enrich pupils’ learning and understanding of the outside world. Involvement with the arts is a strong feature of the school’s provision. For example, a peripatetic music teacher enthusiastically teaches a small group of pupils to play the violin and a visiting theatre group covered interesting topics. Careful thought is given to activities that will give maximum benefit to pupils.

27. There are effective links with the Nursery and Junior schools. Induction and transfer procedures give pupils opportunities to settle into their new surroundings with the minimum of fuss. The school is developing more formal links with the Nursery school.
28. Parents view the school very positively and are generally pleased with their children's progress. The school does everything it can to maximise parental participation. For example, there is a family learning centre with crèche facilities to enable parents with young children to attend school workshops. These are well attended. However, there is an imbalance between the school's effort and level of parental support. For instance, the school makes extensive efforts to improve attendance and requires the support of all parents to achieve this objective but still some parents do not comply.
29. Pupils taking holidays during term time is a growing concern for the school. It involves up to 30 per cent of the pupil population. Parents appear not to be responding to requests to curtail this practice. The school is closely monitoring the impact of these holidays on pupils' achievements.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The head teacher leads the school **outstandingly well**. Governance is **very good**. Management is **good** and deals successfully with barriers to learning which arise.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head teacher provides the school with outstandingly good leadership. Leadership of most non-core subjects³ could be improved.
- The quality of governance is very good. Governors are very well involved in guiding the direction of the school.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good.
- The school has good systems of management.

Commentary

30. The head teacher, who has been in post for many years, provides the school with devoted and inspirational leadership. She is an outstandingly good motivator who works tirelessly to build the confidence of her team. All are offered sensitive guidance and training which builds and increases their effectiveness. They all share the head teacher's vision of exceptionally high aspirations for each and every child, within the school's highly inclusive community. The head teacher's care for the needs of individuals is manifest in everything that she does, whether it is working to support families in difficulty or advising parents in need of guidance. This involvement and interaction with the community is a major feature of her leadership style and a significant feature in the school's success. Other staff with leadership responsibilities provide very good leadership. Leadership of non core subjects is still developing. The school has identified the need for subject leaders to use assessment more consistently to help them monitor their subjects.
31. Governors make a very significant contribution to the work of the school. There is a number of very skilled and experienced governors, who are very committed to the continuing success of the school. They are led by the very experienced chair of governors who has worked very effectively with the head teacher over a lengthy period. They have a shared vision of how all pupils can benefit from what the school has to offer. They speak tellingly of aspiring to add "awe and wonder" to pupils' lives.

³ Core subjects are English, mathematics and science. Non-core subjects are art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education.

32. There is an effective structure of committees. These meet regularly and training is available. Governors are significantly involved in strategic planning and in formulating policies. Governors are kept increasingly well informed and this enables them to challenge and support senior managers. They fulfil their statutory duties and responsibilities in full. Governors are sensitive not to cross professional boundaries inappropriately. They fulfil their role of critical friend very successfully.
33. The provision for pupils with SEN is very good. It is very well organised and managed by the special educational needs subject leader (SENCO). She has bravely and innovatively developed a system of identifying and meeting the needs of pupils with SEN, which is manageable and most successful. The numbers of SEN pupils in school is high but, by involving all staff in adjusting the curriculum to meet the needs of the majority, a minimum number of pupils are identified as requiring specially developed individual educational programmes (IEPs). As a result, all pupils receive most appropriate challenge and are enabled to achieve very well. Those who need a little extra are helped through the very carefully designed IEPs which give short term, achievable targets. These are reviewed regularly, involve staff and parents, and enable pupils to build up their skills in a progressive way. As a consequence, they achieve very well. The school has very good relationships with external agencies involved with SEN and is quick to tap into any outside provision which may benefit individual pupils.
34. Management systems are good. The head teacher ensures that key staff are fully involved. They carefully analyse available performance data to give the school an insight into pupils' achievements. Thus, managers are able to evaluate the school's performance and identify suitable areas for development. Performance management systems for teachers and other staff are effective. Managers set targets for improvement and this is seen as being highly important in generating whole school improvement as good quality training is linked to this process. New members of staff, at all levels, are provided with supportive induction arrangements. Senior managers are very conscious of the need to support and retain successful staff and are increasingly conscious of their workload. Much effort is made to ensure that staff members are deployed effectively. The school regards support staff as being particularly vital in supporting the work of teachers and their deployment is managed very carefully.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	768,716	Balance from previous year	70,000
Total expenditure	798,173	Balance carried forward to the next	40,543
Expenditure per pupil	2978		

35. Systems of financial and resource management are very good. Meticulous monitoring of the school's expenditure is carried out by the school's staff and by governors. The principles of best value, therefore, are important to the school's management and use of resources. Good day-to-day management systems enable the school to run smoothly. The school administrator provides very good support to the head teacher and teaching staff.
36. Particular barriers to the school improving its performance further are increasing levels of pupil mobility, the low starting point for many pupils, the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language and the negative impact of pupils' absences. The school works very hard to minimise the effects of these barriers.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

37. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**. It has improved since the last inspection. The issues raised then over planning and the outdoor learning area have been successfully addressed.
38. Children start in the reception classes in the September of the year in which they are five. Most have received some form of pre-school education. The majority have attended the adjacent Nursery School. At entry to reception, children have a wide range of abilities in all areas of learning. This varies from year group to year group but is generally well below average, particularly in communication skills and in knowledge or understanding of the world. For about half of the children starting school, English is not their mother tongue. Many have little or no English and some have very poor language skills in their mother tongue. Many have sheltered experiences of life and little knowledge and understanding of the world around them. In response to these issues, the Foundation Stage staff focus very closely on communication skills and on giving children rich experiences as they begin school.
39. Children have a very good start in the reception classes and achieve very well. Even so, when they move to Year 1, only about a half will achieve the goals set in communication, language and literacy and in knowledge and understanding of the world. This is because so many of the children start school with low level communication skills, speech and language problems. In personal and social development, in mathematical development and in physical development, indications are that the majority will reach the goals set. In creative development, it is likely that most children will reach the set goals and about a third will exceed them. This is because of the high status given to creative work such as role-play, dance, drama, art and design and music. The school's philosophy that all children can succeed through the arts shines through very clearly in the Foundation Stage.
40. Teaching, in all areas of learning, is very good. Children are successful learners and achieve very well. This is because:
- relationships are very good and all staff work very successfully together making a very strong team
 - planning is very good and links all areas of learning together very effectively
 - all staff have very high expectations of children's work and behaviour and insist on high standards in both
 - all staff value and include each child outstandingly well and encourage them to work hard.
41. All children achieve very well because the overall teaching in all areas of learning is very good. The curriculum is very well planned to provide a wide range of interesting and suitable activities. These are very well matched to the children's needs and challenge them very productively. A strength of the provision is the way in which staff monitor and evaluate the impact which it has upon children's learning, and then adjust the curriculum according to the needs of the particular year group. For example, it became clear that the way the Foundation Stage area was arranged in 'subject areas' was not working particularly well for the current intake. Having identified this, staff regrouped into more conventional class areas. This had the desired effect of making the children feel more comfortable and secure in their environment and, thus, able to learn more productively. Accommodation and resources are good. The outdoor provision has been improved since the last inspection and there are plans for even more developments. Staff plan the use of these outside areas profitably, particularly for physical and creative development. However, there are times when the outside pollution levels are very high, making it a less than ideal setting for outdoor play.

42. The Foundation Stage is led and managed very well. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection, building on the good practice which existed then. The new Foundation Stage curriculum has been implemented very successfully. Assessment procedures are very good. Staff keep very good records of children's attainment and progress. There are good induction procedures for children starting school and for when they transfer to Year 1.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff are excellent role models and have high expectations that all children will try their best.
- Staff take every opportunity to build children's confidence and raise their self-esteem.

Commentary

43. A number of this year's intake are immature for their age and find it difficult to work alongside other children. Staff lead by example, and constantly and consistently support children. They ensure that all children are full included at all times and encouraged to take part in all activities. Children work in small groups, with an adult who joins in as part of the group. This encourages them to 'have a go' at everything because they feel secure and welcomed. Consequently, children settle quickly and learn the routines. Because they know that staff will help them and guide them with their work, they are confident to accept that they may make mistakes and are not afraid to ask when they are unsure. This boosts the quality of learning well and enables children to achieve good results. Children show very great interest in what they are doing and learn to concentrate for reasonable lengths of time.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff take every opportunity to develop children's communication skills and teach them new vocabulary.
- Children achieve very well because of the many and varied literacy related activities which they experience.

Commentary

44. Many children start school with poor communication skills. Staff work hard to encourage children to talk in sentences and to teach them the vocabulary which they will need to explain their ideas clearly. They do this consistently in all of their work and particularly in sessions such as RML times. Children learn to listen to each other and to take turns in discussions. Staff give children many opportunities to learn to read and write. They introduce children to sounds, through the RML programme. The children benefit from these heavily structured sessions and quickly try to build up sounds and read words. They learn to enjoy books, and retell familiar stories using pictures as clues. Many begin to write their names and most enjoy 'mark making' which leads to tracing, copying and writing words and sentences. Children develop their language skills through role play. Staff join them in these sessions, for instance when they act out imaginary scenes at the 'vets'. Children enjoy these sessions and are eager to use their imaginations in the various role-play areas. These activities greatly enhance learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff plan very good mathematical activities which engage children's interest and enable them to achieve very well.

Commentary

45. Children enjoy mathematical activities, which staff plan to be as practical and active as possible. This encourages children to feel confident with numbers, shapes and colours. Consequently, when they work with staff on guided mathematical activities, they achieve very well. When children move to Year 1, most are adept with two-dimensional shapes and know their properties. Some are also quite familiar with three-dimensional shapes. For example, children in one session were quick to remind their teacher which flat shape would fold into a conical hat, and which would fold into a cylindrical hat. Their learning was then very successfully consolidated, by making hats from those shapes, decorating them with borders of repeating patterns in different shapes and colours. Wherever possible, staff link activities to other areas of learning. For example, children sing songs, and learn rhymes to reinforce their number work. This means that they achieve very well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide a wide and interesting range of activities to promote learning.

Commentary

46. Most children start with below average understanding of the world around them and many have restricted ranges of experiences to draw on. To address this, staff plan an interesting range of activities which will extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Staff plan opportunities to explore the properties of malleable materials, such as playdough and modelling clay. They investigate the differences between wet and dry sand. They use computers to reinforce their learning with games, such as in mathematical development with shape games. Staff work alongside children, expertly questioning and challenging them, to ensure that they achieve very well. This helps to extend children's language skills, as well as their knowledge and understanding. Staff use topics such as animals and their environments, to widen children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them. For example, the 'animal man' brought into school a honey bear, a boa constrictor, a tarantula, a barn owl and a variety of other small beasts. The children were encouraged to ask questions about the animals and to touch and hold them. This was a very productive session and the children clearly learned a lot about species that they had never seen before. Put into the context of their animal project, they learned about how the animals live, what sort of homes they have, what they eat, and also had first hand experience of what they feel and look like. It was an exciting and magical time for many of them and greatly increased their understanding of the world around them.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Physical development is promoted very successfully alongside other areas of learning.

Commentary

47. The children enjoy their physical education lessons. They find a variety of ways of balancing, rolling and controlling quoits, in sessions in the hall. They begin to show good control and co-ordination when running or changing direction. They use a range of small and large apparatus, in the hall and in the outside areas. Staff plan very good links between the areas of learning and use the topics well to develop children physically. For example, children are given opportunities to 'move like the animals'. They compare how different animals might move, using words and actions such as 'heavily' and 'slowly' for an elephant and 'floaty' and 'gentle' for a fish.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's commitment to the philosophy of teaching through the arts enables all children to achieve very well, whatever their background or ability.

Commentary

48. Staff firmly believe that, whatever the children's background, ability or linguistic expertise, they can succeed in art, drama and music. They plan these activities into lessons wherever possible and, because children are enthused, they achieve very well. Staff provide a wide variety of activities and introduce the children to such techniques as colour mixing, cutting and sticking. Children build on these skills, and become more accurate, when painting and creating pictures and models. Some of the paintings of flowers created by the reception children are exquisite, and show well above average skills. Staff plan very good links between areas of learning. For example, in support of their work on animals, children listened to excerpts from the 'Carnival of the Animals' and then responded, using a good range of movements, to demonstrate what the music made them think of. They explored a range of musical instruments, then developed their own accompaniment for 'Old McDonald's Farm'.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good and pupils achieve very well. The teaching assistants contribute very well to helping pupils learn.
- The small flexible groupings and small learning steps are major factors why pupils learn very well in all aspects of English.

- The scheme of work has well established learning routines but lacks creativity.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Literacy is planned very well in all subjects.

Commentary

49. Pupils achieve very well. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain the national expectations in their speaking and listening skills and in reading and writing. However, standards are slightly below the national averages overall because the vast majority of pupils start school with low level communication skills. There is very good improvement since the last inspection when pupils' achievement was satisfactory. The gap which existed between boys' and girls' attainments at the last inspection has narrowed and girls no longer significantly outperform boys.
50. The quality of teaching is very good. There is a consistent approach to teaching across the school. The staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils behave very well and have very good relationships with their teachers and other children. The teachers plan pupils' learning very well. The detailed daily planning if RML incorporates small learning steps and short activities which build up pupils' knowledge and understanding and skills systematically. The programme is tightly structured. The resources used and the planning for day-to-day lessons ensure that there is consistency in teaching across the year groups. The programme relies on the teaching assistants playing a major role in teaching so that pupils may be taught in groups of approximately 15 or less. The teaching assistants, as well as the teachers, are very well trained for this work and they make a major contribution to pupils' learning. Because the teaching groups are small, pupils' achievements are monitored and evaluated constantly by the staff and any mistakes are quickly spotted and corrected. This ensures that learning basic skills moves along at a rapid pace as the challenges set are matched very closely to the pupils' abilities.
51. There are very good opportunities planned for pupils to speak and listen during lessons. The 'partner work' each day is particularly effective in encouraging the more reticent speakers to participate in reading activities. Pupils act as teachers, listening carefully to their partners reading their books and daily word lists. The pupils take this job seriously and are taught very well to give their partners praise and to point out mistakes. These activities promote very good social relationships. Pupils enjoy working with their friends and learning from one another. The teachers promote pupils' speaking and listening skills very well. For example, when answering the teacher, pupils reply in a sentence. A one word answer is not accepted as sufficient.
52. In Year 2, most pupils say that they enjoy reading. They recognise familiar words and sounds that they have previously learned. They enjoy their success in reading simple sentences in the step by step RML story books. With prompting, most were able to talk about the development of the story that they were currently reading. The best readers read unfamiliar books unaided accurately and talk about the main themes and ideas. Pupils' reading fluency and expression is a little better than their comprehension skills. Pupils look forward to reading and keeping their RML story books at home once they have read them. Parents comment positively about the books as they listen to their children reading them at home. For both children and their parents, the books build up into a small reading library which allows children to revisit their favourite stories and shows them clearly their ongoing success in developing reading skills. Older pupils also enjoy taking home library books to read. These are plentiful and of good quality.
53. By the end of Year 2, pupils have the confidence to write freely. They build on their previous learning to practise and develop new ideas. They form clearly shaped letters with suitable gaps between words. Most write in sentences using full stops and capital letters correctly. The most able pupils start to develop their ideas into simple sentences, using more adventurous words for effect. They use more advanced punctuation such as quotation marks and question marks. Pupils spell most words as they sound. If they write an unfamiliar word, they are not afraid to have a go at the spelling. Because they do not stop to look up words or ask their teacher and break their concentration, many recall and write the development of a story, sentence by

sentence, at a very good pace. Writing is marked regularly with lots of praise and teachers give clear instructions to pupils how to improve their work. Pupils know their writing targets well and say they work hard to achieve them so that they can be rewarded with a certificate.

54. The scheme of work has well established learning routines. The pupils enjoy routine but the structure has no room for deviation and lacks creativity. It is very successful in giving pupils the basic learning tools they need to become independent in their work. The most able now work on the National Literacy Strategy. Here, the approach is more flexible and allows teachers, for example, to give pupils greater access to different types of books and stories.
55. The subject leader leads and manages the subject very well. The RML programme is very well resourced and has been very well implemented across the school by the teachers and teaching assistants. The quality of the teaching and the pupils' achievements have been closely monitored. The programme has the approval of the parents and is successfully raising standards, particularly for the boys and for the pupils at an early stage of acquiring English.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. Pupils have very good experience of cross-curricular work which is very well planned into the curriculum. For example, pupils use ICT to research and design their castles. In art and design, pupils look at photographs of themselves and write about their feelings and moods. In history, pupils read and find out about some famous kings and queens. In religious education, pupils listen and respond to the story of Rama and Sita.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils are fully included in lessons.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Achievement is very good and standards have risen.
- The subject is well led but management needs further development.

Commentary

57. National test results have improved steadily over the past three years. In 2004, pupils' results were in line with the national average and well above those of pupils in similar schools. Standards are better than those seen in the last inspection. This is because of the high quality teaching and very good planning which is well matched to the full ability range. It ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, achieve very well in lessons and over time. Indications are that the standards of the current Year 2 will be at least average, with a good number of pupils reaching above average standards, by the end of the year.
58. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught in groups according to their abilities. This ensures that the teachers prepare lessons which are closely matched to the needs of the pupils in the set. This enables them to make the maximum amount of progress and achieve very well. It ensures that they gain and consolidate skills, knowledge and understanding and learn, use and apply them appropriately. In the above average set, Year 2 pupils are accurate when calculating mentally and use and explain a range of strategies for solving number problems. For example, in one lesson, pupils wrote their own number sentences to calculate answers in response to problems set orally by the teacher. They explained clearly and confidently how they found the answers. In Year 1 pupils used everyday language to describe features of familiar 2D and 3D shapes and confidently described cylinders, cubes, cuboids and spheres.

59. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy to plan their lessons and identify clearly what each group of pupils is to learn. They use the oral start of the lesson well to challenge pupils' mental arithmetic skills and reinforce number facts. Pupils enjoy these sessions and respond with enthusiasm, which helps to improve their mental agility. Teachers use a good range of resources to support pupils' learning and to stimulate their interest. For example, a group of Year 1 pupils became excited by the concept of 'capacity' and laughed and cheered as the containers were being filled. This interactive activity ensured all pupils learned and consolidated key vocabulary such as 'half-full', 'nearly-full', 'nearly-empty'. Careful assessment, probing questions, and clear explanations encourage pupils to answer confidently. The lively pace and interesting activities encourage pupils to work hard, concentrate effectively and foster very good attitudes to mathematics. Groups of pupils are supported very well by classroom assistants who make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. They are clear what they are to do and support pupils well, enabling them to take a full and active part in lessons.
60. The subject leader has a good overview of the subject. She carefully analyses test results and pupils' answers in national tests to identify areas for development. Class teachers monitor progress against key objectives. This ensures that work is set to redress problem areas. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning to gain clear information about consistent approaches and pupils' achievements only takes place when time and budget allows. Opportunities to improve teaching and learning further are, therefore, not being pursued rigorously enough.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. The use of mathematical skills to aid and improve work in other subjects is currently satisfactory. The use and development of these skills in other subjects are not planned consistently in work.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in lessons.
- The subject leader has good ideas for raising achievement and standards in the subject.

Commentary

62. Overall, by the end of Year 2, standards as measured in national tasks are low. However, many pupils begin school in the reception classes with very low levels of attainment. Their early experiences do not enable them to participate fully in a practical subject such as science. Their lack of early language experience does not give them the vocabulary nor the facility to discuss scientific concepts. Even so, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.
63. An examination of completed work and teachers' planning indicates that, for many pupils, the standards reached represent good achievement. Where pupils are prepared and offered opportunities to discuss and develop scientific thinking, they achieve very well. Only two science lessons were observed during the inspection. The overall quality of teaching and of learning is good. In one lesson, pupils came to conclusions about the dangers of medicines and their helpful properties. Very good teaching enabled pupils to use their own experiences to come to firm decisions about both medicines and also about the dangers of harmful drugs. In this lesson, the teacher knew exactly what it was she wanted the pupils to learn and the lesson had a clear purpose. She had high expectations of what her pupils could achieve and spent time and care in providing essential vocabulary in order that pupils could develop their scientific

thinking and ideas. Learning was effective and pupils of all abilities achieved well. The pupils responded enthusiastically to challenge and came up with lots of ideas. Pupils obviously enjoy these practical sessions very much, particularly when they are firmly rooted in the pupils' experiences. Resources are deployed effectively, for example, the interactive whiteboard was used particularly successfully. Teachers are very well supported by the teaching assistants who are very well briefed.

64. The curriculum is broad and is based on national guidelines. The subject leader, having analysed recent results, has decided, quite rightly, that in order to raise standards, pupils must become more adept at investigative science. There needs to be more opportunities for pupils to broaden their scientific vocabulary and design and carry out their own investigations. This is needed so that pupils can develop their scientific thinking. The school has identified this as an area for improvement and is addressing it. The subject leader also sees the need to improve assessment in order to provide teachers with useful information on pupils' attainment and achievements.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 2, pupils reach average standards.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- ICT is used well across the curriculum.

Commentary

65. By Year 2, pupils' ICT skills are average. Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained and staff skills have improved. Not enough direct teaching of ICT skills was seen during the inspection to make overall judgements on the quality of teaching nor of learning. However, from studying pupils' work in books, portfolios, photographs and in displays, it is clear that all strands of the subject are covered well and pupils achieve very well. The school has adequate numbers of computers, which are sited in classrooms across the school. The school has recognised that some of the hardware is old and, to address this, has introduced a rolling programme of replacement which will update and increase the range of hard- and software available to pupils.
66. The curriculum is based on national guidelines and all pupils receive their full entitlement. The subject is well led and managed. The subject leader monitors the subject efficiently and evaluates its impact effectively in order to ensure standards continue to rise. She has identified that, whilst ICT is used successfully across the curriculum, pupils were not necessarily developing skills progressively. To address this she has initiated a scheme of work, which builds skill upon skill in a constructive way and closely supports learning. She has also devised a very useful assessment system which, once fully implemented and consistently used, will give clear information about pupils' achievements and track how quickly they are acquiring necessary skills.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. Pupils regularly use the classroom computers to support their work in a range of subjects. They use ICT well in subjects such as English, mathematics, art and design, geography, history and science. For example, they use the Internet to find out information for history and geography topics. They use computers to produce block graphs and pictograms to support their mathematical work on collecting data and making graphs. They interrogate their graphs and are adept at making links between input and outcome. They edit and produce final drafts of the creative writing and use painting programs to design and draw artwork in the style of

famous artists. Pupils use a wide range of ICT equipment, including digital cameras, cassette players and robotic toys, as well as computers.

HUMANITIES

Geography and History

68. Due to inspection priorities and timetabling constraints, work in **geography and history** was not inspected in detail. From observation of one history lesson, discussions with the subject leader and work samples, it is evident that the full programmes of study are covered effectively through topic work. The curriculum is enhanced by the use of the environment, the local community and educational visits. In **geography**, planning is appropriately balanced between learning geographical facts and investigating geographical issues. For example, pupils are able to explain how a village is different from a town and identify physical features in different environments. They draw simple maps, such as their route to school, and draw and label street furniture and landmarks. In **history**, work shows a developing sense of chronology. Pupils place events and objects in order and use terms concerned with the passage of time. This was illustrated in an excellent lesson on the history of cleaning and the reasons for change. The teacher brought each era to life as she described events and the pupils used artefacts to raise and answer questions about the need for change. Standards in both subjects are satisfactory and provision has been successfully maintained since the last inspection.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are in line with the expectation of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils achieve well.
- The curriculum is planned creatively.
- The subject supports pupils' personal development well.
- The curriculum is well supported by visits and other activities.

Commentary

69. The RE curriculum is based on the locally agreed syllabus and is planned thoroughly. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. However, from talking to pupils and looking at the work in their books and on display, it is clear that, since the last inspection, standards have been maintained. They are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils achieve well.

70. The curriculum is delivered creatively through topics involving more than one subject. For example, Year 1 pupils follow a theme about 'Water'. The RE aspect of this was 'The Harvest of the Sea'. Older pupils study Bible stories including the story of Jairus's daughter. In these sessions, pupils are always asked their opinions about why people behave in different ways. This helps them to understand behaviour and motivation. Pupils also have the opportunity to discuss stories and celebrations from other faiths. Thus, they study the story of Rama and Sita and discuss Diwali, the festival of light. Other festivals studied include Christmas and Eid. Pupils have opportunities to study their feelings and emotions. For example, they explore what makes them feel happy or sad. In a very good lesson, pupils in Year 1 described and explored their emotions, discussing particularly what makes them feel angry and how best to cope with that emotion in a positive way.

71. The school works hard to link RE with pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. This effectively helps pupils' attitudes to school and their sense of responsibility. Pupils' understanding of other cultures and religious traditions is also

developed successfully through their RE work. For example, they learn how festivals, such as Eid and Diwali are celebrated. This work is very successfully supported by the very good quality daily acts of collective worship which greatly enhance the spiritual life of the school.

72. The school takes pupils on a good variety of visits to places of interest in order to enrich their experiences. Thus, pupils visit not only the local church but also have opportunities to visit Lichfield Cathedral, a mosque and a gudwara. This considerably helps prepare them for life in a culturally diverse society. Particularly popular is the after school Christian club which is open to all and is well attended.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and Design and Design and Technology

Provision in art and design and in design and technology is **very good**.

73. Evidence was gathered from talking to pupils and staff and from observing one art and design lesson.
74. Pupils achieve very well throughout the school and from the work seen attain well above average standards in both **art and design** and **design and technology**. Pupils' observational drawing and use of colour in art and design is a strength. By Year 2, pupils have a very good knowledge of the work of a range of well-known artists, such as Picasso, Matisse and Mondrian. They succeed in interpreting the skills of well known painters and designers to create their own models and art work. For instance, from their study of portraits by Picasso and Matisse, pupils created self portraits using colours and shades of colours to good effect, to reflect moods or emotions such as sadness and anger. As accomplished young artists and technologists, pupils enjoy expressing their feelings and emotions. Both subjects reflect a range of work from other countries and traditions and this makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development.
75. In design and technology, pupils' designs and choice of materials to make their models are well above average. In both subjects, work is successfully planned into other subjects such as English, history or ICT as part of the pupils' topic work. For example, in their recent topic about kings and queens, pupils in Year 1 researched effectively the treasures of Tutankhamen's tomb. They accurately drew and made the jewellery such as bracelets and jewelled collars using a wide range of collage materials showing detailed observational skills. Year 2 pupils designed and made garments for a royal couple. They designed the clothes; cut the patterns to scale and hand stitched the costumes. The work was imaginative and finished to a high standard.
76. The subjects are very well led by a very knowledgeable subject leader. The vision for the development of both subjects underpins the aims of the school to give a high priority to creative work. This is reflected in the high quality pupils' work displayed attractively around the school. However, the monitoring of teaching and assessment of pupils' work are in the early stages of development. The subject is enriched very effectively by visits to local art galleries and by visiting artists who work alongside the pupils.

Music

77. No lessons were observed so no judgements are made on standards, teaching, learning or achievement. However, it is clear from scrutinising planning, talking to pupils, staff and from the work seen that **music** plays an important part in the life of the school. Singing throughout the school is good. Music has a significant impact on the school's strong philosophy of pupils learning through the arts. Hence, music is incorporated in the school's creative arts provision and good links are made to art, dance and drama. Musical activities include a recorder club

and violin lessons. Pupils involved in these activities perform in concerts. All aspects of the subject are covered well and all National Curriculum requirements are met.

Physical Education

78. Too little teaching was observed to draw conclusions about standards, but it is evident that teachers plan their **physical education** lessons very carefully, often involving work from other subjects. Lessons have an interesting range of tasks for the pupils to do and planning indicates that teachers know exactly what they want pupils to achieve. The pupils have access to their full National Curriculum entitlement. Teachers ensure full compliance with health and safety considerations and pupils learn effectively about the benefits to health of regular exercise. Pupils display very good levels of enthusiasm in their attitudes. They are happy to demonstrate their achievements during lessons. They show commitment and enthusiasm. The curriculum is considerably enhanced by a range of visiting experts and by opportunities to participate in Dance Festivals and other performances.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education and citizenship PSHCE

79. The school's policy is that this aspect should permeate the whole of school life. Thus, whether in formal lessons, or in short planned sessions during the school day, teachers take the trouble to help pupils to learn to take responsibility for their own actions. Much work is done to make pupils think about group, class and whole-school responsibilities. Teachers often base their lessons on incidents which have occurred during lessons or at play. Pupils are encouraged to think independently and to develop an awareness of caring for others and the environment in which they live. Much work is linked to RE. This helps pupils to develop a growing confidence and enables them to explore and express feelings and emotions.

80. In order to fulfil their aims, teachers make skilful use of a planned scheme-of-work and school and class assemblies, where there is additional time for discussion and reflection and class times before and after registration. The school realises the value of this time in reinforcing its very high expectations about individual behaviour.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	3

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

